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THE HINDU Page 8

IPCC'S ASSESSMENT REPORTS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

What are IPCC's assessment reports?

What do these reports by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change aim to do? When will the seventh assessment report (AR7) be published? Will it be ready by 2028? What are the topics that will be covered in AR7? What is meant by a global stocktake?

EXPLAINER

Indu K. Murthy

The story so far:

Since 1988, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has produced six assessment reports, three special reports, and methodology reports that provide guidelines for estimating greenhouse gas emissions and removal. Three reports from the IPCC's sixth assessment cycle (AR6) were published in 2021-2022. These documents – prepared by scientists from the 195 countries that are part of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) – examine the science, consequences, adaptation, and vulnerability as well as the mitigation aspects of climate change. Over the years, these reports have substantiated the fact that the planet is warming and that humans bear primary responsibility.

What did the recent report say?

The Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) warned that the time to limit the rise of the world's average surface temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius from the pre-industrial era – as agreed in the Paris Agreement – is running out and that we are close to breaching adaptation limits. It also suggested some options and strategies to slow warming, and to adapt and build resilience in natural systems, in human-made systems, and in communities.

After the AR6 synthesis report, the IPCC initiated its seventh cycle (AR7) by electing an IPCC bureau. In January 2024, bureau members met for the first time in Turkey to discuss budgeting issues, timelines for the various reports, and the work programme. Before this meeting, the co-chairs and rapporteurs of the Informal Group on Lessons Learned had produced a paper consolidating the learnings from the AR6 cycle and submissions from 66 of the 195 member countries regarding the types of reports, the need for special reports, and the value of 'full assessment reports'. The paper also emphasised a recommendation by member countries to "ensure adequate input from the IPCC is available for the second global stocktake to be concluded in 2028".

This paper, along with a report entitled 'Options for the Programme of Work in the Seventh Assessment Cycle' – which discussed options for publication, including ways in which the reports could be clustered for production of any special or additional reports, and their pros and cons – fed into the discussions in Turkey.

What is meant by 'global stocktake'?

To assess the world's progress towards the goals of the Paris Agreement, UNFCCC countries conduct a 'global stocktake' (GST) every five years. The GST is a mechanism to measure collective progress, identify gaps, and chart a better course of climate action.

The first GST started in 2022 and ended at the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the UNFCCC in 2023. The first GST text, to which member countries agreed to at the COP28 in Dubai last year, requested the IPCC to consider ways in which its work can be aligned with subsequent stocktakes. The second GST is due in 2028; and member countries have requested the IPCC to publish its AR7 assessment reports before so that countries could measure their progress against the state of the planet.

What will the AR7 cycle produce?

In Turkey, the Bureau agreed to produce the full assessment and synthesis reports, the methodology reports, and a special report. The full assessment reports will include reports from three Working Groups (as in the previous assessment cycles) plus a synthesis report. This decision considered the time available for significant new literature to be published, time required to run climate models, time to engage with under-represented communities, and the stress imposed on the IPCC technical support unit and the authors. The two methodology reports will be on short-lived climate forcers (like methane) and on carbon removal. The bureau also decided to revise the technical guidelines on impacts and adaptation. While countries suggested producing special reports spanning 28 topics, the bureau decided it will produce only one, on climate change and cities.

What is the timeline for reports?

Several member countries also asked the bureau to ready the assessment reports by 2028 to coincide with the GST. But the bureau couldn't reach a consensus on the release date, partly due to its experience with authors and countries over the time required to review, finalise, and publish the approved texts. Each assessment report in the past has required at least four years from start to finish.

Countries also said a shortened cycle could compromise the content as not enough new research papers may be published in the window and modelling efforts to understand the changes in climate to the full extent may also remain incomplete. Many member countries also said a constrained timeline would complicate engagements with individuals and institutions in under-represented countries. A decision on the timeline with respect to the assessment reports is pending and will be taken at the 61st session of the IPCC. However, the special and methodology reports will be published in 2027.

Indu K. Murthy is a Principal Research Scientist heading the Climate, Environment and Sustainability Sector at GSTEP.



Need for immediate action: Greenpeace activists display a banner prior to a press conference of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) in Incheon in 2018. AFP

THE GIST

- Three reports from the IPCC's sixth assessment cycle (AR6) were published in 2021-2022. These documents examine the consequences, adaptation, and vulnerability as well as the mitigation aspects of climate change.
- The Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) warned that the time to limit the rise of the world's average surface temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius from the pre-industrial era — as agreed in the Paris Agreement — is running out and that we are close to breaching adaptation limits.
- To assess the world's progress towards the goals of the Paris Agreement, UNFCCC countries conduct a 'global stocktake' (GST) every five years.

Context: Over the years, the IPCC reports have substantiated the fact that the world is much warmer now and that humans have played a crucial role in this warming.

About Sixth Assessment Cycle (AR6):

- **Release of the Report:** At the 58th session of IPCC in Interlaken, Switzerland.
- **The Report:** It is the **4th and final** instalment of the sixth assessment report (AR6). It is based on results from **three** Working Groups (WGs):
  - WG I evaluated the physical science basis of climate change,
  - WG II evaluated the impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability, and
  - WG III evaluated the mitigation.

Global stocktake

- **About**: It is a process conducted every five years by UNFCCC countries to evaluate the world's progress towards the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- **Purpose**: To measure collective progress, identify gaps, and guide future climate action strategies.
- **The first GST occurred** from 2022 to 2023, concluding at the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the UNFCCC in Dubai.
- Member countries agreed on the text of the first GST at COP28, requesting alignment of the IPCC's work with subsequent stocktakes.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

- **About:** The IPCC, created in 1988 by the WMO and UNEP, assesses climate change science for the United Nations.
- **Membership**: Boasting 195 member countries, the IPCC serves as a universal body for climate-related evaluations.
- **Objective**: To evaluate scientific, technical, and socio-economic data pertaining to human-induced climate change and propose mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- **Key Activities**: Primarily, the IPCC produces assessment reports, special reports, and methodology reports, influencing global climate change negotiations.

IPCC's AR7 Cycle

- **About**: The AR7 cycle involves the production of several key reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
- In Turkey, the Bureau agreed to produce full assessment and synthesis reports, methodology reports, and a special report.
- **Three reports from the IPCC's sixth assessment cycle (ARG**) were published between 2021-2022, focusing on consequences, adaptation, vulnerability, and mitigation aspects of climate change.

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ISRO'S INSAT-3DS

Syllabus GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

ISRO latest launch: why GSLV rocket is called 'naughty boy'

ALIND CHAUHAN AND AMITABH SINHA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 18

THE INDIAN Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched a new-generation meteorological satellite, INSAT-3DS, meant to carry out enhanced monitoring of the Earth's surface, atmosphere, oceans and environment.

But more than the satellite, it was the rocket that was the focus of attention of this launch. The INSAT-3DS satellite rode on the GSLV-F14 rocket to reach its intended geostationary orbit. GSLV is one of the three main rockets used by ISRO for carrying its satellites, the other two being PSLV and LVM3 (earlier called GSLV-MkIII). GSLV has had a rather patchy track record thus far, because of which it has been described as the 'naughty boy'. On Sunday, however, it made a flawless flight, and deposited the satellite in the desired orbit.

But why 'naughty boy'?

GSLV had flown 15 times before this, and four of the flights were unsuccessful, a very high failure rate for any rocket. PSLV has failed only twice in its 60 launches, including the first time it was tried way back in 1993. The LVM3 rocket has flown seven times and never failed.

GSLV's most recent failure was in August 2021, when it was attempting to carry an earth observation satellite EOS-03 into space. Five minutes into the flight, it deviated from the scheduled trajectory, lost the power to carry on, and fell into the Andaman Sea.

It did have a successful launch after that, in May last year, but the uncertainty over its performance had not dissipated completely.

EXPLAINED SCIENCE

What is the problem?

GSLV is a more powerful rocket than PSLV and can carry much heavier satellites. It can carry more than 2,200 kg to geostationary orbits, and more than 6,000 kg to the low earth orbits.

Its problems have mainly been with the cryogenic engine that powers the third and final stage of the flight. Cryogenics is the science relating to the behaviour of materials at very low temperatures. Cryogenic engines use liquid hydrogen as the main fuel. Hydrogen, the most efficient rocket fuel, is very difficult to handle in its natural gaseous form, but manageable in liquid state. However, it liquifies only at very low temperatures, nearly 250 degrees Celsius below zero. The oxygen that is needed to burn this fuel also needs to be in liquid form. Oxygen is in a liquid state at about 90 degrees Celsius below zero.

The GSLV uses a cryogenic engine that is reverse-engineered on a Russian design. The Russians had won a deal to supply cryogenic engines and technology to ISRO in the late 1980s, but that deal had come under pressure from the United States, which claimed it violated the Missile Technology Control Regime, an international legal framework meant to stop the proliferation of missile technology.

The deal was thus called off. Russia did supply a few of those cryogenic engines but could not transfer the technology. India used those engines in some of its launches in the 2000s, and for later flights, tried to reverse-engineer that engine on its own. It is this engine, used in the GSLV rockets, that has caused a few headaches for ISRO.

What about LVM3?

In the meanwhile, India has managed to develop its own cryogenic engine as well, a result of decades of research and development.

This engine has an entirely Indian design, developed within ISRO, and uses a different process to burn the fuel. It is closer to the designs of the Arianne rockets that were used by ISRO till a few years ago to launch its heavier satellites.

This indigenously developed cryogenic engine has been deployed in LVM3, ISRO's most powerful rocket so far, which carried the Chandrayaan-2 and Chandrayaan-3 missions, among others. LVM3's seven flights have been without any trouble.

Context: The Indian Space Research Organisation **(ISRO) recently launched INSAT-3DS,** a new-generation meteorological satellite designed for enhanced monitoring of the Earth's surface, atmosphere, oceans, and environment.

INSAT-3DS

- **About:** INSAT-3DS Satellite represents a follow-on mission of the Third Generation Meteorological Satellite from Geostationary Orbit.
- **Orbit Adjustment**: Subsequent orbit-raising maneuvers will ensure that the satellite is positioned in a Geo-stationary Orbit, optimizing its functionality.
- **Funding and Support**: GSLV-F14/INSAT-3DS mission is fully funded by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), highlighting government support for advanced meteorological endeavors.
- **Enhanced Capabilities**: The mission is designed for enhanced meteorological observations and monitoring of land and ocean surfaces for weather forecasting and disaster warning.
- **Augmentation of Services**: The INSAT-3DS satellite will augment the Meteorological services alongside the presently operational INSAT-3D and INSAT-3DR satellites, bolstering India's capabilities in weather monitoring.

Why GSLV?

- **Enhanced capacity**: GSLV stands out as a more potent rocket in comparison to PSLV due to its enhanced capacity and strength.
- **Payload Capacity to Geostationary Orbits:** GSLV demonstrates its prowess by transporting payloads exceeding 2,200 kg to geostationary orbits.
- **Payload Capacity to Low Earth Orbits**: The rocket can carry payloads exceeding 6,000 kg to low earth orbits, showcasing its robust performance.
- **Understanding Cryogenics**: Cryogenics, the field of science dealing with the behavior of materials at extremely low temperatures, plays a crucial role in GSLV's operation and its engine's performance.

PIB

Feb 18

INDONESIA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Geography)

PM congratulates people of Indonesia, newly-elected Prez Prabowo Subianto

Context: The Prime Minister of India recently congratulated the people of Indonesia on the successful Presidential elections and the newly-elected President Prabowo Subianto.

Indonesia

- **About:** Indonesia is a country located off the coast of mainland Southeast Asia in the Indian and Pacific oceans.
- It is an archipelago that lies across the Equator and spans a distance equivalent to one-eighth of Earth's circumference.
- **Archipelagic Nature and Size**: Indonesia is the world's largest island country with more than 17,000 islands. Its vast expanse covers a significant portion of the Earth's surface.
- **Population and Demographics**: Indonesia boasts the 4th largest population in the world.
    - It holds the distinction of having the highest Muslim population of any country globally.
- **Historical and Cultural Ties with India**: India and Indonesia have shared two millennia of close cultural and commercial contacts.
    - The exchange of Hindu, Buddhist, and later Muslim faiths between India and Indonesia has played a significant role in shaping Indonesia's cultural landscape.
- **Land boundaries with several countries.**
    - Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Malaysia
- **It also shares maritime boundaries with**:
    - Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, Palau and Australia.
- **Major Mountains**: Mount Kerinci (Sumatra), Mount Rinjani (Lombok), Mount Semeru (Java), Mount Lawu (Java) and Mount Merbabu (Java)
- **Major Active Volcanoes:** Mount Merapi (Java), Mount Semeru (Java), Mount Krakatoa (Sunda Strait), Mount Tambora (Sumbawa) and Mount Agung (Bali).
- **Major islands**: Sunda Islands, Greater Sunda Islands, Java, Sumatra, Borne, Sulawesi, Bali, Lombok and New Guinea.



DTE Feb 17

EUROPEAN WOOD BISON

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

A female-only herd of European bison in war-torn Ukraine is looking for mates

Context: The war between Ukraine and Russia has threatened the European bison population with extinction.

European Wood Bison

- **About**: The European wood bison (Bison bonasus) stands as the largest and heaviest terrestrial mammal in Europe.
- **Also known as**: Wisent.
- **Subspecies Decline**: Once comprising three subspecies, only one, Bison bonasus bonasus, remains extant, with the other two having succumbed to extinction.
- **Habitat**: Thriving in grasslands, deciduous, and mixed forests, the European wood bison is adaptable to diverse ecosystems.
- **Role**: Noteworthy for its role as an ecosystem engineer, the wisent plays a crucial part in restoring grassland habitats, fostering biodiversity.
- **Distribution**: The European wood bison is distributed across Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, and Ukraine.
- **Conservation Status**: IUCN Red list Status: Near Threatened
- **Threats**: Rapid environmental change and hunting by humans were the main drivers of the wisent's extirpation across Europe, highlighting critical threats to its survival.



PIB Feb 18

NATIONAL TRIBAL FESTIVAL

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Govt Policies)

AadiMahotsav – National Tribal Festival concludes today with participation of more than 1000 artists, artisans and entrepreneurs, FPOs and Vandhan groups

Context: The annual "Aadi Mahotsav – National Tribal Festival," recently inaugurated by Hon'ble President of India, came to an end.

National Tribal Festival – Aadi Mahotsav

- **About**: Aadi Mahotsav stands as a flagship national-level festival. Its essence lies in honoring the diverse products, culture, and heritage of Indian tribes.
- **Purpose**: A national initiative to spotlight tribal culture, tradition, and heritage.
- **Scope**: Showcases tribal art, cuisine, commerce, and crafts on a grand scale.
- **Hosted annually by**: Ministry of Tribal Affairs' Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation Limited (TRIFED).
  - TRIFED spearheads the coordination and execution of Aadi Mahotsav.

Highlights of Festival

- **Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Tribes Launch**: Aimed at fostering startup culture and economic innovation among tribal entrepreneurs.
- **Inaugural B2B Workshop**: It attracted representatives from key industry bodies for networking and collaboration.
- **Industry Participation**: Active involvement of industry stalwarts such as Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), ASSOCHAM, IFCA, and leading startups like ITC, Patanjali, Zomato, etc.
- **Showcasing Tribal Products**: Tribal entrepreneurs showcased their products, paving the way for collaboration and bulk supplies through State Corporations, SHGs, and individual buyers and various collaboration and market linkages were explored.

TRIFED

- **About**: TRIFED is a national-level apex body operating **under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs**' supervision, providing administrative oversight. It was established under the **Multi-state co-operative societies act 1984.**
- **Objectives**: The organization aims to equip tribal people with the necessary knowledge, tools, and resources to streamline their operations.
- **Headquarter**: New Delhi.

ALL INDIA RADIO

Feb 18

VAYU-SHAKTI 2024

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Security forces in India)

Indian Air Force conducts exercise Vayu-Shakti in Pokhran, Rajasthan

Context: The Indian Air Force recently conducted the demonstration exercise **Vayu-Shakti 2024** at the Pokhran Range near Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.

Vayu-Shakti 2024

- **About:** It is a "triennial" exercise, conducted once every three years. It is aimed at showcasing the capability of the IAF to conduct full spectrum operations (day & night).
- **Collaborative Manoeuvres**: The exercise highlighted collaborative manoeuvres with the Indian Army, showcasing their joint operational capabilities.
- **Precision and Long-Range Operations**: The exercise showcased the Indian Air Force's prowess in precision and long-range weapon delivery, along with effective operations from various air bases.
- **Participation and Aircraft:** 121 aircraft, including Tejas, Prachand, Dhruv, Rafale, Mirage-2000, Sukhoi-30 MKI, Jaguar, Hawk, C-130J, Chinook, Apache, and Mi-17.
- **Indigenous Weapon Systems**: The exercise will showcase the capabilities of indigenous Surface to Air Weapon systems Akash and Samar in tracking and shooting down intruding aircraft.

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MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – IR)

Jaishankar meets counterparts at Munich Security Conference

External affairs minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar has met his counterparts from Saudi Arabia, Norway, Portugal, Poland and Belgium, and discussed bilateral ties and global matters like the situation in West Asia and reformed multilateralism.

Jaishankar is in Germany to attend the prestigious Munich Security Conference, which is the world's leading forum for debate on international security. He held "a productive conversation" with his Saudi Arabian counterpart Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud on the sideline of the conference.

"Discussed connectivity, the West Asia situation and our strategic partnership," Jaishankar posted on X on Saturday.

He held a "big picture chat" with his Norwegian counterpart Espen Barth Eide and spoke about the imperative of reformed multilateralism and a more equitable world order.

Jaishankar said it was a "pleasure" to meet his Portugal counterpart Joao Gomes Cravinho in Munich. PTI



German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock (Right) shakes hands with EAM Jaishankar during the 60th Munich Security Conference. PTI

Context: The External Affairs Minister (EAM) of India recently met with his counterparts from Saudi Arabia, Norway, Portugal, Poland, and Belgium to discuss bilateral ties and global matters, including the situation in West Asia and reformed multilateralism.

Munich Security Conference

- **About:** Often referred to as the 'Davos of Defence,' the Munich Security Conference (MSC) is an annual international forum.
- **Objective of the conference:** Discussing critical security and foreign policy matters, it serves as a platform for dialogue and debate.
- **Purpose of the MSC**: To facilitate dialogue and debate among political leaders, policymakers, military officials, experts, and civil society representatives.
- **Founded by:** German official and publisher Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist at the peak of the Cold War.
- **Originating in:** 1963, it has emerged as a pivotal event in international security.
- **Location of the Conference**: The Conference is held annually in Munich, Germany.

Significance of MSC

- **Expansion of Participation**: Over the years, the MSC has broadened its participant base, welcoming influential players from rising powers such as China, Brazil, and India.
- **Adaptation to Global Dynamics**: In response to shifting geopolitical landscapes, the MSC has diversified its discussions, incorporating topics like the Problem in West Asia, Arab uprisings, Iran's nuclear ambitions, and the Ukraine War.

ALL INDIA RADIO

Feb 18

JNANPITH AWARD

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Art and Culture)

Gulzar, Sanskrit scholar Rambhadracharya selected for 58th Jnanpith Award

Context: Renowned Urdu poet Gulzar and Sanskrit scholar **Jagadguru Rambhadracharya** will receive the 58th Jnanpith Award.

Jnanpith Award

- **About**: The Jnanpith Award stands as the oldest and most prestigious literary award in India.
- **Annually conferred by**: Bharatiya Jnanpith to authors for their exceptional contributions to literature.
- **Instituted in**: 1961
- **Eligibility Criteria**: The award is exclusively for Indian writers composing in Indian languages specified in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India, along with English.
  - **Posthumous awards are not granted.**
- **Evolution of the Award Criteria**: Initially (1965-1981), the award recognized authors for their "most outstanding work," offering a citation plaque, cash prize, and a bronze replica of Saraswati.
  - G. Sankara Kurup, a Malayalam writer, was the inaugural recipient in 1965 for his poetry collection "Odakkuzhal."
- **Language and Gender Representation**: The award encompasses works in sixteen languages out of twenty-three eligible ones.
- Hindi leads with eleven awards, followed by Kannada with eight.
  - **Ashapoorna Devi, a Bengali novelist**, was the first woman awardee in 1976 for her novel "Prothom Protishruti."
- **Recent Awardees**: In 2023, Sanskrit scholar **Rambhadracharya and Urdu writer Gulzar** were jointly honored as the most recent recipients of the award.

INDIAN EXPRESS

Page 1

NAFED
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)



Talks positive, focused on crop diversification, aid via NAFED: Govt

Union ministers Arjun Munda, Piyush Goyal and Nityanand Rai and Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann during the meeting with farmer leaders in Chandigarh on Sunday. *Express*

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 18

AS THE protest by Punjab's farmers entered the sixth day, farmer leaders held the fourth round of talks with three Union ministers and Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Sunday, amid an outpouring of support from other farmer unions from both Punjab and Haryana.

The meeting, which began at 8:15 pm, ended at about 12:40 am. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said they held "positive discussions in a pleasant environment". "Farmer leaders raised several issues, we had a long discussion after an out-of-box thinking," he said, adding that it was not just Punjab and Haryana farmers who would benefit.

Goyal said they focused on crop diversification and told farmers that if they start sowing pulses, many of the state's problems would be resolved. "We told the farmers that cooperative societies like NAFED will help the farmers. They will sign a contract of five years with farmers and buy their produce at MSP," he said. Similarly, the Cotton Corporation of India will buy cotton from them at MSP, he said.

Goyal said the farmers would get back to the government on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Context: Recently, the Union Commerce and Industry Minister proposed the diversification of crops involving cooperative societies like NAFED entering into five-year contracts with farmers, ensuring purchases at MSP without quantity limitations. This approach would also conserve Punjab's water resources and safeguard its soil.

National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED)

- **About:** NAFED is an apex organization of marketing cooperatives for agricultural produce in India.
- **Establishment and Purpose**: It was founded on 2 October 1958 to promote the trade of agricultural produce and forest resources across the nation.
- **Legal Status**: NAFED is registered under the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act.
- **Size and Scope**: NAFED is now one of the largest procurement as well as marketing agencies for agricultural products in India.
- **Headquarters and Regional Presence**: With its headquarters in New Delhi, NAFED has four regional offices at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata, apart from 28 zonal offices in capitals of states and important cities.
- **Functions of the NAFED**
  - **Facilitating Marketing and Trading Activities**: The cooperative institution aims to facilitate, coordinate, and promote the marketing and trading activities of its partners and associates.
  - **Undertaking Purchase, Sale, and Supply**: Another objective is to undertake the purchase, sale, and supply of various requisites crucial for agriculture, marketing, and processing.
  - **Functioning as a Warehouseman**: The institution also operates as a warehouseman under the Warehousing Act. It has the authority to own and construct its own godowns and cold storage, thereby facilitating storage and preservation of goods.

BUSINESS STANDARD

Page 5

ONE NATION ONE ELECTION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)

'One Nation, One Election' may have German blueprint

Law Commission, in its 2015 report, proposed that a no-confidence motion, even if passed by a majority, shall remain ineffective unless a motion of confidence in a named individual is passed. ARCHIS MOHAN explains



ILLUSTRATION: AJAY MOHANTY

A high-level committee, led by former President Ram Nath Kovind, is currently at work to submit its report on the feasibility "One Nation One Election" proposal to the Union government by the end of this month. The report is likely to recommend that India adopt the German model of "constructive no-confidence" which stipulates that the unseating of a government must be immediately followed by the formation of a new one, which will serve out the remainder of the legislative term.

The report is also expected to highlight the potential economic benefits of simultaneous elections, which could act as a multiplier for gross domestic product (GDP).

The high-level committee (HLC), according to sources, has studied the German model in depth. If the committee's recommendations are accepted, the only requirement would be to amend Rule 198 in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha. Both a parliamentary standing committee in December 2015 and a Law Commission report on electoral reforms in 1999 have noted that the Speaker of the Lok Sabha has the power to make this amendment. Such an amendment would ensure that, if a government were to fall after a no-confidence motion, a successive government would be formed to serve the remaining life of the Lok Sabha or the legislative assembly.

In its report on the feasibility of holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, presented to Parliament in December 2015, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law and Justice suggested that India should consider Germany's "constructive no-confidence" model to ensure political stability. Article 67 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany outlines the specifics of the "constructive vote of no-confidence". It states that the "Bundestag may express its lack of confidence in the Federal Chancellor only by electing a successor with the majority of its Members and requesting the Federal President to dismiss the incumbent. The Federal President must comply with the request and appoint the person elected. Forty-eight hours must elapse between the motion and the vote".

The Law Commission of India, in its 170th Report on Reform of Electoral Laws (1999), also proposed that there should be simultaneous motions of no-confidence in the incumbent government and confidence in an alternative government. The commission recommended the insertion of Rule 198-A, which would stipulate that once a no-confidence motion is taken up for discussion and voted upon, "no fresh motion expressing want of confidence" in the government shall be permitted to be made for a period of two years. Further, a no-confidence motion will not be allowed "unless it is accompanied by a motion expressing confidence in a named individual".

The Law Commission report stated that both motions should be considered and discussed simultaneously and voted upon. Each member of the House would have two votes. It also stated that a no-confidence motion, even if passed by a majority, would remain ineffective unless a majority passes the motion expressing confidence in a named individual. The Law Commission recommended that Speakers of Legislative Assemblies make similar amendments to the respective rules of procedure governing the proceedings in their Assemblies.

In their presentations to the high-level committee, industry chambers CII and Ficci argued that simultaneous elections would improve the ease of doing business. The CII highlighted production losses due to holidays on election days and suggested two models: Single-stage simultaneous elections every five years, or two-stage elections where half the state elections are held with the Lok Sabha polls and the rest 2.5 years later. They argued that this could lead to a saving of ₹12,000 crore.

Context: A high-level committee, led by former President Ram Nath Kovind, is currently at work to submit its report on the feasibility **"One Nation One Election"** proposal to the Union government by the end of February 2024.

High Level Committee for One Nation One Election

- **Committee Formation**: A high-level committee, spearheaded by former President Ram Nath Kovind, has been established to examine the feasibility of implementing the "One Nation One Election" proposal.
- **Report Submission Timeline**: The committee aims to submit its comprehensive report to the Union government by the end of this month.
- **Recommendation**:
  - The report is anticipated to advocate for India's adoption of the German model of "constructive no-confidence" to ensure political stability and continuity in governance.
- **German Model Overview**: The German model entails that the removal of a government through a no-confidence motion must promptly lead to the formation of a new government to serve the remainder of the legislative term.
- **Potential Economic Benefits**: The report is also expected to emphasize the potential economic advantages of synchronized elections, which could bolster the gross domestic product (GDP).

Committee Study and Recommendations

- The high-level committee has extensively examined the German model, and if its recommendations are accepted, it would necessitate an amendment to Rule 198 in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha.
- **Parliamentary Standing Committee and Law Commission Reports**: Previous reports, including one from a parliamentary standing committee in December 2015 and a Law Commission report in 1999, have acknowledged the Speaker of the Lok Sabha's authority to enact such amendments.
- **Feasibility Report of 2015**: The feasibility report presented to Parliament in December 2015 suggested considering Germany's "constructive no-confidence" model to ensure political stability.
- **German Model Specification**: Article 67 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany delineates the procedures for a "constructive vote of no-confidence," requiring the Bundestag to elect a successor with a majority and request the Federal President to dismiss the incumbent, with a 48-hour period between the motion and the vote.

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