



## Current Affairs of the Day

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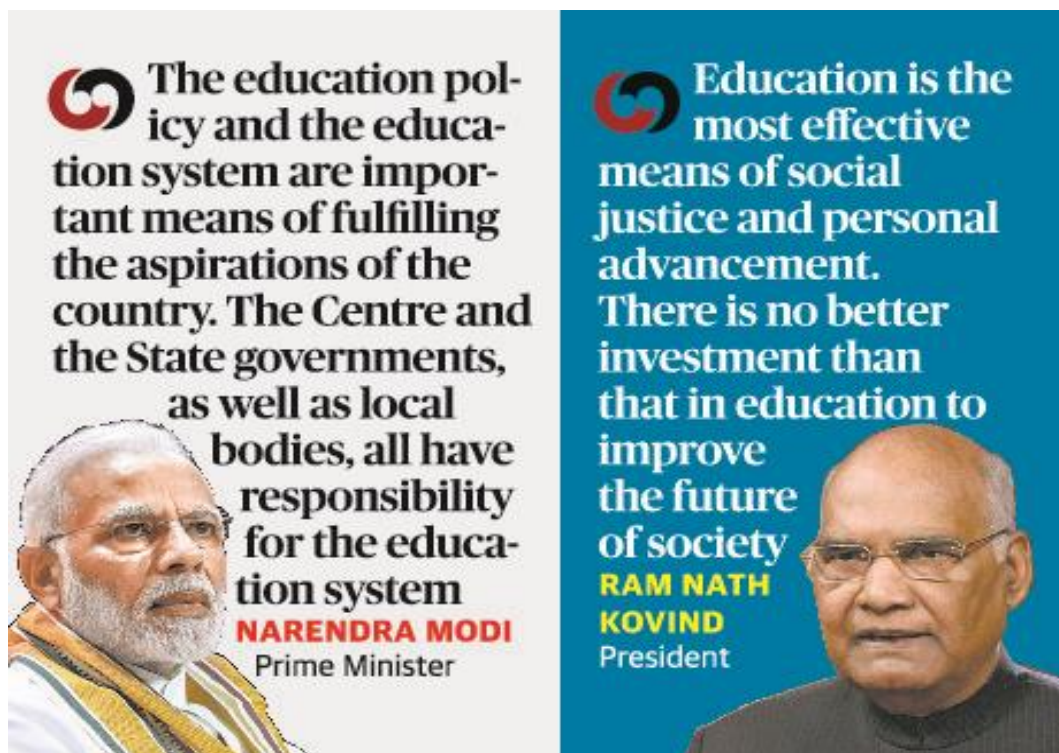
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## Govt. intervention in education policy should be minimal: PM



- The government's intervention in the education policy should be "minimal", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday, emphasising that the policy belonged to the whole country, rather than to any particular government in power.
- Mr. Modi was addressing the inaugural session of the Governors' conference on the **National Education Policy (NEP)**, which is being attended by State Education Ministers and Vice-Chancellors. The focus of the conference is on the implementation of NEP.
- Mr. Modi said the NEP 2020 provided a vision for a new India of the 21st century, in line with its aspirations to be a self-reliant power.
- The Prime Minister felt it would help transform the country into a "knowledge economy" and tackle brain drain by paving the way to open local campuses of global educational institutions.



- The policy would also prepare the country's youth for the jobs of the future, in a world where the nature of work was undergoing change.
- The focus on critical thinking, instead of mere curricular studying, as well as the emphasis on vocational education, would equip Indian students with the skills needed for the global workforce, he pointed out.

### President's call:

- Addressing the conference, President Ram Nath Kovind urged the Central and State governments to increase their percentage of investment in research and innovation.
- Mr. Kovind noted that such investment was only **0.7% of the GDP in India, in comparison to 2.8% in the U.S., 4.2% in South Korea and 4.3% in Israel.**
- "Education is the most effective means of social justice and personal advancement. There is no better investment than that in education to improve the future of society," he said.
- The goal of investing 6% of the GDP in public education had remained unreachable since it was originally made in the 1968 Education Policy, the President added.

### Hypersonic cruise vehicle test puts India in elite club

- The hypersonic air-breathing scramjet technology was successfully demonstrated by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Monday with a flight test of the hypersonic technology demonstrator vehicle (HSTDV), which will lead to the development of hypersonic cruise missiles and vehicles in future.

### Significance:

- It's a major technological breakthrough in the country. This testing paves the way for development of more critical technologies, materials and hypersonic vehicles. This puts India in a select club of nations that have demonstrated this technology.



- A test of the technology demonstrator was conducted in June 2019.

## Major breakthrough:

- With this technology, cruise missiles could now travel at hypersonic speeds, a defence source said. “Scramjet engine is a major breakthrough. Air goes inside the engine at supersonic speed and comes out at hypersonic speeds.
- The vehicle reaches a certain altitude, then cruises and also reaches very high temperatures, up to 1,000°-2,000° Celsius, during re-entry. “After the Anti-Satellite Test, this is the biggest achievement recently,” the source pointed out.
- Critical events such as fuel injection and auto ignition of the scramjet demonstrated technological maturity, the DRDO said. “The scramjet engine performed in a textbook manner. It worked at high dynamic pressure and at very high temperature.”

## August rainfall highest since 1926: IMD

- August rainfall this year has been the highest since 1926 with 32.7 cm — or about 27% more than what is normal for the month, according to data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday. In August 1926, the rainfall recorded was 34.8 cm, exceeding the normal by 33%.
- IMD officials said that though August rainfall was in excess, the figure for this year’s monsoon as a whole were likely to be within the department’s June forecast of a normal (96 to 104% of the long period average) rainfall.

## Reasons:

- **Low-pressure systems:** The heavy rain in August was due to several long-lasting low-pressure systems, or rain-bearing winds, that formed in the Bay of Bengal and were vigorous enough to travel all the way from the south-eastern coast up to north-west India. “In a typical monsoon season, there are 12-13 LPA. There were fewer this year, however, there





were six of them in August and they lasted for several days. Together that led to several rainy days in August,” he said.

- The surplus rain was primarily in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.
- **Climate change:** Long periods of heavy rain followed by extended dry periods are a feature of climate change and is part of a general change in monsoon patterns over India, the IMD had previously stated.

### Urban flood forecasting services:

- This year the IMD launched urban flood forecasting services for Mumbai and Chennai and it would extend it to Bengaluru and Kolkata.
- North-West India has seen 10% less rainfall than what is normal; Central India has seen a 17% surplus; South India a 20% surplus and Northeast India received exactly what it normally gets. Cooler than normal conditions in the equatorial Central Pacific contributed to the increased rainfall.

### Value Added Information

#### About India Meteorological Department (IMD):

- Formed in 1875, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) is the national meteorological service of the country and it is the chief government agency dealing in everything related to meteorology, seismology, and associated subjects.
- The administrative responsibilities of the Department are under the supervision of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Indian Government. The IMD is headquartered in New Delhi.

#### IMD Mandate:

The mandate and functions of the IMD are discussed below.

- Taking meteorological observations and providing current information and forecasting information for the most favorable operation of weather-



dependent activities such as irrigation, agriculture, aviation, shipping, offshore oil exploration, and so on.

- Giving warnings against severe weather phenomena such as tropical cyclones, dust storms, heat waves, cold waves, heavy rains, heavy snow, etc.
- Providing met-related statistics needed for agriculture, industries, water resources management, oil exploration, and any other strategically important activities for the country.
- Engaging in research in meteorology and allied subjects.
- Detection and location of earthquakes and evaluation of seismicity in various parts of the country for developmental projects.

## Saudi Arabia wants 'fair' solution for Palestinians

- Saudi Arabia supports a "fair" solution for the Palestinian cause, King Salman has told Donald Trump in a phone call, as the U.S. President praised the kingdom for opening its airspace to Israel-UAE flights.
- Saudi Arabia has said it will not follow the United Arab Emirates, which announced last month it would establish diplomatic ties with Israel, until the Jewish state has signed a peace accord with the Palestinians.

## Capping of MEIS Scheme Benefits

- The Central government has taken a decision to cap export incentives under Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) at Rs. 2 crore per exporter on outbound shipments made during September-December, 2020.

### Key takeaways:

- The ceiling would be subject to a downward revision to ensure that the total claim doesn't exceed the allocated Rs. 5,000 crore for the period.
- The new Import Export Code (IEC) obtained on or after 1st September will be ineligible to submit any MEIS claim for exports.



- The Indian government has announced a new WTO-compliant scheme called Remission of Duties or Taxes On Export Product (RoDTEP) which will replace MEIS starting 1st January 2021.

### Value Added Information:

#### Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS):

- It was introduced in the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2015-20.
- **Objective:** To offset infrastructural inefficiencies and associated costs involved in exporting goods/products which are produced /manufactured in India including products produced/manufactured by MSME Sector

#### Remission of Duties or Taxes On Export Product (RoDTEP):

- The new scheme is implemented from 1st January 2020.
- It creates a fully automated route for Input Tax Credit (ITC) in the GST to help increase exports in India.
- It will reimburse all the taxes/duties/levies being charged at the Central/State/Local level which are not currently refunded under any of the existing schemes but are incurred at the manufacturing and distribution process.
- The Ministry of Finance has set up a committee under the chairmanship of former commerce and home secretary GK Pillai to finalise the rates under RoDTEP.