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MK Yadav Sir

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FALCON-9

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

What caused the rare failure of SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket?

ALIND CHAUHAN
NEW DELHI, JULY 14

THE US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) last week grounded SpaceX's Falcon 9 – one of the world's most active rockets – after the failure of its upper stage engine that stranded 20 Starlink Internet satellites in a low, non-survivable orbit. The failed mission ended a remarkable streak of more than 300 successful Falcon 9 flights in the last nine years.

What is Falcon 9?

Falcon 9 is a partially reusable rocket designed and manufactured by Elon Musk's SpaceX company. It can transport crew and payloads to low Earth orbit (an altitude of 2000 km or less) and beyond.

The rocket has two stages. The first stage or booster stage comprises nine Merlin engines (a family of rocket engines developed by SpaceX), and aluminium-lithium alloy tanks containing liquid oxygen and rocket-grade kerosene propellant. The second stage consists of a single Merlin engine.

The first stage, which is reusable, is capable of re-entering the atmosphere, and landing vertically after separating from the second stage.

What went wrong with Falcon 9?

The problem occurred about 30 minutes after the Falcon 9 launch from California's Vandenberg Space Force Base on July 11. The rocket's second stage experienced a liquid oxygen leak, and failed to complete a second, short engine burn needed to put 20 Starlink satellites in the correct orbit, SpaceX said on its website.

"After a planned relight of the upper stage engine to raise perigee – or lowest point of orbit – the Merlin Vacuum engine experienced an anomaly and was unable to complete its second burn," SpaceX said.



Falcon 9 in 2021. *Wikimedia Commons*

"Although the stage survived and still deployed the satellites, it did not successfully circularise its orbit. This left the satellites in an eccentric orbit with a very low perigee of 135 kilometres, which is less than half the expected perigee altitude."

SpaceX claimed that the stranded satellites pose no threat to other satellites or to public safety as they are expected to entirely burn up in the Earth's atmosphere.

What happens next?

The rare failure is expected to impede Falcon 9's launch pace. The rocket saw 96 launches in 2023, and exceeded the annual launch total in any country, according to a report by *Reuters*.

The grounding of Falcon 9 is also likely to postpone upcoming missions taking astronauts to orbit. The private Polaris Dawn mission spearheaded by the entrepreneur Jared Isaacman is slated for the end of July. The rocket is also scheduled to take four astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS) for NASA in mid-August – Falcon 9 is the only US rocket capable of taking NASA astronauts to ISS.

The rocket will remain grounded till the time SpaceX investigates the cause of failure, fixes the issue, and gets approval from the FAA.

Context: The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has grounded SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket following an upper stage engine failure that left 20 Starlink satellites in an unsustainable orbit.

Falcon-9

- **About:** It is a **partially reusable** medium-lift launch vehicle that can carry cargo and crew into Earth orbit.
  - It can also be used as an expendable heavy-lift launch vehicle
- **Launched by**: American aerospace company SpaceX.
  - **SpaceX**: A private spaceflight company, founded by Elon Musk, that sends satellites and people to space, including NASA crews to the International Space Station (ISS).
- **The rocket has two stages**:
  - **First stage or booster stage**: It comprises nine Merlin engines (a family of rocket engines developed by SpaceX), and aluminium-lithium alloy tanks containing liquid oxygen and rocket-grade kerosene propellant.
  - **Second stage**: It consists of a single Merlin engine.
- The first stage, which is reusable, is capable of re-entering the atmosphere, and landing vertically after separating from the second stage.

Problem with Falcon 9

- **Technical Failure**: The rocket's second stage experienced a liquid oxygen leak, and failed to complete a second, short engine burn needed to put 20 Starlink satellites in the correct orbit.
- **Engine Anomaly**: After a planned relight of the upper stage engine to raise perigee — or the lowest point of orbit — the Merlin Vacuum engine experienced an anomaly and was unable to complete its second burn.
- **Orbital Inaccuracy**: Although the stage survived and still deployed the satellites, it did not successfully circularize its orbit.
- **Safety Assurance**: SpaceX claimed that the stranded satellites do not pose any threat to other satellites, or public safety as they are expected to entirely burn up in the Earth's atmosphere.

THE HINDU Pg 7/Jul 14

GRAM NYAYALAYAS
(Syllabus GS Paper 2 – Polity)

SC seeks report on gram *nyayalayas* from States, HCs

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has sought a full report from the States and High Courts on the establishment and functioning of gram *nyayalayas*, meant to provide affordable and quick justice to rural India and de-clog local courts.

The top court was informed that gram *nyayalayas* were far and few between even 16 years after they were introduced through a parliamentary law.

"Gram *nyayalayas* were supposed to provide speedy and easy access to the justice system for the last citizens of the country. Every citizen has a right to affordable justice at an affordable price," Justice B.R. Gavai said during a hearing on Friday.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, who appeared for petitioner NGO National Federation of Societies for Fast Justice, informed the court that 16,000 gram *nyayalayas* were required, but only a little over 450 were set up with about 300 actually functional.

The court said the last time it had taken up the issue was on January 29, 2020.

The Bench directed the States and High Courts to file fresh affidavits in six weeks giving details of the establishment and functioning of gram *nyayalayas*. The court scheduled the case for hearing on September 11.

Context: The Supreme Court has sought a full report from States and High Courts on the establishment and functioning of gram nyayalayas, meant to provide affordable and quick justice to rural India and de-clog local courts.

Gram Nyayalayas

- **About**: The Law Commission of India, in its 114th Report, suggested the establishment of Gram Nyayalayas for providing affordable and quick access to justice to citizens at their doorsteps.
- **Legal Framework**: These are established under the Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008, for speedy and easy access to the justice system in the rural areas of India.
- **Composition**: The Gram Nyayalayas are presided over by a Nyayadhikari, who has the same power, salary, and benefits as a Judicial Magistrate of First Class.
- **Appointment**: The Nyayadhikari is appointed by the State Government in consultation with the respective High Court.
- **Jurisdiction**: It is specified by a notification by the State Government in consultation with the respective High Court.
    - Gram Nyayalayas have both civil and criminal jurisdiction over offences.
- **Mobile Court Function**: The Court can function as a mobile court at any place within its jurisdiction after giving wide publicity.
- **Acceptance of Evidence**: Gram Nyayalayas can accept certain evidence which would otherwise not be acceptable under the Indian Evidence Act.
- **Procedure**: Gram Nyayalayas can follow special procedures in civil matters deemed just and reasonable in the interest of justice.
- **Appeals in Criminal Cases**: An appeal in criminal cases shall lie to the Court of Session, to be heard and disposed of within six months from the date of filing.
- **Appeals in Civil Cases**: An appeal in civil cases shall lie to the District Court, to be heard and disposed of within six months from the date of filing.

BUSINESS STANDARD
July 14

WORLD POPULATION PROSPECTS REPORT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Social Issues)

India has only 38 years before its population starts shrinking: UN Report

Context: According to the UN's World Population Prospects report, India's population is projected to peak at 1.701 billion in 2062.

World Population Prospects Report

- **About**: It is the twenty-eighth edition of official United Nations population estimates and projections.
- **Prepared by**: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.
- **Coverage**: It covers population estimates spanning from 1950 to the current year for 237 countries or areas worldwide.
- **Projection**: It provides insights into future population trends and dynamics at multiple levels global, regional, and national enabling policymakers and researchers to anticipate and plan for demographic changes.

Key Findings of 2024

- **Population Growth Projection**: The world's population is expected to peak at around 10.3 billion by the mid-2080s, up from 8.2 billion in 2024.
  - Subsequently, global population is anticipated to gradually decline, reaching 10.2 billion by the end of the century.
- **Fertility Trends:** Global fertility rate stands at 2.25 live births per woman as of 2024, a decrease from 3.31 births in 1990.
  - Over half of all countries globally have fertility rates below the replacement level of 2.1 live births per woman.
- **Growth Hotspots**: Rapid population growth is projected in nine countries including Angola, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger, and Somalia, with their populations expected to double between 2024 and 2054.
- **Life Expectancy Increase**: Global life expectancy at birth was 73.3 years in 2024, marking an increase of 8.4 years since 1995.
- **Global Population Rankings:** India is currently the most populous country with 1.451 billion people, followed by China at 1.419 billion and the United States at 345 million.
  - By 2054, India and China will maintain their positions, while Pakistan is projected to surpass the United States as the third most populous country with 389 million people, maintaining this ranking through the end of the 21st century.

LIVEMINT

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U-WIN PORTAL

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Health)

Pan India rollout of U-WIN by Aug-end

The U-WIN portal, a replication of the covid-19 vaccine management system Co-WIN, is set for a pan-India launch likely by the end of August, aiming to maintain an electronic registry of routine immunisations, official sources said. Currently, U-WIN is in pilot mode across all states and Union Territories, except for West Bengal, which is yet to start uploading data, the sources told *PTI*, adding that it is still under consideration in the state.

The U-WIN platform captures every vaccination event for pregnant women and children under the universal immunization programme (UIP). Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced in the interim Budget for 2024-2025 that U-WIN, along with intensified efforts under Mission Indradhanush, will be rolled out nationwide for managing immunisation.

"The U-WIN will ensure timely administration of vaccine doses by digitally recording every vaccination event under the Universal Immunisation Programme among all pregnant women and children aged 0-5 years," an official told *PTI*. PTI

Context: The U-WIN portal, modeled after CoWIN for vaccine management, is scheduled for a nationwide launch anticipated by late August.

U-WIN Portal

- **About**: It is a replication of the Covid-19 vaccine management system Co-WIN.
- **Announcement**: Interim budget 2024-25
- **Under**: Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)
- The U-WIN platform records all vaccination events for pregnant women and children under the UIP.
- **Targeted Beneficiaries**: The portal targets 2.9 crore pregnant women and 2.6 crore infants annually, providing 11 vaccines against 12 diseases through over 1.2 crore vaccination sessions nationwide.
- **Objective**: To maintain an electronic registry of routine immunisations.
    - Currently, U-WIN is in pilot mode across all states and Union Territories, except for West Bengal.
- **Benefits of U-WIN:** Digitization of session planning and real-time updating of vaccination status.

Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)

- **Origin:** It is a vaccination programme launched by the Government of India in 1985.
- **Part of NRHM:** It became a part of the Child Survival and Safe Motherhood Programme in 1992 and is currently one of the key areas under the National Rural Health Mission since 2005.
- **Objectives**: UIP prevents mortality and morbidity in children and pregnant women against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases.

ECONOMIC TIMES

July 14

AGRI SURE' FUND

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

NABARD set to introduce Rs 750 crore agri fund for startups, rural enterprises

Context: Recently, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has announced an agri fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises (Agri-SURE).

Agri SURE' Fund

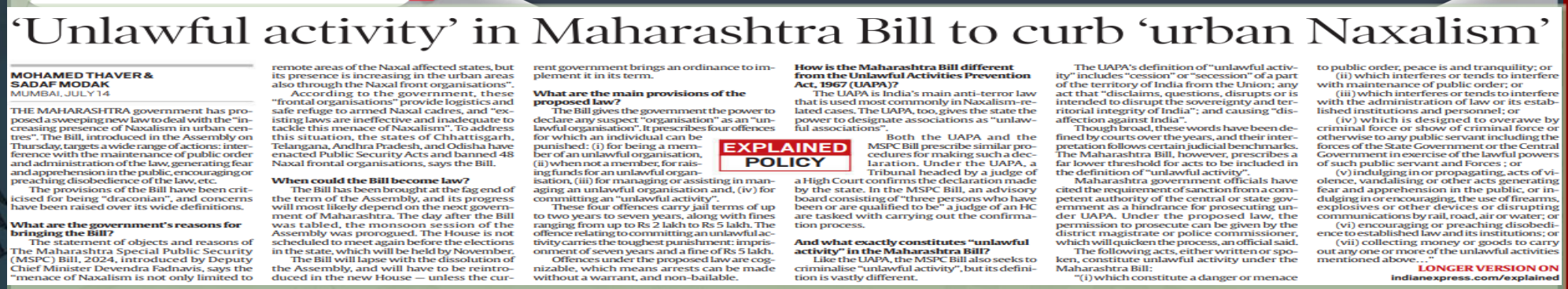
- **About:** It is a fund initiated by NABVENTURES, a subsidiary of NABARD, with an initial corpus of Rs 750 crore.
- **Contributions:** The fund received contributions of Rs 250 crore each from NABARD and the Ministry of Agriculture, along with Rs 250 crore from other institutions.
- **Objectives**: To promote investment in high-risk, high-impact activities in agriculture and allied areas.
- **Focus Areas**:
    - Promoting innovative, technology-driven initiatives in agriculture
    - Enhancing the farm produce value chain
    - Creating new rural ecosystem linkages and infrastructure
    - Generating employment
    - Supporting Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs)
- **Entrepreneurship and Development**: Agri-SURE aims to encourage entrepreneurship through IT-based solutions and machinery rental services for farmers, fostering sustainable growth in the agricultural sector.
- **Investment Strategy**: Agri-SURE supports startups through investments in sector-specific and sector-agnostic Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), as well as direct equity investments.
    - The fund aims to back approximately 85 agri startups with investments up to Rs 25 crore each by the end of its tenure.

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MAHARASHTRA SPECIAL PUBLIC SECURITY BILL

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)



‘Unlawful activity’ in Maharashtra Bill to curb ‘urban Naxalism’

MOHAMED THAVER & SADAF MODAK
MUMBAI, JULY 14

THE MAHARASHTRA government has proposed a sweeping new law to deal with the “increasing presence of Naxalism in urban centres”. The Bill, introduced in the Assembly on Thursday, targets a wide range of actions: interference with the maintenance of public order and administration of the law, generating fear and apprehension in the public, encouraging or preaching disobedience of the law, etc.

The provisions of the Bill have been criticised for being “draconian”, and concerns have been raised over its wide definitions.

What are the government’s reasons for bringing the Bill?

The statement of objects and reasons of The Maharashtra Special Public Security (MSPC) Bill, 2024, introduced by Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, says the “menace of Naxalism is not only limited to remote areas of the Naxal affected states, but its presence is increasing in the urban areas also through the Naxal front organisations”.

According to the government, these “frontal organisations” provide logistics and safe refuge to armed Naxal cadres, and “existing laws are ineffective and inadequate to tackle this menace of Naxalism”. To address this situation, the states of Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha have enacted Public Security Acts and banned 48 Naxal frontal organisations, says the Bill.

When could the Bill become law?

The Bill has been brought at the tag end of the term of the Assembly, and its progress will most likely depend on the next government of Maharashtra. The day after the Bill was tabled, the monsoon session of the Assembly was prorogued. The House is not scheduled to meet again before the elections in the state, which will be held by November.

The Bill will lapse with the dissolution of the Assembly, and will have to be reintroduced in the new House — unless the current government brings an ordinance to implement it in its term.

What are the main provisions of the proposed law?

The Bill gives the government the power to declare any suspect “organisation” as an “unlawful organisation”. It prescribes four offences for which an individual can be punished: (i) for being a member of an unlawful organisation, (ii) when not a member, for raising funds for an unlawful organisation, (iii) for managing or assisting in managing an unlawful organisation and, (iv) for committing an “unlawful activity”.

EXPLAINED POLICY

These four offences carry jail terms of up to two years to seven years, along with fines ranging from up to Rs 2 lakh to Rs 5 lakh. The offence relating to committing an unlawful activity carries the toughest punishment: imprisonment of seven years and a fine of Rs 5 lakh.

Offences under the proposed law are cognizable, which means arrests can be made without a warrant, and non-bailable.

How is the Maharashtra Bill different from the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967 (UAPA)?

The UAPA is India’s main anti-terror law that is used most commonly in Naxalism-related cases. The UAPA, too, gives the state the power to designate associations as “unlawful associations”.

Both the UAPA and the MSPC Bill prescribe similar procedures for making such a declaration. Under the UAPA, a Tribunal headed by a judge of a High Court confirms the declaration made by the state. In the MSPC Bill, an advisory board consisting of “three persons who have been or are qualified to be” a judge of an HC are tasked with carrying out the confirmation process.

And what exactly constitutes “unlawful activity” in the Maharashtra Bill?

Like the UAPA, the MSPC Bill also seeks to criminalise “unlawful activity”, but its definition is vastly different.

The UAPA’s definition of “unlawful activity” includes “cession” or “secession” of a part of the territory of India from the Union; any act that “disclaims, questions, disrupts or is intended to disrupt the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India”; and causing “disaffection against India”.

Though broad, these words have been defined by courts over the years, and their interpretation follows certain judicial benchmarks. The Maharashtra Bill, however, prescribes a far lower threshold for acts to be included in the definition of “unlawful activity”.

Maharashtra government officials have cited the requirement of sanction from a competent authority of the central or state government as a hindrance for prosecuting under UAPA. Under the proposed law, the permission to prosecute can be given by the district magistrate or police commissioner, which will quicken the process, an official said.

The following acts, either written or spoken, constitute unlawful activity under the Maharashtra Bill:

“(i) which constitute a danger or menace to public order, peace is and tranquility; or

(ii) which interferes or tends to interfere with maintenance of public order; or

(iii) which interferes or tends to interfere with the administration of law or its established institutions and personnel; or

(iv) which is designed to overawe by criminal force or show of criminal force or otherwise to any public servant including the forces of the State Government or the Central Government in exercise of the lawful powers of such public servant and Forces ; or

(v) indulging in or propagating, acts of violence, vandalising or other acts generating fear and apprehension in the public, or indulging in or encouraging, the use of firearms, explosives or other devices or disrupting communications by rail, road, air or water; or

(vi) encouraging or preaching disobedience to established law and its institutions; or

(vii) collecting money or goods to carry out any one or more of the unlawful activities mentioned above…”

LONGER VERSION ON indianexpress.com/explained

Context: The Maharashtra government has proposed a sweeping new law to deal with the “increasing presence of Naxalism in urban centres”.

Maharashtra Special Public Security (MSPC) Bill, 2024

- **Power to Declare Unlawful Organisations**: The Bill grants the government authority to declare any suspect “organisation” as an “unlawful organisation.”
- **Four Punishable Offences:**
  - Being a member of an unlawful organisation.
  - Raising funds for an unlawful organisation without being a member.
  - Managing or assisting in managing an unlawful organisation.
  - Committing an “unlawful activity.”
- **Punishments and Fines**: The offences carry jail terms of two to seven years and fines ranging from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 5 lakh, with the toughest punishment for committing an unlawful activity, which includes seven years imprisonment and a Rs 5 lakh fine.
- **Cognizable and Non-bailable Offences**: Offences under the proposed law are cognizable, allowing arrests without a warrant, and are non-bailable.

Differences Between Maharashtra Bill and UAPA

- **Primary Use and Scope:** The UAPA is India’s main anti-terror law, frequently applied in Naxalism-related cases, while the MSPC Bill is specific to Maharashtra.
- **Authority to Designate Unlawful Associations**: Both the UAPA and the MSPC Bill empower the state to designate associations as “unlawful associations.”
- **Procedure for Declaration Confirmation**: Under the UAPA, a Tribunal headed by a High Court judge confirms the declaration, whereas in the MSPC Bill, an advisory board consisting of three persons qualified to be High Court judges handles the confirmation process.

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CENTRE-STATE FINANCIAL RELATIONS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)



The Union government's rein on financial transfers to different States

One of the reasons for the States' share in gross revenue declining is that the net tax revenue is arrived at after deducting the revenue collections under cess and surcharge, revenue collections from Union Territories, and tax administration expenditure

J. Jeyaranjan
R. Srinivasan

On July 11, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin alleged that the Union government was withholding funds for the State's Metro rail completion and other vital projects. In this article, dated February 7, 2024, J. Jeyaranjan and R. Srinivasan explain how the government's tax policies reduce aggregate financial transfers to States, weakening cooperative federalism.

Ever since the start of the Fourteenth Finance Commission award period (2015-16), the Union government has been reducing financial transfers to States. This is particularly strange given that the Fourteenth Finance Commission recommended devolving 42% of Union tax revenues to States, which is a clean 10 percentage points increase over the 13th Finance Commission's recommendation. The Fifteenth Finance Commission retained this recommendation of 41%, excluding the devolution to Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh, which were recategorised as Union Territories. If we include the shares of J&K and Ladakh, it should be 42%. The Union government not only reduced the financial transfers to States but also increased its own total revenue to increase its discretionary expenditure. The discretionary expenditures of the Union government are not being routed through the States' Budgets, and, therefore, can impact different States in different ways.

Some basic math on tax revenue

The Finance Commissions recommend the States' share in the net tax revenue of the Union government. The difference between the gross and the net tax revenue includes collection costs, tax revenue to be assigned to Union territories, and cess and surcharges. Though the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Finance Commissions recommended 42% and 41%, respectively, of the net tax revenue to be the shares of States, the share of the gross tax revenue was just 35% in 2015-16 and 30% in 2023-24 (Budget Estimate). While the gross tax revenue of the Union government increased from ₹14.6 lakh crore in 2015-16 to ₹33.6 lakh crore in 2023-24, the States' share in the Union tax revenue increased from ₹5.1 lakh crore to ₹10.2 lakh crore between these two years. In other words, the gross tax revenue of the Union government more than doubled while the share of States just doubled. Grants-in-aid to States is another statutory grant recommended by the Finance Commission. The grants-in-aid to States declined in absolute amount from ₹1.95 lakh crore in 2015-16 to ₹1.65 lakh crore in 2023-24. Thus, the combined share of the statutory financial transfers in the gross tax revenue of the Union government declined from 48.2% to 35.32%.

One of the reasons for the States' share in gross revenue declining during this period is that the net tax revenue is arrived at after deducting the revenue collections under cess and surcharge, revenue collections from Union Territories, and tax administration expenditure. Among the three factors, revenue collection through cess and surcharge is the highest and increasing. The cess and surcharge collection in 2015-16 was 5.9% (₹85,628 crore) of the gross tax revenue of the Union government, and this ratio increased to 10.8% (₹3.63 lakh crore) in 2023-24. This calculation is excluding the Goods and Services Tax (GST) cess that is collected to compensate for the revenue loss of the States due to implementation of GST till June 2022. The Union government is increasing tax collection under cess and surcharge categories mainly to implement its own schemes in specific sectors, and at the same time, the revenues so raised need not be shared with the States.

More centralisation of public expenditure

When the financial transfers to States either as tax devolution or grants-in-aid decline on the one hand, or do not increase at least proportionately to increase in gross revenue of the Union government on the other, the resultant effect is the availability of larger discretionary funds for the Union government to spend. This could affect the equity in distribution of financial resources among States. The Union government has two other routes of direct financial transfers to States, that is, Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and Central Sector Schemes (CSec Schemes). The Union government influences the priorities of the States through CSS wherein the Union government provides partial funding and another part is to be committed by States. In other words, the Union government proposes the schemes and States implement them, committing their financial resources as well. Between 2015-16 and 2023-24, the allocation for CSS increased from ₹2.04 lakh crore to ₹4.76 lakh crore through 59 CSS. Thus, the Union government compels the State to commit more or less an equivalent quantum of financial resources. Moreover, the actual financial transfers to States under CSS is only ₹3.64 lakh crore (2023-24), retaining nearly ₹1.12 lakh crore of CSS allocation for other expenses.

An important aspect of CSS shared schemes is that the States that can afford to commit matching finances from the State budgets alone can avail of the matching grants. This creates two different effects in terms of inter-State equity in public finances. Wealthy States can afford to commit equivalent finances and leverage Union finances towards through the implementation of CSS. Less wealthy States will have to commit their borrowed finances in these CSS, thus increasing their own liabilities. These differential trajectories of the public finances of States accentuate inter-State inequality in public finances, the major reason being CSS.

The CSec Schemes are fully funded by the Union government in sectors where the Union government has exclusive legislative or institutional controls. The allocation for CSec Schemes increased from ₹5.2 lakh crore in 2015-16 to ₹14.68 lakh crore in 2023-24 to implement more than 700 schemes. Thus, it is clear the Union government allocates a larger share of the finances to CSec Schemes. It is quite likely that the Union government can allocate financial resources with a motive to benefit specific States or constituencies through the CSec Schemes. Since the CSec Schemes are directly implemented by the Union government, only ₹60,942 crore is devolved to States under this scheme in 2023-24. The combined allocation for CSS and CSec Schemes in 2023-24 is ₹19.4 lakh crore and only ₹4.25 lakh crore is devolved to States.

Scope for anti-federal fiscal policies

The financial transfers through CSS and CSec Schemes are non-statutory transfers as they are based on neither any legal provisions nor any formula determined by the Finance Commission. This non-statutory grant forms 12.6% of gross tax revenue. Together with statutory grants, the total financial transfers as a proportion to gross tax revenue were only 47.9% in 2023-24. Further, the non-statutory grants are tied grants, that is, they have to be spent on specific schemes for which the grants are allocated. This reduces the freedom of States in conducting public expenditure. In addition to retaining more than 50% of gross tax revenue, the Union government incurs a fiscal deficit to the extent of 5.9% of GDP. Thus, the Union government wields enormous financial powers with limited expenditure responsibilities.

Further, the Fifteenth Finance Commission noted that the Union government had argued for the downward revision of States' share in Union tax revenue from 42% and the Commission retained the share at 41%. Citing higher expenditure commitments, the Union government may repeat the argument before the Sixteenth Finance Commission. So much for cooperative federalism!

J. Jeyaranjan is Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Commission, Government of Tamil Nadu. R. Srinivasan is Member, State Planning Commission, Government of Tamil Nadu.

Context: Since the beginning of the Fourteenth Finance Commission award period (2015-16), the Union government has steadily decreased financial transfers to states.

Centre State Financial Relations

- **About:** Articles 268 to 293 in Part XI of the Constitution primarily address Centre-state financial relations.
- **Taxes and Duties**: Stamp duties and excise duties on medical and toilet preparations are levied by the Union but collected by States, except in Union Territories.
- **Service Tax**: These are levied by the Centre but collected and appropriated both by the Centre and States.
- **Union Taxes Assigned to States (Art.269)**: Includes succession duty, estate duty, terminal taxes on goods/passengers, and taxes on railway fares/freights.
- **Distribution of Union-State Taxes (Art.270)**: Certain taxes from the Union List are collected by the Union and shared with States according to prescribed proportions.
- Excludes specific-purpose cess or surcharge.
- **State Taxes**: Taxes listed in the State List are levied, collected, and exclusively retained by States.
- **Grants-in-Aid**: Parliament can provide grants from the Consolidated Fund of India to needy States, especially for tribal welfare.
- **Loans and Presidential Sanction (Art. 274)**: Union can provide loans or guarantees to States; requires Presidential sanction for bills affecting State taxes or financial principles.
- **Distribution of Non-Tax Revenues:** Central and State shares from various non-tax revenue sources like post, telegraph, railways, etc.

Some Basic Math on Tax Revenue

- **Recommendation:** Finance Commissions recommend the States' share in the net tax revenue of the Union government.
- **Difference Between Gross and Net Tax Revenue**: The difference includes collection costs, revenue assigned to Union territories, and cess and surcharges.
- **Share Discrepancy Over Years**: While recommended shares were 42% (14th FC) and 41% (15th FC), actual gross tax revenue shares were 35% (2015-16) and 30% (2023-24).
- **Share Decline**: Share of statutory financial transfers in Union government's gross tax revenue declined from 48.2% to 35.32%.

ICSSR
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

ICSSR invites research proposals on JJM scheme

HT Correspondent
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NEW DELHI: The Indian Council of Social Science Research has invited study proposals on the central government's Jal Jeevan Mission to assess the socioeconomic impact of the scheme to provide tap water in all rural households and analyse the challenges faced in its implementation.

The council, an autonomous body under the education ministry, has invited the proposals in line with the United Nations' sustainable development goal that focuses on clean water and sanitation for all, which was adopted by India in 2015.

The idea is to evaluate the impact of mission on rural water access, quality and management, according to a notification issued by the council earlier this week. "The research will focus on evaluating the socioeconomic impact of the JJM on the beneficiary Indian households, identifying and analysing the challenges faced in the implementation and sustainability of JJM, and examining the role of community involvement, with a focus on gender and inclusivity, in the success of JJM," the council said.

The state research institution also aims to develop strategies to overcome identified challenges and boost the mission's effectiveness. Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, the government seeks to provide safe and adequate drinking water to all rural households through taps by 2024.

"The call for empirical research projects on the mission is to collect evidence-based, primary data-driven studies done on the Har Ghar Nal Yojana (water tap in every home scheme)," ICSSR member secretary Dhananjay Singh said.



PM Modi launched the Jal Jeevan Mission on August 15, 2019. ANI

Context: The Indian Council of Social Science Research has invited study proposals on the central government's **Jal Jeevan Mission** to assess the socioeconomic impact of the scheme.

Indian Council of Social Science Research

- **About**: The council, under the education ministry, calls for proposals aligned with UN sustainable development goals, specifically focusing on clean water and sanitation.
- **Establishment:** 1969
- **Recommendation**; Prof. V. K. R. V. Rao Committee
- **Focus**: To evaluate JJM's impact on rural water access, quality, and management, as outlined in the recent council notification.
- **Socioeconomic Evaluation:**
  - The study will assess the socioeconomic impact of JJM on Indian households, identifying implementation challenges and sustainability issues.
  - Development of strategies to overcome challenges and enhance the effectiveness of the Jal Jeevan Mission.
- **Mission Objectives**
  - Government's objective under JJM is to provide safe drinking water to rural households through taps by 2024.
  - The call for empirical research projects aims to gather primary data-driven studies on the Har Ghar Nal Yojana, providing evidence for policy decisions.
- **Council's Priorities**: Five priorities set by the council include health impact, water resource sustainability, community and gender inclusion, governance policies, and technological innovations.

Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

- **About**: Launched in 2019, it envisages supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024.
- **Nodal Ministry**: Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- **Objective**: The mission ensures functionality of existing water supply systems and water connections, water quality monitoring and testing as well as sustainable agriculture.
  - It also ensures conjunctive use of conserved water; drinking water source augmentation, drinking water supply system, grey water treatment and its reuse.

THE HINDU Page 8

GENERAL CONSENT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)



On the jurisdiction of the CBI

Is the Central Bureau of Investigation an independent agency or does it come under the control of the Union government? Does the CBI need the permission of the State to carry out investigation in its territory? Which are the States that have withdrawn general consent to the central agency?

EXPLAINER

Aravindh Bharathi

THE GIST

The story so far:

The Supreme Court on July 31 upheld the maintainability of the West Bengal government's suit accusing the Union government of "constitutional overreach" by employing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to register and investigate cases in the State despite its withdrawal of general consent on November 16, 2018. A Bench comprising Justices B.R. Gavai and Sandeep Mehta rejected the Centre's preliminary objections that it was wrongly made a defendant in the suit as it did not control the CBI, which was an "independent agency." Perusing various provisions of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946, under which the CBI functions, the Bench concluded "the very establishment, exercise of powers, extension of jurisdiction, the superintendence of the DSPE (Act), all vest with the Government of India." Accordingly, the Court ruled that the suit discloses a valid cause of action and must be heard on merits. It posted the next hearing on August 13.

What is general consent?

Under Section 6 of the DSPE Act, the CBI is required to obtain consent from the concerned State government before initiating an investigation within its jurisdiction.

This permission is crucial since "police" and "public order" are subjects that fall within the State List under the seventh schedule of the Constitution. However, no such prior consent is necessary in Union territories or railway areas. General consent is given by States to facilitate the agency's seamless investigation into corruption charges against Central government employees in their territories. However, since 2015, several States such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Mizoram, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Meghalaya and West Bengal have revoked their general consent alleging that the Centre is misusing the federal agency to unfairly target the Opposition. "In the absence of such an omnibus consent, the CBI will be unable to register any fresh cases in these States without the explicit permission of the respective State governments," P.D.T. Achary, former Secretary General, Lok Sabha told *The Hindu*.

What does the case filed by the West Bengal government allege?

In August 2018, the West Bengal government filed an original suit under Article 131 of the Constitution arguing that the actions of the Union government and the involvement of the CBI in the State infringed upon its sovereignty. The suit highlighted that despite the withdrawal of general consent for CBI investigations by the Trinamool Congress government on November 16, 2018, the agency proceeded to register 12 new cases. Deeming this to be a "constitutional overreach," the State sought the annulment of these 12 cases and a restrain on the agency from lodging any further cases.

The framers of the Constitution envisioned such conflicts between the Centre and the States owing to the existing quasi-federal structure and dual polity. As a result, they conferred original and exclusive jurisdiction upon the Supreme Court to address such disputes, under Article 131. For a suit to be maintainable under this provision, two conditions have to be satisfied – it should relate to a dispute between the Government of India and one or more State Governments (or) between one or more State Governments, and it must involve a question of law or fact crucial to the determination of legal rights.

In *State Of Karnataka vs Union Of India* (1977), the Supreme Court observed that Article 131 is a feature of federalism and should be "widely and generously interpreted" to advance the intended remedy. Similarly, in *State Of Rajasthan & Ors. vs Union Of India* (1977), the top Court cautioned against taking a very "restrictive or a hypertechnical view of the State's rights."

What was the Union government's argument?

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Union government, pressed the Court to dismiss West Bengal's suit by raising preliminary objections to its maintainability. He pointed out that original suits under Article 131 of the Constitution exclusively involve the Union and States as parties. "It is the CBI which has registered the cases in question. But the CBI is not a defendant in this suit, and it cannot be made one, as the CBI is not a 'State' under Article 131," Mr. Mehta contended.

He further argued that the CBI was an "independent agency" since it did not function under the direct control of the Union government. "The Union does not supervise the registration of offences or investigation or closure or filing of chargesheet or conviction or acquittal of cases by the CBI," he reasoned. However, later in the proceedings, Mr. Mehta finally conceded that the agency cannot initiate any investigation without the express authorization of the Union government under Section 5 of the DSPE Act.

On the contrary, senior advocate Kapil Sibal highlighted that the case extended beyond the Centre's control over the CBI to the fundamental question of whether the agency could disregard a specific notification issued by the West Bengal government in 2018, withdrawing its consent. Mr. Sibal asserted that once a State grants and then withdraws its consent, the CBI lacks jurisdiction to exercise its powers within that State.

What did the verdict state?

The Court observed that a bare perusal of the provisions of the DSPE Act reveals that right from the constitution of the CBI, the classes of offences which are to be investigated by it, to its administration and powers, it is the "Central government that it is vitally concerned with."

"Under Section 4 of the DSPE Act, except the offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, in which the superintendence will be with the Central Vigilance Commission, the superintendence of the DSPE in all other matters would vest with the Central government," Justice Gavai, who authored the verdict, noted. The judge also reminded the Centre that Section 6 of the DSPE Act mandates the prior consent of the State government to a CBI probe within its jurisdiction.

While the Court recognised that the CBI would always be entitled to investigate offences independently, it underscored that this autonomy "would not water down" its administrative control and superintendence that vests with the Centre. It thus proceeded to conclude that the Solicitor General's argument that the CBI is an "independent agency" holds no water.

The verdict, however, clarified that these observations were only made to meet the preliminary objections raised by the Union government and would not have any bearing on the merits of the suit.

What are the implications?

According to Mr. Achary, if the CBI is permitted to initiate investigations in States that have revoked their general consent, it would be an affront to federalism. "This could strain Centre-State relations, particularly since the police is a State subject under the Constitution. Allowing the CBI to register cases would effectively confer upon it the same powers as the State police forces," he adds. While the Supreme Court has so far only addressed the preliminary objections to the maintainability of West Bengal's suit, the constitutional expert pointed out that the final ruling on its merits will have a significant bearing on other similar pending cases.

Another Bench of the top Court is tackling a similar question of law related to the State of Tamil Nadu in the case of Akhil Tiwari, an Enforcement Directorate (ED) officer against whom the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption had launched a criminal prosecution for bribery. A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and K.V. Viswanathan had recommended judicial oversight over the cross-fire of criminal cases filed between Central agencies like the ED and the police in Opposition-ruled States to protect innocents from prosecution.

Context: The Supreme Court upheld the West Bengal government's suit against the Union government, alleging "constitutional overreach" for using the CBI to investigate cases in the state without its general consent.

General Consent

- **Definition:** It is the approval given by State governments to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to carry out investigations within their jurisdictions without requiring individual case-by-case permissions.
- **Purpose**: It is given by States to facilitate the CBI's seamless investigation into corruption charges against Central government employees in their territories.
- **Legal Requirement under the DSPE Act**: Under Section 6 of the DSPE Act, the CBI must obtain consent from the concerned State government before initiating an investigation within its jurisdiction.
- **Importance of Permission**: This permission is crucial since “police” and “public order” are subjects that fall within the State List under the seventh schedule of the Constitution.
- **Exception**: No such prior consent is necessary for investigations in Union territories or railway areas.
- **Withdrawal**: Since 2015, several States such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Mizoram, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Meghalaya, and West Bengal have revoked their general consent.
    - These States allege that the Centre is misusing the federal agency to unfairly target the Opposition.
- **Impact of Withdrawal:** In the absence of such an omnibus consent, the CBI is unable to register any fresh cases in these States without the explicit permission of the respective State governments.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS Page 6

NEW RULES OF FSSAI
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Health)



What is the FSSAI proposing?

THE FOOD SAFETY and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has approved a proposal to display nutritional information regarding total sugar, salt and saturated fat in bold letters and bigger font size on labels of packaged food items. The decision to approve the amendment in the Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020 regarding nutritional information labelling was taken at its 44th meeting recently. With the amendment, packaged food brands will have to display the information regarding per-serve percentage contribution to recommended dietary allowances (RDAs) in bold letters for total sugar, total saturated fat and sodium content.

Current regulations require that the name and description of the food product, ingredients list, nutritional information, information about allergens, the FSSAI logo and licence number, and other information like a "best before" or "use by" date, net quantity, country of origin, storage conditions, and instructions for use be declared on the packaging of the product.

FSSAI'S FOOD LABELLING NORMS

The need for loud and clear food labels

The food safety regulator is proposing display of information on salt, sugar & saturated fat content prominently on packaged food items. ***Anvitii Rai*** looks at how better food labelling norms can nudge consumers and brands towards healthier options

₹95,522 cr
SIZE OF THE INDIAN SNACKS MARKET BY 2032, AGAINST ₹42,695 CR IN 2023

FRONT-OF-PACK LABELLING SYSTEM IS THE BEST WAY TO SUPPLY AMPLE INFORMATION ON FOOD CHOICES

1 in 3
INDIANS IS PRE-DIABETIC AND TWO IN THREE ARE PRE-HYPERTENSIVE, AS PER AN APOLLO HOSPITALS REPORT

Why is this proposed change important?

A FOOD LABEL, the information presented on the package of a food product, is one of the most important and direct means of communicating information to the consumer. Besides consumer protection and awareness in an era of globalisation and technology, food labelling is important to help consumers make the right choices and curb the rising incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) arising from diet-related issues. If the FSSAI amendment comes through, it would empower consumers to make informed choices. While all stakeholders need to be educated well about dietary requirements and the repercussions of including particular ingredients in packaged food, coherent labelling is the first step towards creating health-conscious producers and consumers. It can nudge companies to reduce the amount of salt, sugar and saturated fat in their food products and ensure greater availability of healthier options in the market.

Global norms on food labelling

THE FRONT-OF-PACK labelling (FoPL) system is regarded as the best way to supply ample information on food choices. According to the WHO, FoPL is defined as "nutrition labelling systems that are presented on the front of food packages in the principal field of vision; and present simple, often graphic information on the nutrient content or nutritional quality of products, to complement the more detailed nutrient declarations provided on the back of food packages."

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation works in tandem with the World Health Organisation (WHO) to advise the Codex Alimentarius Commission on technical and policy matters related to food labelling. Codex has a collection of internationally recognised standards, codes of practice, guidelines, and other recommendations relating to food, food production, food labelling, and food safety.

How other countries are doing it

NORDIC COUNTRIES ARE ahead of the curve with smart food labels becoming the norm. With QR codes placed on product labels, not only do consumers get to know the exact ingredients, they can also trace the origin of the product to any point in its supply chain. Denmark, in particular, is known for collaboration between the food producers and the government authorities, thus earning the country a reputation of reliability when it comes to food safety. Closer home, China collaborates with Denmark to ensure the development of high food safety standards. Brazil, Chile and Israel have labelling laws that stress on FoPL in the packaged food industry as an index to fight obesity and NCDs. In 2016, Chile implemented a law mandating FoPL warning labels pertaining to high sugar, salt or fat content, and banned sales of such products in schools.

Can India catch up with them?

THE DRAFT NOTIFICATION for the amendment will now be put in the public domain by FSSAI for feedback. In 2018, FSSAI had signed an MoU with the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration in 2018 concerning food safety and processing, and the latter will launch a pre-project in India this year.

Anthony D'Souza, executive director and country service line leader, Innovation, Ipsos India, a market research company which works with many food brands, says the amendment by FSSAI is a good move and companies are happy to highlight the ingredients in their food products as it will help consumers make informed choices. "However, most consumers do not read the labels. Unlike other evolved markets, India is still at the nascent stage when it comes to reading back-of-the-pack labels. Only affluent, urban consumers look at the nutritional information," he says. "Also, purchase of snacking items (with more sugar, salt or saturated fat) are impulse-driven. Now with pronounced labelling, customers will be nudged towards more moderate consumption."

Context: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has approved changes to nutritional information labelling on packaged food items.

New Rules of FSSAI

- **Bold Display**: FSSAI approved displaying total sugar, salt, and saturated fat in bold and larger font sizes on packaged food labels.
- **Decision**: The decision to amend the Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020, was made during the 44th meeting of the Food Authority.
- **Empowering Consumers with Clear Information**: The amendment aims to empower consumers by enhancing understanding of nutritional value and encouraging healthier food choices.
- **Mandatory Per-Serve Percentage of RDAs:** Packaged food brands must now include per-serve percentage contributions to recommended dietary allowances (RDAs) for total sugar, total saturated fat, and sodium content in bold letters.
- **Existing Regulations and Required Information**: Current regulations mandate the declaration of product name, ingredients, nutritional information, allergens, FSSAI logo and license number, "best before" or "use by" date, net quantity, country of origin, storage conditions, and usage instructions on product packaging.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

- **Statutory status**: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is a statutory body established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
- **Nodal Ministry**: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **Objective**: Its primary objective is to lay down science-based standards for food articles and regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import to ensure the availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

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