



## Optimism unbounded

The National Statistical Office on Thursday projected that GDP in the 12 months ending March would total almost ₹134.4-lakh crore in constant prices, reflecting a 7.7% contraction from the preceding year's figure.

### Highlights:

1. To reach that level, the NSO has assumed that output will recover vigorously in the third and fourth quarters.
2. After contracting by almost 16% in the April-September period, It is this mathematical projection that is hard to square with the economic reality revealed in both the NSO's more detailed sectoral output forecasts as well as other emerging trends from ground-level activity.
3. Both the expenditure side and gross value added (GVA) across various industries point to the high degree of optimism implicit in the NSO's assumptions.

### A Caveat

The NSO has furnished a caveat that its estimates are likely to undergo sharp revisions. The upcoming Economic Survey could move away from these overly optimistic assumptions with a more sober assessment of the economy.

## Night and day

To expect women to stay indoors for their safety is to deny them their freedoms, rights.

### Highlights:

1. After the victim succumbed to the injuries, a depressingly similar pattern came to light: the police had dithered with both the post mortem and in registering an FIR.
2. The culprits, a priest and his two associates were arrested by Thursday night, with the State government saying that stern action would be taken.
3. What came as a shocker, however, was the reaction of a senior member of the National Commission for Women who visited the family.
4. Chandramukhi Devi was quoted as saying, "I tell women again and again that they should never go out at odd hours under anyone's influence... I think if she had not gone out in the evening or was accompanied by any child of the family perhaps this incident could have been avoided."



5. Such remarks worsen the situation for women who have to battle against skewed societal gender conditioning.
6. When insensitive utterances emanate from a national commission actually meant to uphold women's rights, it reeks of a primitive mindset wherein lawlessness is overlooked and responsibility pinned, perversely, on the woman for ensuring her own well-being.

### **The Damage**

1. All the hard work put in by women in all spheres including science and technology comes undone by such crude statements.
2. The equal rights movement means nothing if women are stopped from going out whenever they want to or need to, day or night. But it is also imperative that with society steeped in gender prejudices, the government, police and family must step up to provide a safe environment.
3. Although after the Nirbhaya incident in 2012, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act laid down the rules for stringent punishment, crimes against women continue, pointing at other issues that should be addressed from patriarchal mindsets to poor policing.
4. For gender parity, more women must join the workforce but thereby hangs another sorry tale. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy data, women accounted for 10.7% of the workforce in 2019-20 and many lost jobs due to the pandemic.
5. By November 2020, the CMIE reported that men recovered most of their lost jobs but not women. It is a matter of shame that even in 2021, women are asked to stay indoors at night instead of reaching for the moon.