



Current Affairs of the Day

GS Paper II

- 'Tele-law services empowering voiceless'
- 'Super censorship': MPs' panel grills Ministry
- Ethiopia resumes filling the disputed dam

GS Paper III

- GST mop-up in June falls below ₹1 lakh cr.
- Oil soars to multi-year highs after OPEC+ talks collapse

'Tele-law services empowering voiceless'

Offering legal assistance to needy people over telephone and video conference by lawyers and para-legal volunteers has given the "voice of justice to the voiceless," Law Minister said.

Highlights:

1. The Minister was addressing an event to mark the coverage of more than nine lakh beneficiaries of the government's tele-law scheme, using common service centres (CSCs) to provide justice across the country.
2. The facility had been "a source of gender justice and empowerment".
3. Urging lawyers and para-legal volunteers engaged in tele-law to keep their commitment, Mr Prasad said tele-law had the potential to foster inclusive justice delivery and strengthening rule of law.
4. Presently, the tele-law programme is operational in 633 districts.

'Super censorship': MPs' panel grills Ministry

The Standing Committee on Information and Technology headed by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor grilled the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on the "super censorship" clause introduced in the draft Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill 2021.



Highlights:

1. The committee members, according to sources, asked the Ministry to explain the “reasons” and “motivation” for introducing the provision which allows the government to order recertification for a film already certified by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).
2. The Ministry officials, sources said, were at pains to explain. They claimed that the Bill has been misunderstood and that the Ministry itself will have no powers to censor any film. The Bill only allows the Ministry to return the film for recertification, one of the members said on condition of anonymity.
3. Ministry officials also said that the clause would only be invoked if the content of a film impinged on the security and integrity of the nation.
4. Not satisfied with the explanation, the members asked why, when there were existing penal provisions to deal with such a situation, did the Ministry felt it necessary to incorporate this in the Bill.
5. If any person or group feels that a film or part of it hurts their sentiment or imperils the country, they can go to court. Our basic question was why should this power to adjudicate be vested with a bureaucrat.
6. The members, sources said, also pointed to the Supreme Court order passed in 2000 that the government could not exercise revisional powers on films already certified by the CBFC.

Ethiopia resumes filling the disputed dam

Egypt and Sudan have opposed the project on the Nile.

Controversial move:

1. Ethiopia has started the second phase of filling a mega-dam's reservoir on the upper Blue Nile, said Egypt and Sudan, raising tensions ahead of an upcoming UN Security Council meeting on the issue.
2. Both Cairo and Khartoum said they had been notified by Addis Ababa that the second phase of filling had begun at the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.
3. The huge dam, set to be Africa's largest hydroelectric project when completed, has sparked an almost decade-long diplomatic stand-off between Addis Ababa and downstream nations Egypt and Sudan. Ethiopia says the project is essential to its development, but Cairo and Khartoum fear it could restrict their citizens' water access.



- Both governments have been pushing Addis Ababa to ink a binding deal over the filling and operation of the dam, and have urged the UN Security Council to take up the matter.

GST mop-up in June falls below ₹1 lakh cr.

Highlights:

- Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections in June fell to ₹92,849 crores from ₹1.02 lakh crore in May, marking the first time after eight months that indirect tax collections fell below the ₹1 lakh crore mark.
- While lockdowns aimed at curbing the second wave of COVID-19 hit economic activity and moderated GST revenues in June, the Union Finance Ministry said the collections were 2% higher than a year ago and would improve from this month.
- It is expected that while the GST revenues have dipped during the month of June, the revenues will see an increase again from July onwards.
- The June GST figures are related to business transactions made during May and also include taxes on domestic transactions between June 5 and July 5, due to extended compliance deadlines for taxpayers.
- Tax experts said the decline in GST revenues was expected. With significant relaxations in lockdown and business supplies picking up the collections should see a definite uptick in the coming months.

Oil soars to multi-year highs after OPEC+ talks collapse

Brent hits the highest level since 2018 after producers fail to agree on raising output.

No deal:

- Ministers from OPEC+, which groups producers from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) with Russia and others, abandoned talks. No date for further talks has been announced.
- Goldman Sachs said the collapse of the talks has introduced uncertainty into the group's production path while maintaining its view of an \$80 per barrel Brent price and a gradual increase in output early next year.
- In a sign of a tightening market, top oil exporter Saudi Arabia raised the August official selling prices of all crude grades it sells to Asia, the state oil producer Aramco.