



Current Affairs of the Day

GS Paper - II

- Fifteenth Finance Commission to hand in a report on Nov. 9
- Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Goa best governed States: report
- 'We are at a critical juncture in the fight against COVID-19; it's time to be more alert'

GS Paper - III

- As prices soar, NAFED to import onions
- Malabar naval exercise to kick off next week



Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Goa best governed States: report

GS II: Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency and Accountability

News: Kerala has been adjudged as the best-governed State in the large States category, while Uttar Pradesh ended at the bottom in the Public Affairs Index-2020 released by the Public Affairs Centre here on Friday.

Highlights:

1. The city-based not-for-profit organisation, headed by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman K. Kasturirangan, said in its annual report that the States were ranked on governance performance based on a composite index in the context of sustainable development.
2. Four southern States — Kerala (1.388 PAI Index point), Tamil Nadu (0.912), Andhra Pradesh (0.531) and Karnataka (0.468) stood in the first four ranks in the large State category in terms of governance.
3. Uttar Pradesh (-1.461), Odisha (-1.201) and Bihar (-1.158) were at the bottom of the ranking.
4. In the small State category, Goa ranked first with 1.745 points, followed by Meghalaya (0.797) and Himachal Pradesh (0.725).
5. Chandigarh emerged at the top in the category of Union Territories with 1.05 PAI points, followed by Puducherry (0.52) and Lakshadweep (0.003).

PUBLIC AFFAIRS INDEX

BEST	WORST
LARGE STATE CATEGORY	
Kerala	UP
Tamil Nadu	Odisha
Andhra Pradesh	Bihar
SMALL STATE CATEGORY	
Goa	Manipur
Meghalaya	Delhi
Himachal	U'khand

■ Chandigarh the best governed UT, followed by Puducherry and Lakshadweep

■ Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Andaman, J&K least performers

Sustainable development at the centre of Index

According to the PAC, the governance performance is analysed in the context of sustainable development defined by the three pillars of equity, growth and sustainability.



Fifteenth Finance Commission to hand in a report on Nov. 9

GS II: Functions and Responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

News: Three years after it was constituted, the Fifteenth Finance Commission has finalised its report for fund devolution from the Centre to States for the five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

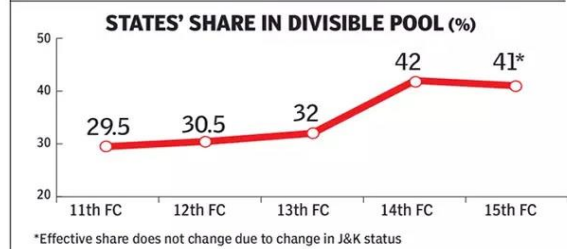
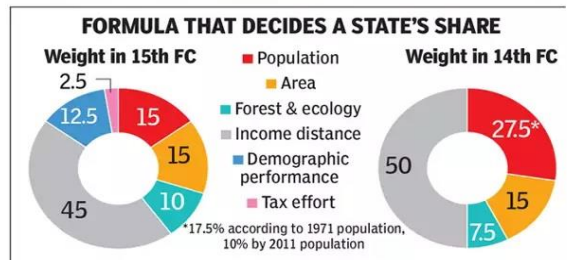
Background:

The Fifteenth Finance Commission was constituted against the backdrop of the abolition of the Planning Commission and the distinction between Plan and non-Plan expenditure, and introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The panel had to grapple with an enlarged Terms of Reference (TOR) that included determining the viability of a separate defence and national security fund as well as the issue of GST compensation.

Term extension

1. Although its original remit was to recommend the fund-sharing formula between the Centre and States from 2020-21 to 2024-25, the commission's term was extended by 11 months.
2. Last year, the Commission submitted an initial report just for the year 2020-21. That report had pared the States' share of the divisible tax pool from 42%, as recommended by the Fourteenth Finance Commission, to 41%, citing the creation of the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.
3. The Commission had then said that some of the key recommendations it was required to make would feature in its final report, including the viability of creating a separate defence and national security fund as suggested by the Centre.
4. States would keenly await these recommendations as it may translate into a lower share of funds for them.

HOW THE BOOTY IS DIVIDED





- The panel is also expected to factor in unpaid GST compensation dues to States for this year while working out States' revenue flow calculations for the years beyond 2022. States were guaranteed compensation by the Centre for revenue losses owing to the implementation of the GST for a period of five years. However, the disruption in economic activity due to the pandemic and lockdowns this year has dampened cess collections used to recompense States.

'We are at a critical juncture in the fight against COVID-19; it's time to be more alert'

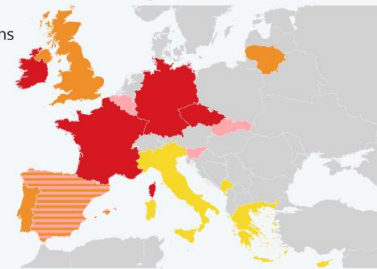
GS III: Disaster and Disaster Management.

CruX: The pandemic has impacted lives and livelihood. We understand the difficulties people continue to face — working from home or losing income, children being schooled remotely, not being able to celebrate milestones with friends and family or not being there with them in the most difficult times — it's very tough and the COVID-19 fatigue is real. But, we must break the virus transmission chains and governments should continue to strengthen pandemic response, says regional director, WHO South-East Asia

Europe Back in Lockdown Mode

European countries by second-wave COVID-19 lockdown measures imposed*

- National lockdowns
- Local lockdowns
- National curfews
- Local curfews



* As of Oct 29, 2020
All restaurants closed: Netherlands, Poland.
Restaurant curfews in several countries incl. Italy at 6 p.m.
Source: Media reports



statista

Issues

- The second wave of COVID-19 infection,
- fatigue among healthcare workers/general public
- countries in the northern hemisphere continue to be at a critical juncture in the fight against the pandemic:

Caution:

- Now is the time to be even more alert. The pandemic is still not behind us. Our efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 transmission need to be more vigorous now.



2. Health workers, who have themselves gone through immense stress and trauma, are still on the front line, taking care of patients, and it is no surprise if they too are getting tired. And in addition, we do not know how long this pandemic will last.

Schools: to open or not to open

1. From a public health perspective, deciding to close or reopen schools should be guided by a risk-based approach, taking into consideration the epidemiology of COVID-19 at the local level; the capacity of educational institutions to adapt their system to operate safely; the impact of school closures on educational loss, equity, general health and well-being of children; and the range of other public health measures being implemented outside school.
2. Decisions on full or partial closure or reopening should be taken at a local administrative level, based on the local level of transmission of COVID-19 and the local risk assessment, as well as how much the reopening of educational settings might increase transmission in the community.

Malabar naval exercise to kick off next week

GS II: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

News: The first phase of the Malabar Naval exercise with Australia, Japan and the U.S. is scheduled to be held next week off the Visakhapatnam coast. This is the first time Australia will be joining the exercise after 2007 and it will bring all four countries of the Quadrilateral grouping together for military games.



Background:

Malabar began as a bilateral exercise between India and the U.S. in 1992 and became trilateral in 2015 with the addition of Japan.



As prices soar, NAFED to import onions

GS III: Issues of Buffer Stocks and Food Security

The central cooperative, NAFED, will soon begin importing onions in a bid to tame soaring prices, Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday.

Highlights:

1. The government is already facilitating the import of onions by private traders
2. In the week since the Centre imposed stock limits, invoking the provisions of the newly amended Essential Commodities Act, the all-India average retail price of onions has continued to rise
3. Although NAFED had created a buffer stock of one lakh tonnes from the rabi crop, from which it has been releasing stock into retail markets directly and through State governments, it has already disposed of 40%, and another 25% is expected to be lost to damp and rot.

