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MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



MK Yadav Sir

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PYROCUMULONIMBUS' CLOUDS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Geography)

PYROCUMULONIMBUS CLOUD: WHEN WILDFIRES SPIT STORMS, LIGHTNING

ALIND CHAUHAN
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

THE WILDFIRES currently raging in the United States and Canada are so intense that they have created 'pyrocumulonimbus' clouds, which have the potential to spit out thunder and spark more fires.

The development of these clouds has become more frequent in recent years. Before 2023, 102 pyrocumulonimbus were recorded globally in a single year on average — 50 of them were seen in Canada, according to a report published in the journal *Nature*. However, during last year's extreme wildfire season, 140 pyrocumulonimbus clouds were recorded in Canada alone, the report said.

How are these clouds formed?

Not every wildfire leads to the creation of pyrocumulonimbus clouds. They occur only when there is an extremely hot wildfire — volcanic eruptions can also lead to the formation of pyrocumulonimbus clouds. For instance, these clouds were formed during the Australian bushfires of 2019-2020 when temperatures crossed 800 degrees Celsius.

The intense heat from the fire warms the surrounding air which moves upward into the atmosphere. As this hot and very buoyant air — carrying water vapour, smoke, and ash — rises, it expands and cools down. Once it is cool enough, water vapour condenses on ash, forming a grey or brown cloud. At this stage, the cloud is known as a pyrocumulus cloud, also known as 'fire cloud'. But if there is sufficient water vapour available and the upward movement of hot air intensifies, pyrocumulus clouds can evolve into a pyrocumulonimbus cloud. These clouds can reach heights of 50,000 feet and generate their own systems of thunderstorms.

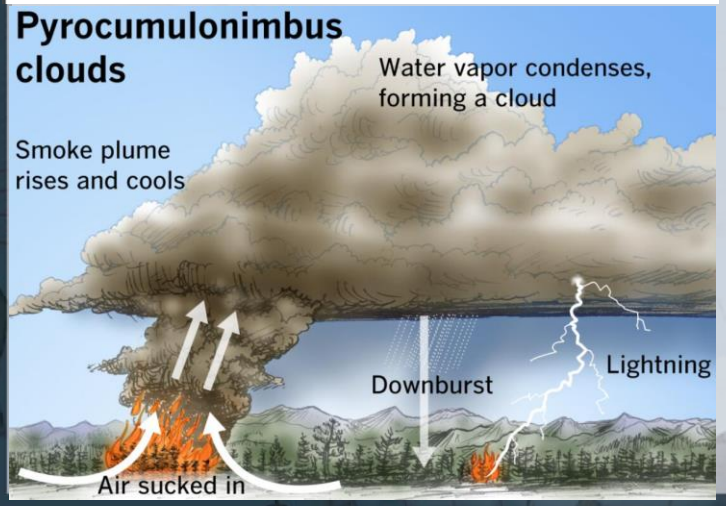
Although pyrocumulonimbus clouds can produce lighting, they do not generate much rain. As a result, they can spark new wildfires many kilometres away from the main blaze. These clouds can also trigger strong winds that can make the spread of the wildfire faster and unpredictable.

Why are pyrocumulonimbus cloud events occurring more often?

The exact reason remains unclear as unlike in the case of other extreme weather events, the study of these clouds is relatively new. However, scientists believe that climate change could have a role to play in the increase of their frequency.

Studies have shown that with temperatures soaring across the world, wildfires are becoming more common and intense. This could be spiking the occurrence of pyrocumulonimbus clouds.

"In a general sense, if you have more fires you'll have more pyroCbs (pyrocumulonimbus) because there are more opportunities to have them sink up, but it depends on atmospheric conditions, too… An intense wildfire definitely increases the odds," David Peterson, a meteorologist at the US Naval Research Laboratory in California, told *The New York Times*.



Context: The wildfires currently raging in the United States and Canada are so intense that they have created 'pyrocumulonimbus' clouds, which can produce thunder and ignite additional fires.

Pyrocumulonimbus' Clouds

- **About:** These are thunder clouds created by intense heat from the Earth's surface, primarily due to large wildfires or volcanic eruptions.
- **Meaning:** The prefix 'pyro' is used, meaning fire in Greek.
- **Evolution:** If there is sufficient water vapor and the upward movement of hot air intensifies, pyrocumulus clouds can evolve into pyrocumulonimbus clouds.
- **Formation**: They are formed similarly to cumulonimbus clouds, but the intense heat that results in the vigorous updraft comes from fire, either large wildfires or volcanic eruptions.
    - Not every wildfire leads to the creation of pyrocumulonimbus clouds; they occur only when there is an extremely hot wildfire or volcanic eruption.
- **Example**: During the Australian bushfires of 2019-2020, temperatures crossed 800 degrees Celsius, leading to the formation of pyrocumulonimbus clouds.
- **Impact of Rising Temperatures**: Studies suggest that with global temperatures soaring, wildfires are becoming more common and intense, potentially increasing the occurrence of pyrocumulonimbus clouds.
- **Impact**: Pyrocumulonimbus clouds are thought to be responsible for several aerosol pollutants, such as smoke and ash, being trapped in the stratosphere and upper atmosphere.

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RASHTRIYA VIGYAN PURASKAR
(Syllabus GS Paper 1 – Awards)

Chandrayaan-3 team, ex-IISc Director win top science awards

33 Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar awards will be given on National Space Day; 13 scientists to get Vigyan Shree award, 18 selected for Viyan Yuva award

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The Union government has announced the first set of Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar, or national awards for scientists, ever since it controversially cut down the number of such awards in 2022. Thirty-three of these awards, slated to be given on August 23, National Space Day to mark Chandrayaan-3's moon landing, were announced on Wednesday.



Massive effort: Some members of the jubilant Chandrayaan-3 team with ISRO Chairman S. Somanath. FILE PHOTO

Overhaul of awards

Following the overhaul of the scientific awards scheme, the Ministry of Science and Technology in January this year had notified four categories of awards, comprising a maximum of 56, for scientists. These are up to three Vigyan Ratna to recognise life-time achievements and contributions made in a given field of science and technology, up to 25 Vigyan Shri to recognise distinguished contributions, up to 25 Vigyan Yuva: Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar award to recognise and encourage young scientists who made an exceptional contribution, and up to three Vigyan Team awards to recognise a team of three or more scientists/researchers/innovators who have made an exceptional contribution working in a team.

Noted biochemist and former Director of the Indian Institute of Science, G Padmanabhan, was announced as the winner of the Vigyan Ratna. Thirteen scientists spanning a diverse set of fields from physics, chemistry, mathematics, atomic energy, biological sciences, earth sciences were awarded the Vigyan Shri and 18 scientists were nominated for the Viyan Yuva.

The Vigyan team award went to the ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 team. The awards are expected to be given at a ceremony on August 23 here. The awards this year were decided by a nomination process on a portal maintained by the Union Home Ministry that is a repository of a range of national awards.

Context: The government has announced the first set of Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar, or national awards for scientists, ever since it controversially cut down the number of such awards in 2022.

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar

- **About**: Similar to the prestigious Padma awards, these awards will not include any cash component; instead, they will likely bestow only a certificate and medallion on the awardee.
- **It will comprise:**
  - **Vigyan Ratna (VR):** Up to 3 awards for lifetime achievements.
  - **Vigyan Shri (VS)**: Up to 25 awards for distinguished contributions.
  - **Vigyan Yuva**: Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award: Up to 25 awards for young scientists.
  - **Vigyan Team (VT) Award**: Up to 3 awards for outstanding team contributions.
- **Frequency of award**: Annually.
- **Announcement**: National Technology Day (11th May)
- **Categories covered**: Total 13.
- **It will include**: Physics, chemistry, biological sciences, mathematics and computer science, earth science, medicine, engineering science, agricultural science, environmental science, technology and innovation, atomic energy, space science and technology, and a 13th category, simply called 'Others'.

DTE

Aug 7

GANGA RIVER SYSTEM

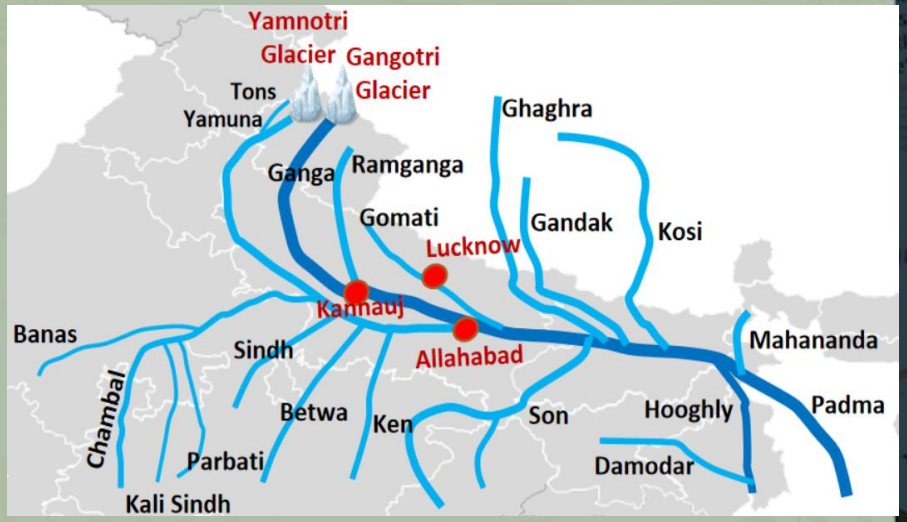
(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Geography)

Supreme Court raps illegal encroachment, plastic dumping on Ganga banks

Context: The Supreme Court has expressed deep concern over the rampant encroachment and dumping of plastic waste on the banks of the Ganga river.

Ganga River System

- **About**: The Ganga is formed from six headstreams and their five confluences.
- **Total Length**: 2,525 km.
- **Confluences**: The Alaknanda River meets the Dhauliganga River at Vishnuprayag, the Nandakini River at Nandprayag, and the Pindar River to form the Ganga main stream.
- **Mouth:** The Ganga fans out into the 350km wide Ganga delta and finally empties into the Bay of Bengal.
- **Source of the Bhagirathi River**: The Bhagirathi, considered the source stream, rises at the foot of Gangotri Glacier, at Gaumukh, at an elevation of 3892m.



- **Important cities near River**: Haridwar, Kanpur, Soron, Kannauj, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Ghazipur, Bhagalpur, Mirzapur, Ballia, Buxar, Saidpur, and Chunar are important towns along the river.

Initiatives to fight Ganga pollution:

- **National Ganga Council**: To maintain water quality and environmentally sustainable development.
- **Clean Ganga Fund:** Announced in 2014 with the aim of using the collection for various activities under the Namami Gange programme for cleaning the Ganges.
- **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)**: It aims at reducing the pollution of the river Ganga along with the conservation and rejuvenation of the river banks.

PIB Aug 7

GREEN NATIONAL HIGHWAY CORRIDORS PROJECT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

Implementation of Green National Highway Corridor Project

Context: The Government of India and the World Bank have recently signed an agreement to construct the Green National Highway Corridors Project (GNHCP). This initiative aims to enhance infrastructure while promoting environmental sustainability.

Green National Highway Corridors Project (GNHCP)

- **About**: A safe, green, climate-resilient road project using green technologies in Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Launched in**: 2015
- **Nodal Ministry:** Managed by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- Project Objectives
- **Aim**: To provide smooth, motorable roads with all-weather connectivity to nearby areas.
- **Institutional Capacity**: Aims to improve the Ministry's capability in implementing safety and green technologies.
- **Duration**: Scheduled from 2020 to 2026.
- **Funding**: World Bank
- **Features**
  - **Resource Conservation**: Utilizes cement-treated sub-base and reclaimed asphalt pavement.
  - **Local Materials**: Promotes use of lime, fly ash, and waste plastic.
  - **Erosion Control:** Uses erosion control blankets with shrub/grass plantation and hydroseeding.
    - ✓ **Hydroseeding**: A mixture of seed, mulch, fertilizer, and water applied to control erosion and promote vegetation growth.
  - **Structural Enhancements**: Includes shotcrete crib walls with vegetation, bamboo plantation, and hedge brush layers.
  - **Geocell**: A three-dimensional honeycomb-like cellular structure used for slope stabilization.
- **Benefits:**
  - Reduces carbon emissions through green technologies and bio-engineering solutions.
  - Focuses on the conservation of natural resources throughout the project's lifecycle.

TIMES OF INDIA

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PM-UDAY

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Govt Schemes)

Why city's response to PM-UDAY has remained lukewarm

Vibha.Sharma@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Even four and a half years after the launch of the Prime Minister's Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi Awas Adhikar Yojana (PM-UDAY), there has been no major surge in the number of beneficiaries with the people's response to the scheme remaining lukewarm.

Responding to questions raised by South Delhi MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri in Parliament, the Union housing and urban affairs minister said on July 25 that of the 1,22,729 applications received under PM-UDAY, only 23,811 were granted ownership rights, the highest being in Najafgarh, Nangloi, Burari and Kakrola.

Given that approximately 30% of Delhi's population resides in 1,737 unauthorised colonies, this number is significantly low, pointed out experts. Residents themselves said there were obstacles that had to be addressed in order to improve the scheme's effectiveness and increase participation.

The scheme was launched in 2019 by Delhi Development Authority to provide property ownership rights to residents of unauthorised colonies or slums. As of March 1 this year, 4.8 people had registered with DDA under the scheme, but not even half of them had submitted applications for ownership rights and only 22,034 individuals were granted conveyance deeds.

Till date, there has been no major change in the situation. When asked about this, Bidhuri said that it was important that the layout plans of the unauthorised colonies were prepared on priority so that the building plans could be quickly approved. "Till such a time, individuals who have been issued ownership rights should be allowed to reconstruct their houses as per the building bylaws. DDA should also hold regular meetings with residents to understand their problems and accelerate response to the scheme," he said.

The scheme was launched in 2019 by Delhi Development Authority to provide property ownership rights to residents of unauthorised colonies or slums

Sushil Chaddha, a resident of Chandra Vihar, Nilothi, said, "People are still facing hurdles in fulfilling the terms and conditions of the scheme, such as attaching the power of attorney. Difficulties arise when these are old. Also, even after getting ownership rights under the scheme, getting a loan from nationalised banks for reconstruction and getting a building plan approved are challenges. Loans offered by private banks have very high interest."

Chaddha added, "People are also reluctant about incurring extra expenses involved in the process, which is around Rs 60,000 for a 50 sq yard property and Rs 1 lakh for a 100 sq yard one. Moreover, one has to go to Vikas Sadan to pursue the matter. Ideally, the facility should have been started in zonal offices."

Than Singh Yadav of Delhi Dehat Sangh said that getting new electricity and water connections was no longer a simple task. "If two families, say of two brothers, are living in the same house with one entrance in an unauthorised colony, then DJB does not permit two connections. Further, a no-objection certificate from DDA is mandatory before applying for new electricity and water connections, which in itself is a herculean task to get," said Yadav.

DDA officials claimed that they are organising camps in unauthorised colonies regularly to resolve or address the queries of the people. "We are also distributing brochures detailing the procedure and benefits of the scheme. Additional staff, referred to as PMUday-Mitra, have been deployed to promote the scheme and assist residents in unauthorised colonies with their application-related issues. The application form has been simplified and made concise. The online portal has been made bilingual," said an official. Public hearings are also conducted at DDA headquarters and 10 processing centres to provide hand-holding support to the residents in application processing besides regular monitoring, claimed the agency.

Context: Despite being active for over four and a half years, the Prime Minister's Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi Awas Adhikar Yojana (PM-UDAY) has seen little increase in beneficiaries, with public response remaining lukewarm.

PM-UDAY Scheme

- **About**: This scheme is for conferment of property/ownership rights to the residents of 1731 Unauthorized Colonies (UCs) or slums in Delhi.
- **Full form:** Prime Minister Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi Awas Adhikar Yojana
- **Launched**: 2019
- **Launched by**: Delhi Development Authority.
- **Benefits:**
  - The residents can sale/purchase their properties without any hindrance.
  - Residents can avail loans from banks / financial institutions against their properties.
  - Residents can get building plans approved if they want to change anything in the present building or construct house in the vacant plot for whichthey have got property rights.

Other such government initiatives for urban slums:

- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U):** For construction of houses for all eligible beneficiaries including slum dwellers.
- **Other initiatives that indirectly help such slum dwellers**: AMRUT, SBM-U, AB-PMJAY, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), UJALA etc.

INDIAN EXPRESS

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BAILEY BRIDGE

190-foot structure built by the Army to move vehicles and machinery in landslide-ravaged Wayanad

THE INDIAN Army's Madras Engineer Group last week assembled a Bailey bridge at Chooralmala to reach Mundakkai village, one of the sites worst hit by the landslides in Wayanad.

The 190-foot bridge has since been crucial in facilitating the movement of men, heavy machinery and ambulances. It can carry weights up to 24 tonnes, and will remain in use until a permanent bridge is built.

A Bailey bridge is a type of modular bridge whose parts are pre-built, so they can be put together quickly as needed. An English civil engineer named Donald Coleman Bailey is credited with inventing it during World War II.

A US Army Engineer School manual says that Bailey gave his first sketch of a bridge that could be moved, rebuilt, or replaced in hours, even under enemy fire, to the British War Office in 1941. "It was used widely and well by Allied armies in Italy and northwest Europe, 1943-45," the manual says.

The British Field Marshal Lord Bernard Law Montgomery said: "Without the Bailey bridge, we should not have won the war. It was the best thing in that line we ever had."

The pre-fabricated parts in a Bailey bridge include light steel panels linked through pins, which are big, screw-like objects. These help establish the guardrails of the bridge. Through the guardrails on either side, workers place beams to form the deck or path of the bridge. All beams were constructed such that they would lock in on the guardrails to ensure stability.

After that, the bridge can be extended, and the lightness of the parts allows it to be mobile. No heavy installation equipment is needed. In disaster relief situations, this is ideal because parts can be transported in small trucks – something also of use during wartime.

A Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) publication says, "The Indian armed forces, and particularly the Indian Army carried on the British legacy and thus inherited a large inventory of the Bailey bridge." Such bridges were used in the 1971 war with Pakistan, and in disaster relief situations such as in Uttarakhand after the flash floods of 2021.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

BAILEY BRIDGE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Disaster Management)

Context: The Indian Army's Madras Engineer Group last week assembled a Bailey bridge at Chooralmala to reach Mundakkai village, one of the sites worst hit by the landslides in Wayanad.

Bailey Bridge

- **About**: A Bailey bridge is a modular bridge made of pre-built parts, allowing for quick assembly with minimal construction work.
- **Historical Origin**: Invented by Donald Coleman Bailey, an English civil engineer, during World War II (1939-45).
- **Early Usage:** First sketched in 1941 and designed to be rapidly assembled and disassembled under wartime conditions, proving crucial in Italy and northwest Europe (1943-45).
- **Significance**: British Field Marshal Lord Bernard Law Montgomery acknowledged the bridge's crucial role in the Allied victory during World War II.
- **Components**: The bridge consists of pre-fabricated light steel panels connected with pins, which form the guardrails.
- **Construction**: Beams are placed on the guardrails to create the deck of the bridge, locking into place for stability.
- **Mobility**: The bridge can be extended and assembled without heavy equipment, making it suitable for transport in small trucks, ideal for disaster relief and wartime.
- **Legacy:** The Indian armed forces inherited a substantial inventory of Bailey bridges from the British, continuing their use and maintenance in the country.

TIMES OF INDIA
Aug 7

E-RUPEE
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Google And Amazon May Be Looking To Join RBI's E-Rupee Pilot

Context: Fintech companies are eager to participate in the Indian central bank's digital currency project by enabling their users to conduct transactions in e-rupee through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

E-Rupee

- **About**: The e-rupee, or digital rupee, is a digital currency introduced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- **Launched:** The digital rupee was introduced on a pilot basis in December 2022, initially available through select public and private banks in major cities.
- **Objectives**: It aimed to provide an alternative to cryptocurrencies and enhance transaction transparency, while reducing the costs associated with traditional fiat currency production.

Key Features of e-Rupee:

- **Acceptance:** Must be accepted as a medium of payment and a legal tender.
- **Store of Value**: Should serve as a safe store of value for all citizens, enterprises, and government agencies.
- **Convertibility**: Freely convertible against commercial bank money and cash.
- **Fungibility**: Functions as a fungible legal tender without requiring a bank account.
- **Cost Efficiency:** Expected to reduce the cost of issuing money and transactions.
- **Electronic Form**: It exists solely in electronic form and does not involve physical currency.
- **Legal Tender:** Like traditional banknotes, it is a legal tender for transactions but can only be used online.
- **Legal Tender Status**: Both e-rupee and banknotes are legal tender issued by the central bank.
- **Interest Payments**: Unlike bank deposits, digital rupee holdings do not earn interest from the central bank.
- **Conversion Flexibility**: Bank deposits can be converted into e-rupees and vice versa, facilitating ease of use.

BUSINESS LINE

Aug 7

OILFIELDS ACT 1948

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Oil Ministry introduces Bill to amend Oilfields Regulation Act

Context: The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoPNG) introduced a Bill in Parliament to amend the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948.

Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948

- **Scope of Act**: Focuses on the regulation and development of traditional 'mineral oils' as commonly defined.
- **Proposed Amendment:** Aims to update the definition of 'mineral oil' to include future alternative or clean energy sources.
- **Objective:** Facilitates the development and production of emerging clean energy technologies.

Key features of the Bill

- **Expanded Definition of Mineral Oils**: The Act defines mineral oils to include petroleum and natural gas, excluding coal, lignite, and helium. The Bill expands this definition to cover:
  - Any naturally occurring hydrocarbon
  - Coal bed methane
  - Shale gas/oil
- **Introduction of Petroleum Lease**: The Act initially provides for a mining lease covering exploration, prospecting, production, and disposal of mineral oils. The Bill replaces this with a petroleum lease, encompassing similar activities. Existing mining leases remain valid.
- **Penalties for**: Undertaking mineral oil activities (exploration, prospecting, production) without a valid lease and Non-payment of royalty.
- **Adjudication of Penalties**: An officer of the rank of Joint Secretary or above will be appointed by the central government for adjudicating penalties.
  - Appeals will be heard by the Appellate Tribunal specified in the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006, which is the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity constituted under the Electricity Act, 2003.

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FINANCE BILL

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Lok Sabha passes Finance Bill, amends provision on LTCG tax

Sitharaman rejects criticism from Opposition that the middle class is heavily taxed; she says Budget is aimed at promoting investment; protests erupt in House after govt. does not take up amendment against 18% GST on insurance premiums

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Finance Bill, 2024 was passed in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday with an amendment relaxing a proposal for the long-term capital gains tax on real estate. It allows tax payers an option to switch to a new lower tax rate or stick to the old regime that had a higher rate with indexation benefit.

The amendment comes after a proposal to remove indexation benefit in calculation of long-term capital gains on sale of immoveable properties in the Budget, 2024-25 had evoked criticism from various corners, including Opposition parties and tax professionals. The Budget had proposed a lower 12.5% rate of LTCG tax, down from 20%, while doing away with the indexation benefit.

With this amendment, individuals or Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) who bought houses before July 23, 2024, can opt to pay LTCG tax under the new scheme at the rate of 12.5% without indexation or claim the indexation benefit and pay 20% tax.



New regime: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government had eased tax compliance. PTI

The Finance Bill was passed by a voice vote in the Lok Sabha with a total of 45 official amendments.

Replying to the debate before the passage of the Bill, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman rejected criticism from Opposition parties that the middle class was heavily taxed. She said that the Budget proposals were aimed at promoting investment and benefiting the middle class.

She said the Narendra Modi government had brought in a simplified taxation regime and eased compliance without drastically increasing taxes.

Among the various measures taken to help the middle class, Ms. Sitharaman mentioned the reduction in customs duty on various goods that would promote trade and investment and generate employment.

She also referred to the hike in tax exemption limit on long-term capital gains in listed equities and bonds to ₹1.25 lakh from ₹1 lakh, a move that she said would benefit those investing in the stock market.

The Finance Minister said that simplification of the tax regime was the primary objective of the Modi government, highlighting that 72% of those who had paid income tax had opted for the new regime while filing returns this year.

"We have made transformational changes in tax governance. In 2023, the tax slabs were significantly reduced. Again, this has been done this year," Ms. Sitharaman said, adding that the standard deduction for the salaried class had been increased.

On the Opposition's demand for removal of Goods and Services Tax on health and life insurance premiums, the Union Minister said that 75% of the GST collected went to the States.

"Prior to levying 18% GST on health insurance [premium], all States used to levy tax on insurance premiums. So when GST was rolled out, the tax automatically got subsumed into GST," she said.

Opposition MPs staged a walkout after a furore over the government not taking up an amendment in the Finance Bill to withdraw the 18% GST levy on medical and life insurance premiums.

The amendment had been moved by N.K. Premachandran of the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

The Finance Minister said any amendment in GST had to be approved by the GST Council.

- **Long-Term Capital Gains (LTCG)**: Gains made on assets held for a period exceeding three years (one year for shares and mutual funds).
- Long-term gains on all financial and non-financial assets will attract a tax rate of 12.5% instead of 10%.

Context: The Lok Sabha passed the Finance Bill 2024, which includes an amendment easing the recently introduced capital gains tax on real estate.

Finance Bill 2024

- **Purpose**: It embodies the government's proposals regarding taxation, spending, and other financial matters for the upcoming fiscal year.
- **Categorization as a Money Bill:** The Bill is categorized as a Money Bill under Article 110 of the Constitution, specifically dealing with taxation proposals.
- **Legislative Context:** According to Rule 219 of the Lok Sabha's Rules of Procedure, a Finance Bill is introduced annually to implement the Government of India's financial proposals for the fiscal year and any supplementary financial proposals.
- **Constitutional Requirement:** Article 110(a) of the Indian Constitution mandates that a finance bill be presented alongside the budget.

Key Features of Bill

- **Election Impact**: Focuses on maintaining the existing tax structure to provide stability during the April-May 2024 general elections.
- **Targeted Tax Reliefs**: Includes minor tax reliefs for specific sectors or taxpayers, aiming to incentivize behaviors or support vulnerable groups.
- **Economic Growth Measures**: Proposes infrastructure development, investment promotion, and business reforms to boost economic growth and job creation.
- **Fiscal Deficit Reduction**: Aims to reduce the fiscal deficit through measures to control spending or increase revenue, maintaining macroeconomic stability and investor confidence.

QCI SURAJYA RECOGNITION & RANKING
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Governance)

Quality Council of India introduces QCI Surajya Recognition & Ranking Framework to Drive Excellence in Key Sectors

Context: Recently, the Quality Council of India introduces QCI Surajya Recognition & Ranking Framework to Drive Excellence in Key Sectors.

QCI Surajya Recognition & Ranking Framework

- **About**: It is an empowering initiative aimed at fostering excellence among states to enhance the quality of life for citizens, contributing to a developed and prosperous Bharat.
- **Four Pillars**: The framework is categorized under Shiksha (Education), Swasthya (Health), Samriddhi (Prosperity), and Sushasan (Governance).
- **Performance:** Acknowledges states and organizations excelling in the four vital areas of quality and innovation.
- **Shiksha Rankings:** In the Shiksha Rankings, Uttar Pradesh leads with the highest number of accreditations, assessments, and ratings. Delhi, as a union territory, also ranks prominently.
- **Swasthya Category Highlights**: Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Mizoram, and Manipur stand out with complete certification in the Ayushman Arogya Yojana (NABH), while Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra lead in the Medical Entry Level Testing Labs (MELT) rankings (NABL).
- **Union Territories in Health**: Among the union territories, Chandigarh excels with 100% certification in Ayushman Arogya Yojana, and Jammu & Kashmir shows commendable performance with a 71.43% certification rate. Delhi, followed by Jammu & Kashmir, excels in MELT.
- **Samriddhi Category Leaders**: Gujarat, Karnataka, and Rajasthan lead with the highest number of ZED certifications, particularly in the Micro category. Jammu & Kashmir and Delhi also achieved significant certifications in ZED.
    - For the MSME Competitive LEAN Scheme, Maharashtra and Bihar are the top performers.

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