

FEBRUARY

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**MK Yadav Sir**

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## Gov approves Sub scheme for PM Matsya Kisan Samridhi -Yojana; Telecom spectrum auction across multiple bands also approved

**Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana, a Central Sector sub-scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada for the fisheries sector.

### Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana

- **Objective:** To enhance further the earnings and incomes of fishermen, fish vendors and micro & small enterprises engaged in fisheries sector.
- **Targeted investment:** 6,000 crore
- **Funding:** 50% public finance, including the World Bank and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) external financing, and rest 50% being the anticipated investment from the private sector leverage.
- **Aim:** At facilitating growth of businesses, creation of jobs and creation of business opportunities
- **India is the 4th largest exporter** of fish and fisheries products, **3rd largest fish producer** and **2nd largest aquaculture producer**.

### Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana

- **About:** This initiative represents a flagship scheme aimed at fostering sustainable development in India's fisheries sector.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying.
- **Aim:** To drive a blue revolution by promoting the sustainable and responsible growth of India's fisheries sector.
- **Income Enhancement:** The scheme intends to double the incomes of fishers and fish farmers while reducing post-harvest losses from 20-25% to approximately 10%. Additionally, it seeks to create employment opportunities within the sector.

### Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)



- Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana for formalization of fisheries sector and supporting fisheries micro and small enterprises
- Investment of over **Rs. 6,000 crores** over next 4 years from FY 2023-24 to FY 2026-27 in all States/Union Territories

### Benefits

- Creation of National Fisheries Digital Platform to provide **40 lakh small and micro-enterprises** work based identities
- Support to **6.4 lakh micro-enterprises** and **5,500 fisheries cooperatives**, providing access to institutional credit



### NEW GUIDELINES TO MAKE CINEMA HALLS ACCESSIBLE TO THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

DIVYAA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE MINISTRY of Information & Broadcasting last month came out with 'Accessibility Standards in the Public Exhibition of Feature Films in Cinema Theatres for Persons with Hearing and Visual Impairment', and invited stakeholder comments on the draft till February 15.

These guidelines are applicable for those feature films that are certified by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) for commercial public exhibition in movie theatres. Once notified, the guidelines will require production houses and movie theatres to either run dedicated shows for the impaired, or ensure special provisions in theatres so they can enjoy the cinema experience like anyone else.

#### Why the guidelines?

The proposal quotes Sections 29 and 42 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, which mandate the government to take measures to promote universal access in the information and communication sector. This includes access to films for persons with hearing and visual disabilities.

As per the Census 2011, 2.21% of the total population in India has been marked as 'disabled', of which 19 per cent are visually impaired, and another 19 per cent have hearing disabilities.

#### What do the guidelines propose?

According to the proposed guidelines, two versions of the same film will have to be delivered for certification to the CBFC: a standard version, and a version with special accessibility features – audio description, open/closed captioning, and Indian Sign Language Interpretation.

After both versions are certified, movie theatres can either hold dedicated screenings with accessible services, or use certain specialised equipment during standard shows to facilitate the viewing experience for the hearing and visually impaired.

Such equipment can include smart glasses for displaying captions, closed caption stands near the seats, a separate small screen below the big screen to display captions, headphones for audio description, and specialised mobile apps. Theatres need to make available at least two such equipment per 200 seats.

Moreover, cinema owners, in consultation with organisations for disabled persons, also have to train their staff to serve customers with disabilities.

#### How will the guidelines be implemented?

The licensing authorities will monitor places under their jurisdiction to ensure that accessible seats are provided. The I&B Ministry will also set up a committee to monitor the implementation of these rules, with at least 50% of the members being persons with hearing/visual impairment, and the rest being representatives from the film industry.

Grievances can be filed with the licensee of the respective cinema theatre, and further be escalated to the licensing authority. The CBFC will also annually collect and publish information about different accessible services provided.

#### When do they come into effect?

Films dubbed in more than one language would be required to provide at least one accessibility feature each for the hearing impaired and visually impaired, within six months from the date of implementation of these guidelines.

Feature films submitted for consideration in the National Film Awards, in the Indian Panorama Section of the International Film Festival of India, Goa, and Mumbai International Film Festival have to include closed captioning and audio description with effect from January 1 next year.

All other Feature Films being certified through CBFC and meant for theatrical releases would be required to provide accessibility features within three years from the date of issue of the guidelines.

**Context:** The ministry of Information & Broadcasting last month came out with 'Accessibility Standards in the Public Exhibition of Feature Films in Cinema Theatres for Persons with Hearing and Visual Impairment, and invited stakeholder comments on the draft till February 15.

### Why the Guidelines

- **Legal Foundation:** The proposal references Sections 29 and 42 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. These sections require government action to enhance universal access in the information and communication sector, specifically focusing on providing access to films for individuals with hearing and visual impairments.
- **Demographic Overview:** According to the Census 2011, 2.21% of India's total population is classified as 'disabled.' Within this demographic, 19% of individuals have a disability related to sight, and an additional 19% experience hearing disabilities.

### Film Certification Process Requirements

- **Dual Film Sets Submission:** The producer must submit two sets of films to CBFC for certification.
- Sets include the original version for public viewing and a second version with accessibility features.
- **Mandatory CBFC Certification:** Cinemas must ensure that both versions of feature films are certified by CBFC for theatrical releases.
- **Options for Cinema Halls:** Cinemas can schedule specific days and timings for screenings with accessibility services.
  - Alternatively, cinemas can use specific equipment during regular shows to cater to the impaired segment.

### How will the guidelines be implemented?

- **CBFC and Government:** The CBFC and relevant government bodies under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, will monitor the implementation schedule.
- **Involvement of Film Stakeholders:** Film producers and movie theatre licensees will actively participate in overseeing the implementation process.
- **Establishment of Monitoring Committee:** The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) will create a committee, comprising half its members with hearing/visual impairment and representatives from the film industry, to supervise accessibility standards implementation.

## Installation of Flue Gas De-sulphurisation (FGD) equipment in thermal power plants

**Context:** The Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy has informed about the installation of Flue Gas De-sulphurisation (FGD) equipment in thermal power plants.

### Flue Gas De-sulphurisation (FGD) Equipment

- **About:** It is a set of technologies used to remove sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) from exhaust flue gases of fossil-fuel power plants, and from the emissions of other sulfur oxide emitting processes such as waste incineration, petroleum refineries, cement and lime kilns.
- **Three variants:** Wet Flue Gas Desulphurisation (WFGD), Spray Dryer Absorber (SDA) and Dry Sorbent Injection (DSI).
- **Features**
  - Over 300 FGD plants have been distributed globally and have garnered a significant market share because of the following attributes:
  - They demonstrate high efficiency in removing SO<sub>2</sub>, meeting mandated emission standards for all types of fossil fuels.
  - They offer diverse pollutant control capabilities through environmental control equipment.
  - They are renowned for their high reliability.
  - They contribute to energy and utility savings.

### Steps are taken to reduce emission by Thermal Power Companies

- They are required to meet the **environmental pollution standard** set by MoEF&CC from time to time.
- Thermal Power Plants of total capacity of about 181 GW is covered under **Perform, Achieve, Trade (PAT) Scheme** and they are given mandatory targets to reduce their specific energy consumption i.e. Net Heat Rate.
- As per **revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs)** submitted to United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in August, 2022, India's target is to achieve about 50 percent cumulative electric power installed capacity by 2030 from non- fossil fuel-based energy resources to reduce the Green House Gases (GHGs) emissions.
- Ministry of Power has issued revised policy on **Bio-mass Utilization for Power Generation through Co-firing in Coal** based Power Plants to use 5-10% blend of biomass pellets made, primarily of agro-residue along with coal.

# Clean water crisis: Nitrogen pollution to triple scarcity in river sub-basins worldwide

**Context:** Water scarcity is exacerbated by declining water quality in numerous regions, and the situation is expected to worsen in the years to come, a new report underlined.

## Nitrogen Pollution

- **About:** Nitrogen, constituting the majority of the atmosphere, remains inert and unreactive in its natural state.
- **Reactivity in Anthropogenic Releases:** When released through agricultural, sewage, or biological waste, nitrogen transforms into reactive compounds, potentially causing pollution and exhibiting a strong greenhouse gas effect.
- **Potent Greenhouse Gas Impact:** Nitrous oxide ( $\text{N}_2\text{O}$ ), though less prevalent than carbon dioxide, possesses a greenhouse gas potency 300 times greater. Nitrogen pollution is associated with diverse environmental impacts, including the depletion of biodiversity, river and sea pollution, ozone depletion, and consequences for health, economy, and livelihoods.
- **Sources of Nitrogen Pollution:** Emissions from chemical fertilizers, livestock manure, and the combustion of fossil fuels contribute significantly to nitrogen pollution.
- **Impact on Air Quality and Human Health:** Ammonia ( $\text{NH}_3$ ) and nitrogen dioxide ( $\text{NO}_2$ ) released into the air contribute to poor air quality, exacerbating respiratory and cardiac conditions, resulting in millions of premature deaths worldwide.
- **Nitrate Pollution in Water Systems:** Nitrate pollution stemming from chemical fertilizers, manure, and industrial activities contaminates rivers and seas, posing health risks for humans and threatening aquatic ecosystems, including fish, coral, and plant life.
- **Harmful Algal Blooms and Dead Zones:** Nitrogen pollution leads to the formation of harmful algal blooms and dead zones in water bodies, causing the production of toxins that harm both humans and aquatic organisms. This, in turn, negatively impacts fisheries and biodiversity in coastal regions.

## MHA decides to scrap Free Movement Regime (FMR) between India and Myanmar to ensure the internal security of the country and maintain the demographic structure of India's North Eastern States bordering Myanmar

**Context:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has decided to scrap the Free Movement Regime (FMR) between India and Myanmar to ensure the internal security of the country and to maintain the demographic structure of India's North Eastern States bordering Myanmar.

### India–Myanmar Border

- **About:** It is the international border between India and Myanmar (formerly Burma).
- **Length:** 1,643 kilometres (1,021 mi) in length and runs from the tripoint with China in the north to the tripoint with Bangladesh in the south.
- **The border between India and Myanmar runs along four states:** Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Capital city:** Naypyidaw

### Free Movement Regime (FMR)

- **About:** The FMR is a mutually agreed arrangement between the two countries that allows tribes living along the border on either side to travel up to 16 km inside the other country without a visa.
- **Implementation:** It was implemented in 2018 as part of the Act East policy, at a time when diplomatic relations between India and Myanmar were on the upswing.
- **Geographical Scope:** Under the FMR, residents of hill tribes, whether Indian or Myanmar citizens, are allowed to travel within a 16 km radius on both sides of the Indo-Myanmar Border (IMB).
- **Border Crossing Procedure:** To cross the border, individuals need to present a border pass issued by the competent authority, valid for one year.



## 'India's Kaladan project in Myanmar in limbo as rebels control key town'

Kallol Bhattacharjee  
NEW DELHI

One of India's flagship connectivity projects that was aimed at enhancing road and maritime connection with Southeast Asia has faced a definite setback after an important town in Myanmar was captured recently by a rebel group, a senior figure of Myanmar's Opposition has stated.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, the source said that the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) has "almost died" after the rebel Arakan Army (AA) captured the Paletwa township near Mizoram border in January.

"There is no way that any connectivity project can take place in Rakhine State right now as the AA has established control in almost all the major towns and supply routes. As a result, the Kaladan project too has almost died as Paletwa is essential for this project and Paletwa is no longer in control of the military junta," said the senior Opposition figure from Myanmar.

KMTTP was aimed at connecting the port of Kolkata with the port of Sittwe in Rakhine or Arakan State which would then be connected to Mizoram by road and the Kaladan river which flows by Paletwa. But the restive province has witnessed serious clashes between the Myanmar military and the rebel AA. The source said the AA has established control over Mrauk-U, Kyauktaw, Minbya, Thandwe, and major roads connecting these towns. AA has also captured Ann township which has Myanmar Army's Western Command headquarters.



Workers during the construction of a port in Sittwe in Rakhine State of Myanmar. *Source: Reuters*

mar military and the rebel AA. The source said the AA has established control over Mrauk-U, Kyauktaw, Minbya, Thandwe, and major roads connecting these towns. AA has also captured Ann township which has Myanmar Army's Western Command headquarters.

### \$500-million project

Kaladan project, which was estimated to cost around \$500 million has been delayed for multiple reasons, including the Rohingya crisis that erupted in 2017. However while the Rohingya crisis is rooted in religious and ethnic differences between the junta in Naypyidaw and Muslim Rohingyas, the conflict between the AA and the Myanmar military junta is not based on religious differences but fuelled by a nationalist aspiration of the Buddhist Arakanese population of the region which has been demanding a confederated

or independent status. The population of Rakhine State is divided among the Buddhist Arakanese, Rohingyas and non-Rohingyas Muslims, Christians, and other communities.

The fight between the AA and the junta's forces took a crucial turn on January 15 when the rebel forces captured Paletwa. This move has also roused concern of a tripartite conflict involving the junta's forces, the AA, and rebels of the Chin State as Paletwa has been traditionally a Chin-majority township.

The Myanmar source said that the AA is in an advantageous position and it is a matter of time before they establish control over the entire State of Rakhine, an unprecedented situation. "They are now aiming for capturing the Sittwe port, which is one of the oldest ports and airports of Myanmar and they can do that as early as summer of this year," said the source who requested anonymity.

**Context:** A key connectivity initiative of India targeting improved road and maritime links with Southeast Asia encountered a significant setback following the recent capture of a vital town in Myanmar by a rebel group, as reported by a senior figure in Myanmar's Opposition.

## Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP)

- **About:** The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) stands as a pivotal element in India's strategic and infrastructural advancements, aligning closely with its 'Act East' policy and regional integration objectives.
- **Collaborative Initiation:** The project's inception involved a collaborative effort between India and Myanmar, emphasizing the cooperative nature of this infrastructural endeavor.
- **Multi-Modal Components**
  - **Sea Route:** The project encompasses sea, river, and road transportation. The sea route spans from Kolkata to Sittwe, covering a distance of 539 km.
  - **River Route:** Connecting Sittwe to Paletwa via the Kaladan River, this component extends over a distance of 158 km.
  - **Road Component:** The project includes a road segment from Paletwa to the Indo-Myanmar border (110 km) and further into Mizoram.
- **Connectivity Objectives:** The primary goal of KMTTP is to establish a novel connectivity pathway, linking different modes of transportation and enhancing economic development, especially for the landlocked northeastern states of India.
- **Significance:** This project aims to decrease the distance from Kolkata to Sittwe by approximately 1328 km, minimize reliance on transporting goods through the narrow Siliguri corridor, and establish an alternative route linking northeast and mainland India.

### Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project



## Parliament clears Water Prevention and Control of Pollution Amendment Bill

**Context:** Parliament has passed the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024.

### **Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024**

- **Empowerment of Central Government:** According to the Bill, the central government gains authority to exempt specific industrial plants from the restrictions outlined in section 25, concerning new outlets and discharges.
- **Procedures for State Pollution Control Board:** Under the proposed law, the central government will define the process for nominating chairpersons of State Pollution Control Boards, providing a structured framework.
- **Consent Matters:** The proposed legislation grants the central government the power to issue guidelines pertaining to the grant, refusal, or cancellation of consent by state boards for the establishment of industries, operations, processes, or treatment and disposal systems, as well as the use of new or modified outlets.
- **Discharge of polluting matter:** Under the Act, the SPCB may issue directions to immediately restrain any activity which is leading to discharge of noxious or polluting matter in water bodies.
- **Offenses:** The Bill aims to decriminalize minor offenses, replacing punitive measures with monetary penalties in cases of continued contravention.
- **Penalty for other offences:** Under the Act, an offence for which punishment is not explicitly specified is punishable with an imprisonment term of up to three months or a fine of up to Rs 10,000, or both.
  - The Bill removes imprisonment as a punishment, and prescribes a penalty between Rs 10,000 and Rs 15 lakh.

### **Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974**

- **Objective:** To provide for the prevention and control of water pollution, and for the maintaining or restoring of wholesomeness of water in the country.
- **Enacted in:** 1977
- **Amendment:** 1988
- **Regulatory Authority:** The Act grants regulatory authority to State Pollution Control Boards. Their mandate includes establishing and enforcing effluent standards for factories.
- **Central Pollution Control Board:** It assumes a parallel role for Union Territories.
  - It performs functions similar to State Boards, formulating policies and coordinating activities across different states.

## What white paper says—and doesn't

The govt has come out with a white paper on the Indian economy, comparing its performance over 10 years with the UPA decade. It has attacked its predecessor for 'abandoning reforms' and 'policy paralysis'

UDIT MISRA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman presented a "white paper" on the Indian economy in Parliament Thursday. The document, which has been prepared by the Ministry of Finance, essentially compares the 10-year record of economic governance under the Congress-led UPA governments (between 2004-05 and 2013-14) with the 10-year record of the BJP-led NDA governments (between 2014-15 and 2023-24).

### What is a white paper, and is this one?

A white paper typically provides information about a specific issue. A government may present a white paper — say, on black money — to make people aware of the nature and scope of the problem and the possible ways to resolve it.

In that sense, what was presented in Parliament is not exactly a white paper, because it is a comparison between the record of two governments on a variety of economic parameters. A comprehensive review of the state of the Indian economy as things stood in 2014, when the incumbent government first took charge, would have been a white paper on the economy.

### Why is it being presented now?

The document explains why the white paper is being presented at the end of 10 years instead of at the start. "Our government refrained from bringing out a white paper on the poor state of affairs then. That would have given a negative narrative and shaken the confidence of all, including investors. The need of the hour was to give hope to the people, to attract investments, both domestic and global and to build support for the much-needed reforms."

### What is its objective?

There are four stated objectives. One, it seeks to inform everyone "of the nature and extent of governance, economic and fiscal crises that were bequeathed" to the NDA government when it assumed office in 2014.

Two, it informs about "the policies and measures that NDA government took to restore the health of the economy" since 2014. Three, it "hopes to generate a wider, more informed debate on the paramountcy of national interest and fiscal responsibility in matters of governance over political expediency."

Four, and it quotes Prime Minister

**UPA AND NDA YEARS: WHAT SOME CRUCIAL NUMBERS SAY**

| Financial Year       | Nominal GDP growth rate (%) | Real GDP growth rate (%) | Fiscal Deficit rate (%) |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2004-05              | 14.10                       | 7.92                     | 3.95                    |
| 2005-06              | 13.99                       | 7.92                     | 4.03                    |
| 2006-07              | 17.14                       | 8.06                     | 3.35                    |
| 2007-08              | 15.14                       | 7.66                     | 2.59                    |
| 2008-09              | 12.56                       | 3.09                     | 6.11                    |
| 2009-10              | 15.46                       | 7.86                     | 6.57                    |
| 2010-11              | 19.92                       | 8.5                      | 4.89                    |
| 2011-12              | 14.43                       | 5.24                     | 5.91                    |
| 2012-13              | 13.82                       | 5.46                     | 4.93                    |
| 2013-14              | 12.97                       | 6.39                     | 4.48                    |
| AVERAGE OF UPA YEARS |                             |                          |                         |
| 2004-2014            | 14.95                       | 6.80                     | 4.7                     |

| Financial Year       | Nominal GDP growth rate (%) | Real GDP growth rate (%) | Fiscal Deficit rate (%) |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2014-15              | 10.99                       | 7.41                     | 4.10                    |
| 2015-16              | 10.46                       | 8                        | 3.87                    |
| 2016-17              | 11.76                       | 8.26                     | 3.48                    |
| 2017-18              | 11.03                       | 6.8                      | 3.46                    |
| 2018-19              | 10.59                       | 6.45                     | 3.44                    |
| 2019-20              | 6.37                        | 3.87                     | 4.64                    |
| 2020-21              | -1.36                       | -5.83                    | 9.17                    |
| 2021-22              | 18.36                       | 9.05                     | 6.75                    |
| 2022-23              | 16.06                       | 7.24                     | 6.38                    |
| 2023-24              | 8.87                        | 7.32                     | 5.85                    |
| AVERAGE OF NDA YEARS |                             |                          |                         |
| 2014-2024            | 10.31                       | 5.9                      | 5.1                     |

Source: MoPI and CME, % on a % of Nominal GDP

The white paper was presented in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. PFI/PII

Narendra Modi's speech on last year's Independence Day, "to commit ourselves to national development, with new inspirations, new consciousness, new resolutions, as the country opens up immense possibilities and opportunities."

### What does it say?

The 58-page white paper has three main parts.

Part 1 discusses the macroeconomic situation during the 10 years of UPA rule. Part 2 provides the "current status of the various corruption scams of the UPA government." Part 3 shows how the NDA "turned the economy around."

Here are some of the most important claims in the white paper:

- The UPA Government inherited a healthy economy ready for more reforms, but made it non-performing in 10 years.
- UPA abandoned economic reforms.
- In a quest to maintain high economic growth by any means after the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, UPA severely undermined the macroeconomic foundations. For instance, it underscores high inflation, high fiscal deficit (or the money borrowed to meet expenses), and high proportion of bad loans in the banking system that dragged down economic activity.

■ Not only did UPA borrow heavily from the market, but the funds raised were applied unproductively. "Capital expenditure

as a per cent of total expenditure (excluding interest payments) halved from 31 per cent in FY04 to 16 per cent in FY14." This ratio stands at 28% in the current year. The resulting "neglect of infrastructure creation and challenges of the logistical constraints caused industrial and economic growth to stumble."

■ Health expenditure of Indian households showed very little improvement.

■ Defence preparedness was hampered by policy paralysis. "By 2012, shortage of combat-ready equipment and ammunition was a chronic issue plaguing our forces," quotes the document from another of PM Modi's speeches in 2018.

■ UPA's decade was marked by "policy misadventures and scams such as non-transparent auction of public resources (coal and telecom spectrum), (and) the spectre of retrospective taxation..."

A substantive part of the documents goes on to claim how things have improved under the NDA. It uses data from the International Monetary Fund to show how "average headline inflation has been lower in the NDA decade". Or how many of the schemes — such as construction of toilets or opening of bank accounts — achieved higher results during the NDA decade.

### What is the upshot?

Analysing the performance of any economy over two decades, even when they are aligned back to back, is a daunting task. This

is so because a variety of factors affect not just the economy but also how we measure it.

For instance, a very big reason why domestic inflation was very high during the last couple of UPA years and immediately subsided during the first two of NDA is the cost of crude oil, which ranged between \$111 and \$105 a barrel between FY12 and FY14, and then fell to \$84 in FY15 and to \$46 in FY16.

Indeed, on aggregate, data shows that India registered better GDP growth as well as lower fiscal deficits during the UPA time. The NDA government has several genuine achievements to its credit — such as the GST and IBC — but the white paper ignores all that is at odds with the economy. For instance, it does not even count the word "unemployment" in its text. This was when the government's own Periodic Labour Force Survey showed that unemployment had reached a 45-year high in 2017-18.

Similarly, it makes no mention of the fact that there has been no formal measure of poverty since 2011. Or that this government has failed to conduct the decadal Census — the first such miss since 1881. Also, a white paper on the Indian economy over two decades does not have a single chart on GDP growth over this period.

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## WHITE PAPER

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

**Context:** Finance Minister of India presented a "white paper" on the Indian economy in Parliament.

### White Paper

- **About:** A white paper typically provides information about a specific issue.
  - A government may present a white paper — say, on black money — to make people aware of the nature and scope of the problem and the possible ways to resolve it.
- **Prepared by:** Ministry of Finance
- **Comparison between:** The record of two governments on a variety of economic parameters.
- **Objective**
- It seeks to inform everyone "of the nature and extent of governance, economic and fiscal crises that were bequeathed" to the NDA government when it assumed office in 2014.
- It informs about "the policies and measures that (NDA) government took to restore the health of the economy" since 2014.
- It "hopes to generate a wider, more informed debate on the paramountcy of national interest and fiscal responsibility in matters of governance over political expediency."
- It quotes Prime Minister of India's speech on last year's Independence Day, "to commit ourselves to national development, with new inspirations, new consciousness, new resolutions, as the country opens up immense possibilities and opportunities."

### Why is it being presented now?

- **Timing:** The document clarifies the decision to present the white paper after a decade, highlighting the government's strategic approach.
- **Negative Narrative:** The government chose not to release a white paper earlier to prevent a negative portrayal of the state of affairs, which could have undermined confidence, including that of investors.
- **Attraction of Investments:** Delaying the white paper allowed for the attraction of both domestic and global investments, contributing to economic stability and growth.
- **Building Support for Reforms:** The document highlights the intention to build public support for much-needed reforms as a key factor in the delayed release of the white paper.

# WWF demands protection for naturally-restored Mahmudia wetland in Romania's Danube Delta

**Context:** Wildlife conservation organisation World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has urged the Romanian government to classify Mahmudia wetland as a 'national interest ecological restoration area' to protect its natural progress and foster community prosperity.

## World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

- **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.
- **Global Reach:** The world's largest conservation organization, boasting over five million supporters across 100 countries.

## Mahmudia Wetland

- **Location:** Mahmudia is positioned along the southernmost canal of the **Danube Delta**, where the renowned river meets the Black Sea.
- **Danube River:** It holds the title of the most international river globally, traversing or serving as a border for ten countries: Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine.
  - It also connects four capitals: Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, and Belgrade.
- **Formation of the Danube Delta:** The Delta is shaped around the three principal channels of the Danube, named after the ports they lead to: Chilia (in the north), Sulina (in the middle), and Sfantu Gheorghe (in the south).



## Kyasanur Forest Disease: the assault of the tick

Sathish G. T.

Since January 1 this year, two people have died due to Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), a viral infection, in Karnataka. The number of deaths reported due to the disease since 1956, when it was first noticed in the forests of Shivamogga district, is above 560. The number of cases in Malnad's districts – Shivamogga, Uttara Kannada and Chikmagalur – has been increasing, forcing the Health and Family Welfare Department to take measures to contain its spread. Since January 1, the Department of Health and Family Welfare has conducted 2,567 tests and 68 people have been found positive.

What is KFD? The disease was first noticed in the Kyasanur Forest area of Sorab Taluk in Shivamogga district in 1956, and was named after the region. It is

**The disease spreads through ticks. Primates that come in contact with infected ticks contract the disease. Human beings who visit the same forest area can contract the disease**

also known as monkey fever, as monkeys also get infected. In fact, the death of a monkey serves as a warning of a KFD outbreak. The scientists concluded that the virus must have been present in the forests of Malnad region. It became active due to ecological changes.

The disease spreads through ticks. Primates that come in contact with infective ticks contract the disease. Human beings who visit the same forest area can contract the disease. Normally, the transmission begins from late November to June. It peaks between December and March, according to studies. A blood test is done to identify if someone has KFD.

Symptoms start to appear three to eight days after the bite of an infective tick. Fever, redness of the eyes, severe headache, and body pain are common symptoms. Three-four days after the onset of initial symptoms, the patient may have gastro-intestinal symptoms. In severe cases, bleeding from the nose is noted. There is no specific treatment, doctors handle the symptoms, and monitor the vitals daily. An attempt to use a vaccine was given up after studies showed it to be ineffective. The ICMR is said to be in consultation with Indian Immunologicals for development of a vaccine.

For nearly 15 years (up to 1971), the disease was confined to Shivamogga district. It was noticed in Uttara Kannada district in 1972. In 1980, cases were reported in Koppa, Chikmagalur. Two years later it was found in Dakshina Kannada. Cases were later reported in Channarayana (2002), Belagavi district (2016), Gadag (2017), Mysuru, and Hassan (2019). The virus has been found in other states too. It was detected in dead monkeys in the Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu in 2002. Six human cases were reported in Wayanad and Malappuram, Kerala in 2003-04. An outbreak was reported in North Goa district in 2005-06. Maharashtra reported cases in 2016.

The forest department is distributing DEPA oil, a tick repellent, to families who have to go into the forest. The State Government has also decided to provide free treatment to patients (sathish.g@thehindu.co.in)

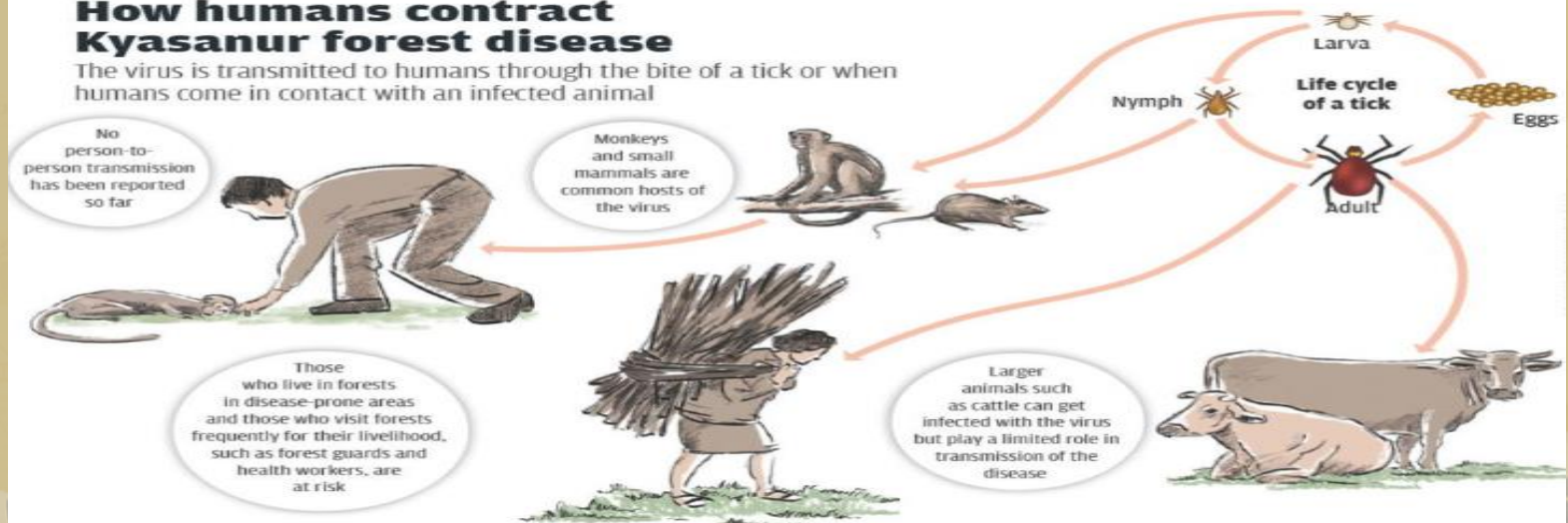
**Context:** Since January 1 this year, two people have died due to Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), a viral infection, in Karnataka.

### Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD)

- **About:** It is caused by Kyasanur Forest disease virus (KFDV), a member of the virus family Flaviviridae.
- **First Identified:** KFDV was identified in 1957 when it was isolated from a sick monkey from the Kyasanur Forest in Karnataka (formerly Mysore) State, India.
- **Transmission:** Humans may occur after a tick bite or contact with an infected animal, most importantly a sick or recently dead monkey. No person-to-person transmission has been described.
- **Signs and Symptoms:** Severe muscle pain with vomiting, gastrointestinal symptoms and bleeding problems may occur 3-4 days after initial symptom onset.
- **Treatment:** There is no specific treatment for KFD,
- **Endemic Regions of KFD:** Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala

### How humans contract Kyasanur forest disease

The virus is transmitted to humans through the bite of a tick or when humans come in contact with an infected animal



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