



## Current Affairs of the Day

### GS Paper - II

- Live-streaming of court proceedings soon: SC judge
- Bhutan, China to schedule boundary discussions soon
- China, Pakistan to back each other's 'core interests' at the UN

### GS Paper - III

- Net direct tax receipts rise 5%
- Fuel consumption falls 9.1% in FY21; first, drop since 1998-99



## Live-streaming of court proceedings soon: SC judge

Supreme Court judge and chairperson of its e-committee, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said live-streaming of court proceedings was on the brink of becoming a reality.

### Highlights:

1. The judge was speaking at the inauguration of a new website for judgments and e-filing.
2. The judge said the idea behind the virtual court system was not to replace physical courts, but, instead, to show the “flexibility” of the Indian judicial system to ensure that access to justice was not denied even during the hardest of times.
3. The idea is to show the flexibility of the Indian Judicial system. Not for a moment do we want to replace the physical hearing. But we are conscious of the need to protect the public health of our lawyers, litigants who come to our country or across the country.

## Bhutan, China to schedule boundary discussions soon

Bhutan and China have agreed to set up the next round of much-delayed boundary talks between them “as soon as possible” and discussed a roadmap for expediting the boundary resolution.

### Highlights:

1. The upcoming talks will be the first since the Doklam standoff in 2017 and the first since China made new claims on Bhutan’s eastern boundary bordering Arunachal Pradesh in June 2020.
2. The annual boundary talk mechanism began in 1984 and was followed by two agreements on the maintenance of peace and tranquillity along with the border areas in 1988 and 1998.
3. The talks have thus far focused on two areas of dispute: Pasamlung and Jakarlung valleys to the North of Bhutan and Doklam to the West of Bhutan, along the tri-junction with India.



4. However, at a UN environmental meeting in June 2020, China raised an objection to a grant for Bhutan's **Sakteng Sanctuary** to the East frontier as well, saying that it was disputed as well.

## China, Pakistan to back each other's 'core interests' at the UN

**China-Pak axis:** China and Pakistan have pledged to back each other's "core and major interests" in the United Nations after holding bilateral consultations on UN affairs.

### Iron brothers

1. The countries, which describe their relationship officially as one of "all-weather partners" and "iron brothers", have in recent months stepped in to provide crucial support to the other on issues they see as sensitive, with Beijing raising the Kashmir issue at the UN Security Council and Islamabad backing China on Hong Kong and Xinjiang.
2. China has in the past stepped in on many instances to block the listing of Pakistani terrorists at the UNSC sanctions committee.
3. China in 2019 and 2020 raised the Kashmir issue at the UNSC on at least three occasions, calling for discussions in the wake of India's dilution of Article 370, reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir and revocation of special status.
4. In a joint statement, the two countries said they would "firmly safeguard multilateralism and support the central role of the United Nations in international affairs."
5. This comes amid heightened Chinese criticism of what it calls United States-led "selective multilateralism", aimed particularly at the Indian, U.S., Australia and Japan Quadrilateral framework, as well as the "rules-based order" advocated by the Quad.

## Net direct tax receipts rise 5%

India's net direct tax collections for the pandemic-hit financial year 2020-21 grew by almost 5% year-on-year to ₹9.45 lakh crore, exceeding the revised estimates of ₹9.05 lakh crore presented in the Union Budget and reflecting a gradual economic recovery in recent months.



## Highlights:

1. Tax experts said that the Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme to settle pending tax disputes also helped bolster the collections, with net Corporation tax collections for the year at ₹4.57 lakh crore.
2. Revenues from personal income tax, including the Securities Transaction Tax, were ₹4.88 lakh crore, as per provisional data released by the Finance Ministry on Friday.
3. The improved direct tax collections, along with the recent uptick in inflows of indirect taxes, including the GST, suggest that India's fiscal position may be better than the 9.5% of the fiscal deficit projected in the revised estimates.
4. The strong campaign for the Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme, the use of technology and digitisation, and the widening of tax base coupled with tax collected at source have contributed to higher tax collections.

## Fuel consumption falls 9.1% in FY21; first, drop since 1998-99

India's fuel demand contracted by a massive 9.1% in the financial year ended March 31, the first in more than two decades. A stringent lockdown imposed to curb the spread of the pandemic pummelled economic activity.

## Highlights:

1. This is the first time fuel consumption has contracted since 1998-99, the most historical year for which government data is available.
2. The demand contraction was led by diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country. Diesel consumption fell 12% to 72.72 million tonnes while petrol demand shrank 6.7% to 27.95 million tonnes.
3. The government imposed a nationwide lockdown in March last year, shutting down factories and businesses. It was lifted in stages beginning June.
4. The GDP is estimated to have contracted by 7-8% in 2020-21 as economic activity showed signs of recovery in the last quarter of 2020.