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MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



MK Yadav Sir

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DTE June 14

PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM IN INDIA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)

30 years after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, Panchayati Raj institutions still leave a lot to be desired; HP a case study

Context: Even after thirty years of this seminal change, if we look at the status and the functioning of PRIs, the much touted three Fs — Functions, Functionaries and Finances — are still in varying stages of devolution in different Indian states.

Panchayati Raj System in India

- **About:** Panchayati raj is the system of local self-government in rural India, focused on villages, distinct from urban and suburban municipalities.
- **Components**: The system comprises Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), facilitating village self-government, with responsibilities including economic development, social justice, and implementing government schemes.
- **Tenure**: 5 Years
- **Panchayat Election by**: State Election Commission.
- **Legal Provision**:
  - **Constitutional Provision:** Article 40 (Directive Principle for State Policy) - The state shall organise village panchayats.
  - **73rd Constitutional Amendments Act:** Added 11th Schedule and a Part-IX to the Constitution and consists of provisions from **Articles 243 to 243 O.**
  - **Non-Applicability to Certain Areas**
    - ✓ The act does not apply to Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram, as well as certain other areas. These areas include:
    - ✓ The scheduled areas and tribal areas in the states.
    - ✓ The hill areas of Manipur with district councils.
    - ✓ The Darjeeling district of West Bengal with the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council.
    - ✓ Extension to Scheduled and Tribal Areas
    - ✓ However, subject to the exceptions and modifications specified by the Parliament, the provisions of this Part may be extended to scheduled areas and tribal areas.
- **Three-Tier Structure**: In states or Union Territories with populations exceeding two million, PRIs operate across three levels: gram panchayats (village level), panchayat samiti (block level), and district council (district level).
- **Functions:** 11th Schedule contains 29 functional items of PRIs and the 12th Schedule to the Constitution contains 18 functional items of Municipalities.

Panchayat Empowerment & Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS): To gauge the performance of states in empowering PRIs.

- The objective of PEAIS was to arrive at a Devolution Index (DI) to assess the extent of devolution of 29 subjects to PRIs on framework, functions, finances and functionaries.
- The assessment under this scheme was carried out by reputed independent organisations like National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) from 2006-07 to 2008-09, and the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) from 2009-10 to 2012-13. The DI of most states in all these assessments were not very encouraging.

INDIAN EXPRESS

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KAVLI PRIZE

Like the Nobel Prize in cutting edge fields of astrophysics, neuroscience, and nanoscience

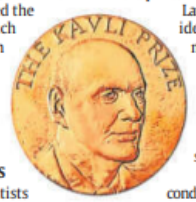
ANAGHA JAYAKUMAR
NEW DELHI, JUNE 14

EIGHT SCIENTISTS will be awarded with the Kavli Prize this year.

"The prizes are awarded in three areas: astrophysics, nanoscience and neuroscience — the largest, the smallest, and the most complex," Fred Kavli (1927-2013), after whom the prizes are named, said.

Kavli was a Norwegian-American scientist, businessman and philanthropist, who founded Kavlico in 1958. The company is a leading manufacturer of pressure transducers (devices which convert pressure into an electric signal) used in a wide variety of industries, from aviation to home appliances.

After selling Kavlico for $340 million in 2000, Kavli established the Kavli Foundation, which awards the Kavli Prize, in partnership with the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, and the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.



Nobel comparisons

Since 2008, 73 scientists from 19 countries have been honoured with the biennial Kavli Prizes. Ten of them have gone on to win the Nobel Prize.

While designed to be like the Nobel for its fields, the Kavli Prize is not restricted to recent work, meaning it is wider in its scope. The Nobel is only awarded for achievements made "during the preceding year".

Three independent five-member committees select the winners. These comprise nominees by top science institutes the world, including the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the French Academy of Sciences, Germanys Max Planck Society, the National Academy of Sciences in the US, and the Royal Society in the UK.

The Kavli Prize comprises a $1 million cash prize (per field), a scroll, and a medal *(in picture)*. The award ceremony is more fancy than the one for the Nobel Prizes, with a red carpet rolled out for invitees. This year, it will take place on September 3 in the Oslo Concert Hall. The Norwegian Royal Family will hand out the prizes.

2024 winners

All eight winners are professors at leading American universities.

ASTROPHYSICS: David Charbonneau of Harvard University and Sara Seager of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are this year's winners. They have been recognised for discoveries of exoplanets, and the characterisation of their atmosphere. The citation states that contributions of Charbonneau and Seager included pioneering "methods for the detection of atomic species in planetary atmospheres and the measurement of their thermal infrared emission".

NANOSCIENCE: Robert Langer of MIT, Armand Paul Alivisatos of the University of Chicago, and Chad Mirkin of Northwestern University were given the prize.

Langer was recognised for his idea of nano-engineering a material for the controlled release of therapeutic biomolecules, which could help development of controlled drug delivery systems to treat diseases like schizophrenia.

Alivisatos devised semiconductor crystals or "quantum dots" which could be used as multicolour fluorescent probes in bio-imaging. Today, these are used for diagnostic imaging of patients, and helping research in medicine and biology.

Mirkin introduced the concept of the spherical nucleic acid (SNA), a new class of nucleic acids that are densely functionalised and oriented spherically around a nanoparticle core. SNAs have wide-ranging use in areas like intracellular detection, gene regulation and immunotherapy.

NEUROSCIENCE: This year's winners are Nancy Kanwisher of MIT, Winrich Freiwald of Rockefeller University, and Doris Tsao of the University of California at Berkeley. They have been awarded for their effort to map the linkage between facial recognition and the brain. While Kinwisher identified the exact brain centre for face processing, Tsao and Freiwald took this knowledge forward using functional imaging and recording from individual brain cells to map out the neural architecture of the human brain.

KAVLI PRIZE
(Syllabus GS Paper 1 – Awards)

Context: The winners of the 2024 Kavli Prize were recently announced, honoring eight individuals for their groundbreaking contributions to astrophysics, neuroscience, and nanoscience.

Kavli Prize

- **About**: It is awarded in honour of Norwegian-American businessman and philanthropist Fred Kavli (1927-2013).
- **Awarded in three areas:** Astrophysics, nanoscience and neuroscience — the largest, the smallest, and the most complex.
- **Prize:** $1 million cash prize (per field), a scroll, and a medal.
    - US-based Kavli Foundation, the prize is given in partnership with the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, and the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.
- **Selection Criteria**: Three independent selection committees review entries to present a unanimous recommendation to The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters.
    - Each committee comprises five members, who are nominated by science institutes around the world.
- **Campare with Nobel**: Nobel Prize is only awarded for achievements made "during the preceding year". But the Kavli Prize does not operate under such a restriction.
- **Winners in 2024:** Astrophysics - David Charbonneau. Nanoscience - Robert Langer and Chad Mirkin, Neuroscience - Nancy Kanwisher and Doris Tsao.

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RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)

CIC upholds response to RTI query on Presidential assent

In reply to an application asking how many times former President Kovind returned a decision take by the PM or Council of Ministers, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said there was 'no data' available

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The Central Information Commission (CIC) has upheld the Rashtrapati Bhavan's response to a Right to Information (RTI) Act query on the number of times former President Ram Nath Kovind returned any decision taken by the Prime Minister/Union Council of Ministers for reconsideration. The President's Secretariat had responded that no information was available on record.

The petitioner Yuvan Mitran, a Chennai-based college student, had moved the CIC challenging the response of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. In his first appeal before the First Appellate Authority he wanted to know whether the reply meant that the former President had never returned a decision taken by the Union Council of Ministers and others for reconsideration or whether the information was not available on records.



Right information: The petitioner moved the CIC challenging the response of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. FILE PHOTO

Appeal made

He said the information provided was "incomplete, misleading or false". In response, the Officer on Special Duty/FAA referred the appeal to the concerned section, which reiterated its earlier reply that "no information rests with this Secretariat".

In his second appeal before the CIC, he argued that satisfactory reply was not given to him and said that the President of India, being a constitutional authority, who is elected was accountable to the people.

"Providing information regarding the legislative actions of the President is important in the light of promoting transparency and accountability in the working of the public authority," he said.

The stand of the Chief Public Information Officer/ Deputy Secretary, Rashtrapati Bhavan, was that the appellant was already informed that "no such information is available".

'No records'

After hearing both sides, the Chief Information Commissioner Heeralal Samariya said that appropriate response as per the provisions of the RTI Act, 2005, had been provided as only such information that was held and available in the records could be shared, he said.

During his tenure as President, Mr. Kovind gave assent to some important Bills which included the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019; Triple Talaq Bill; amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019; Citizenship Amendment Bill; and three farm Bills among others.

Context: The Central Information Commission (CIC) recently upheld the Rashtrapati Bhavan's response to an RTI query regarding instances where the former President of India returned decisions by the Prime Minister or Union Council of Ministers for reconsideration.

Central Information Commission

- **About**: It is a statutory body constituted under Section 12 of the RTI Act, with effect from October 2005.
- **Composition**: It consists of the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and such number of Commissioners not exceeding 10 as may be deemed necessary.
- **Function**: To receive and inquire into a complaint from any person regarding information requested under RTI, 2005. The Commission can order an inquiry into any matter if there are reasonable grounds (suo-moto power).

Right to Information Act

- **About:** The RTI Act, enacted by the Parliament of India, delineates the regulations and protocols governing citizens' access to information.
- **Replaced by**: Freedom of Information Act, 2002.
- **Features**
- **Time Limit for Providing Information**: 30 days from the day of application.
    - 2 days for information concerning life or liberty of a person.
- **Penalties**: 250/day up to a maximum of 25000 for:
    - Not accepting an application.
    - Delaying information without reasonable cause.
    - Knowingly giving incomplete, incorrect or misleading information.
    - Destroying the requested information.
- **Fundamental Right**: RTI has been given the status of a fundamental right under Article 19(1) of the Constitution.
- **Exemptions**: The Act, although advocating transparency, incorporates exemptions to disclosure, encompassing categories such as data concerning national security, privacy of individuals, and information pertinent to ongoing investigations.
- **Fees**: Public authorities are entitled to levy fees for furnishing information, with the fee framework established by the government, contingent on the information's nature and the mode of access, be it paper-based or electronic.
- **Power to impose penalty**: The CIC and the State Information Commission.
- **Name of bills:** During his tenure as former President of India gave assent to some important Bills which included the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019; Triple Talaq Bill; amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019; Citizenship Amendment Bill; and three farm Bills among others.

DTE June 14

WORLD WILDLIFE FUND
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

How DNA analysis of our rivers and lakes can reveal new secrets about their biodiversity

Context: A 2022 report by the World Wildlife Fund revealed a staggering 83% decline in global freshwater vertebrate populations since 1970, a rate far exceeding that of any other habitat.

World Wildlife Fund

- **About:** It is an international non-governmental organization.
- **Established**: In 1961
- **Headquarter**: In Gland, Switzerland.
- **Previously known as the**: World Wildlife Fund
- **Mission:** WWF's mission is to halt the degradation of the planet's natural environment and create a future in which humans coexist harmoniously with nature.
- **Objective:** To help local communities conserve the natural resources they depend upon; transform markets and policies toward sustainability; and protect and restore species and their habitats.
- **Global Reach**: The world's largest conservation organization, boasting over five million supporters across 100 countries.

WWF-India Intervention

- **About**: WWF-India has initiated several conservation projects to integrate conservation efforts with sustainable development.
- **Tiger conservation:** It has been working on tiger conservation in the Sundarbans since the launch of the Project Tiger in 1973.
- **The Climate Witness Project:** It was launched in the Sundarbans to document first-hand accounts of climate change from local residents, aiming to enhance understanding of climate impacts and support policy change and advocacy.
- **The Climate Adaptation Programme**: Initiated in 2011, is crucial for the people of Sundarbans to adapt to the evolving climatic conditions and their impacts to ensure survival in the region.

NAGASTRA-1
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

Army gets its first indigenous man-portable suicide drones

Context: The Indian Army is set to induct its first indigenous loiter munition, Nagastra-1.

Nagastra-1

- **About:** It is first indigenous man-portable suicide drones.
- **Developed by:** Solar Industries, Nagpur, the Army has placed a supply order for Economics Explosives Ltd (EEL),
  - The Nagastra-1 is entirely designed and developed in India, demonstrating a high indigenous content of over 75%.
- **Key Features**
  - **Precision Strike Capability**: The Nagastra-1 excels in "kamikaze mode," effectively neutralizing threats with GPS-enabled precision strikes, achieving an impressive accuracy of up to two meters.
  - **Compact and Lightweight Design**: Weighing just 9 kg, the Nagastra-1 is a man-portable fixed-wing electric UAV designed for ease of deployment. Despite its size, it boasts an endurance of 30 minutes and can cover distances up to 15 km in man-in-loop control mode, extending to 30 km in autonomous operation.
  - **Recovery Mechanism:** Equipped with a parachute recovery system for mission aborts, ensuring reusability and cost-effectiveness.
  - **Operational Specifications**: Weighing 6 kg, it can remain airborne for up to 60 minutes, providing flexibility and endurance in tactical operations.
  - **Low Acoustic Signature**: Featuring an electric propulsion system, the Nagastra-1 operates with a minimal acoustic footprint, rendering it nearly undetectable at altitudes exceeding 200 meters. This characteristic enhances its stealth capabilities significantly.



INDIAN EXPRESS

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Digital Agriculture Mission

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Agriculture)

Launch of ₹2,800 cr Digital Agri Mission part of govt's agenda for first 100 days

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 14

IN A push to the rural and agriculture sector under Modi 3.0, the Centre is set to announce big ticket initiatives as part of its first 100-day agenda, which include a ₹2,800 crore Digital Agriculture Mission. Besides, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to release the 17th instalment under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi from his parliamentary constituency, Varanasi, on June 18.

The Indian Express has learnt that the Digital Agriculture Mission will pave the way for creation of a nationwide farmers registry, crop sown registry, and geo-referencing of village maps. It is also learnt that the Union Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is expected to clear a proposal of this effect "very soon". A budgetary allocation of Rs 28,00 crore has been made for the mission and it will be rolled out over the next two years (till 2025-26). The launch of the mission was initially planned in 2021-22 but due to Covid-19 outbreak, it could not be rolled out nationally, said a source.

Meanwhile, the Agriculture ministry started various pilot projects and activities across several states, which are part of the mission.

One of the components of the mission is to create a farmers' registry, in which every farmer will be given a unique ID, the sources said. In some of the states, generation of farmer unique ID has already begun, the sources added.

As per the sources, a pilot project has been undertaken across 6 districts — Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh, Beed in Maharashtra, Gandhinagar in Gujarat, Fatehgarh Sahib in Punjab, and Virudhunagar in Tamil Nadu.

The sources said that Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra have already started generation of farmers' ID. In Farrukhabad, the UP government has already generated unique IDs for over 1.5 lakh farmers. The unique farmer ID will allow launch of new value-added services and farmers will be able to avail various government schemes including PM-Kisan and Fasal Bima Yojana through this ID. It will also enable them to avail financial services like farm loans and insurance.

The mission also envisages a crop sown registry. This will have a record of crops sown by a farmer on his land. It will help better planning and estimation of crop production.

Last year, the Centre had asked the States and Union Territories (UTs) to automate/digitise the process of area enumeration/girdawari of crops at field level by adopting Digital Crop Survey from July 2024.

- **Digital Ecosystem Components**:
  - Interoperability
  - Data governance
  - Data quality
  - Data standards
  - Security and privacy
  - Promoting innovation
- **Architectural Requirements:**
  - A decentralized, federated architecture is essential, ensuring:
  - Autonomy for service providers and other stakeholders
  - Interoperability across the ecosystem.

Context: The indian government is set to announce big ticket initiatives as part of its first 100-day agenda, which include a Rs 2,800 crore Digital Agriculture Mission.

Digital Agriculture Mission

- **About:** It was launched in September 2021 by Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
  - It spanning 2021-2025 has been launched by the government to support projects leveraging new technologies.
- **Technological Innovations:** Technologies such as AI, blockchain, remote sensing, GIS, drones, and robots will be integrated to enhance agricultural practices.
- **Ecosystem Transformation:** Transforming the agricultural sector requires a holistic approach that embraces ecosystem thinking.
- This involves integrating various stakeholders, both public and private, across the agriculture value chain—from crop selection and management to market logistics.
- **Agriculture Value Chain**: It encompasses activities from crop selection and management to marketing, involving both public and private sectors, including logistics.

GST COUNCIL

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)



Council may Cut Upfront Payment for Tax Appeal to 7%

JUNE 22 MEET May also consider amnesty scheme for disputes; proposal to make Aadhaar authentication must for suspicious persons likely to be looked into

Anuradha.Shukla
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The Goods and Services Tax Council, at its meeting on June 22, may consider a proposal to reduce upfront payment required to be deposited prior to filing of a tax appeal to 7% of disputed tax amount from 10% now, **ET** has learnt.

The council could also consider an amnesty scheme for disputes of the pre-GST regime and a proposal to make biometric-based Aadhaar authentication mandatory for suspicious persons seeking GST registration. Officials said the amnesty scheme, once approved by the council, may be announced in the budget. In the interim budget, the finance minister had announced an amnesty for small direct tax disputes involving up to ₹25,000.

They said though states and the Centre can implement amnesty schemes for pre-GST disputes on their own, a discussion at council will help bring uniformity in execution of the scheme. States have in the past come out with amnesty schemes for state taxes. "Businesses are urging the GST Council to prioritise an amnesty scheme to clear tax disputes arising from the goods and services tax implementation," Saurabh Agarwal, tax partner at EY, said.

The amnesty would provide a chance for businesses to settle past tax issues without heavy penalties and reduce the burden on courts, he added. The council may also look into the modalities of pre-deposits in cases where the industry has already made some deposits ahead of contesting tax demand.

"There will be many decisions to improve ease of doing business and, at the same time, further enhance the scrutiny process for risky taxpayers," a senior official told ET.

The official added that now that biometric-based Aadhaar authentication is successfully running in Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry on a pilot basis, the council may consider making it mandatory pan-India for suspicious and high-risk persons seeking GST registration.

ZAHID

At a Glance

GST Council to consider reducing pre-deposit for appeal to **7%** from **10%**

Council may take up pre-GST amnesty scheme	If approved, the scheme may be announced in budget

COUNCIL MAY CONSIDER BIOMETRIC-BASED AADHAAR MANDATORY PAN INDIA



Context: The Goods and Services Tax Council is set to discuss a proposal to lower the upfront payment needed before filing a tax appeal from the current 10% to 7% of the disputed tax amount.

GST Council

- **101st Amendment Act of 2016**: It also referred to as the 122nd Amendment Bill, laid the groundwork for the introduction of GST.
- **Article 279-A:** The GST Council functions as a collaborative platform involving both the Central and state governments.
  - It grants the President the power to establish the GST Council through an executive order.
- **Composition**: The GST Council's membership includes key figures like the **Union Finance Minister (serving as the chairperson)** and the **Union Minister of State** (Finance), representing various states.
- **Function**: To provide recommendations to both the Union and the states on crucial GST-related matters, encompassing the taxation of goods and services, exemptions, and the formulation of model GST Laws.
- **Decision of the Council**: The GST Council takes decisions through a **consensus-based approach**.
  - Every decision of the GST Council shall be taken **by a majority** of **not less than three-fourths** (75%) of the weighted votes of the members present and voting.
  - The weightage of **one-third of the total votes cast to the Centre** and a weightage of **two-thirds of the total votes cast to the States**, promoting the spirit of the co-operative federalism

TIMES OF INDIA

June 14

OLYMPUS MONS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

1,50,000 tonnes of water frost found on Mars' tallest volcano: What it means

Context: Scientists recently discovered frost on Mars' tallest volcano, Olympus Mons, revealing an active water cycle on the Red Planet.

Olympus Mons

- **About**: It is a shield volcano situated on Mars' western hemisphere.
- **Size and Height:** It is the highest point on Mars and holds the title of the **largest known volcano in the solar system.**
  - Standing at 16 miles (24 kilometers) tall, it dwarfs Mt. Everest by a factor of three.
- **Coverage:** The volcano spans a width of 340 miles (550 kilometers), covering an area larger than the entire Hawaiian Islands chain.
- **Comparison with Earth's Volcanoes**: In contrast to Earth's Mauna Loa, which rises 6.3 miles (10 km) above the ocean floor and is relatively shorter above sea level,
  - Olympus Mons boasts a volume about a hundred times greater than Mauna Loa, with enough space to fit the entire Hawaiian island chain inside it.
- **Age and Formation**: Olympus Mons is approximately 3.5 billion years old, forming early in Mars' history.
- **Summit and Caldera:** The summit of Olympus Mons is marked by a caldera, an expansive depression spanning 50 miles (80 kilometers) wide, formed by successive volcanic activities.
- **Complex Caldera Formation**: Unlike most Earth-based volcanoes with simpler calderas, Olympus Mons' summit caldera consists of several overlapping pits, each created during different eruptive phases, highlighting its complex volcanic history.

INDIAN EXPRESS Page 13

NEW COLLECTIVE QUANTITATIVE GOAL

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

No outcome in Bonn: why money is key to climate action

AMITABH SINHA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 14

A CLIMATE meeting in Bonn, Germany, has failed to make much headway on the crucial issue of defining a new climate finance goal. By the end of 2024, countries have to finalise a new sum of money — above the existing figure of $100 billion per year — that the developed world must mobilise for the developing countries to help them fight climate change.

The Bonn talks, an annual fixture in June, were expected to give at least some indicative numbers. They could have been worked upon before COP29 — scheduled to take place in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November — where they have to be finalised.

But this did not happen. All that came out was a 35-page, 428-paragraph, "input paper", which was a broad description of the wish lists of different countries. The lists pertained to not just the quantum of climate finance, but also other associated issues such as who should be contributing, what should this money be spent on, and how the finance flows should be monitored. The paper is likely to be developed into a formal negotiating draft that can be agreed upon at COP29.

Search for a new NCQG

Money is central to climate action. It is needed not just for facilitating mitigation or adaptation works — mundane tasks of collecting and reporting climate data, mandatory under the 2015 Paris Agreement, also require substantial sums of money, especially in developing and poor countries, where there is a large capacity gap for this kind of work.

Under the international climate architecture set by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), rich and developed countries are obliged to provide money to developing countries to fight climate change. This is because the rich and developed countries are primarily responsible for causing climate change.

In 2009, the developed countries promised to mobilise $100 billion every year from 2020 towards this purpose. A report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a grouping of rich countries, two weeks ago claimed that this $100 billion target had been met for the first time in 2022.

However, developing countries contest these claims, citing double-counting and innovative accounting, and have often blamed the developed world for not keeping its promise on climate finance.

The 2015 Paris Agreement says that developed countries must periodically increase this sum after 2025, considering the rapidly growing requirements for climate finance. The increased target, or the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), for the post-2025 period, is to be finalised this year.

EXPLAINED CLIMATE

The adequate amount

It is widely acknowledged that developing countries now need trillions of dollars, not billions, annually. A UNFCCC assessment last year said these countries needed about $6 trillion between now and 2030 just to implement their promised climate actions. Only for their adaptation needs, some of which are part of their climate actions, developing countries require between $215 billion and $387 billion annually, it said. The assessment also said the global transition to clean energy (not just in developing countries) needed investments of about $4.3 trillion every year till 2030, and about $5 trillion annually after that till 2050 to reach a global net zero status.

These are assessments of a few specific needs. The overall requirement for climate finance is much greater.

A few months back, India formally proposed that developed countries should commit themselves to providing at least $1 trillion every year after 2025. The Arab countries have said this figure should be at least $1.1 trillion. African countries have demanded $1.3 trillion.

The developed countries have not made any offer publicly. They have just acknowledged that the new amount has to be higher than $100 billion per year.

Debate over contribution

According to the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, only the countries listed in Annexure 2 of UNFCCC — 25 of them and the European Economic Community — are responsible for providing climate finance to developing countries. The listed countries, however, have been trying to shift the responsibility to others as well. They argue that many other countries are now economically better off than in the early 1990s when the list was made. They also argue that the requirements are too huge for the original group of listed countries to meet. China, the world's second-largest economy, oil-rich Gulf countries, and others like South Korea are not part of Annexure 2. In Bonn, China said it was playing its part in the global fight against climate change, but had "no intention" of taking additional responsibility.

All eyes on Baku

NCQG is the biggest thing on the climate change agenda this year. An agreement on this has to happen at COP29. The $100 billion figure was not a negotiated outcome. The offer was made in a statement by then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at COP15 in Copenhagen. It was later agreed upon by all the other Annexure 2 countries.

LONGER VERSION ON indianexpress.com/explained

Context: A recent climate meeting in Bonn, Germany, made little progress on defining the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for post-2025 climate finance. The NCQG, a major focus for this year's climate agenda, must be finalized at COP29.

New Collective Quantitative Goal (NCQG)

- **About:** It is a global climate finance goal to be set by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA).
- **Purpose**: The goal is designed to strengthen the global response to climate change threats within the framework of sustainable development and poverty eradication.
  - It aims to ensure finance flows are aligned with pathways towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.
  - The NCQG aims to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- **Contribution to Paris Agreement:** In 2021, Parties agreed that the NCQG should help achieve Article 2 of the Paris Agreement. This includes:
  - Holding the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels.
  - Pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- **Adaptation and Resilience**: The NCQG aims to:
  - Increase the ability to adapt to adverse impacts of climate change.
  - Foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emission development without threatening food production.

ECONOMIC TIMES June 14

LIPULEKH PASS
(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Geography)

Indian traders demand resumption of border trade with China through Lipulekh pass

Context: Indian traders involved in border trade with China through the Lipulekh pass have requested the central government to take up the issue of resumption of border trade through this route.

Lipulekh Pass

- **Location**: Lipulekh Pass is situated in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand, near the trijunction of India, Nepal, and China.
- **International Connectivity**: It serves as a crucial link between the Indian state of Uttarakhand and the Tibet region of China.
- **Altitude**: The pass is located at an altitude of approximately 5,334 meters (17,500 feet) above sea level.
- **Terrain and Landscape**: Known for its challenging terrain, Lipulekh Pass features steep ascents and rugged landscapes.
- **Strategic Importance**: Due to its elevation and strategic location, the pass acts as a gateway to the higher reaches of the Himalayas.
- **Ancient Trade Route:** Lipulekh Pass has served as an important trade route for centuries, facilitating commerce between the Indian subcontinent and the Tibetan plateau.
- **Religious Significance**: Apart from its role in trade and strategic positioning, Lipulekh Pass holds deep religious significance. It forms an integral part of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, a sacred pilgrimage for Hindus.
- **Opening for Trade:**
    - Lipulekh Pass made history by becoming the first Indian border post to be opened for trade with China in 1992.
    - Subsequently, other passes like Shipki La Pass in Himachal Pradesh (1994) and Nathu La Pass in Sikkim (2006) were also opened, marking significant steps in India-China trade relations.



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