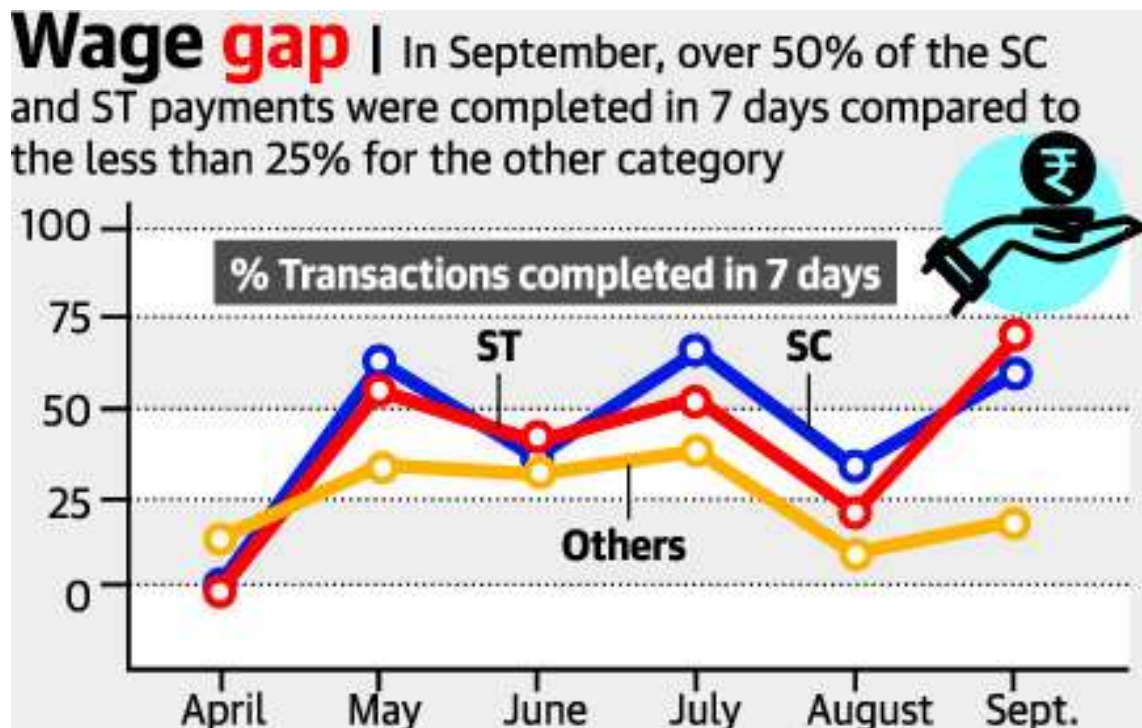


## Current Affairs of the Day

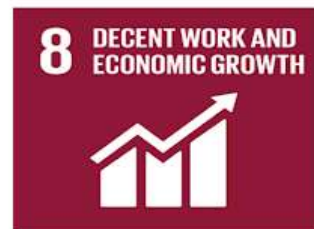
### Row over caste split of MGNREGA wage



1. For poor villagers in Rajasthan's Ajmer district, a good Deepavali depends on their wages from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme. So tensions ran high when some got paid faster than others for work done over the last six months.
2. "These are people who did the work together, at the same worksite, for the same number of days. They were all on the same muster roll. But those from SC/ST [Scheduled Castes and Tribes] got paid within 15-20 days. Those from other communities had to wait two months.
3. Similar concerns have been raised by grassroots activists and union leaders in several states, including Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, after a Central directive on March 2 this year to split the MGNREGA budget for wage payments along caste lines.
4. The Social Justice Ministry and several State governments warned of "dissension", "backlash" and threats to social harmony in villages following the directive.



## MGNREGs CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)



### No time-bound pacts on climate change at G-20

India pushed for “safeguarding the interests of the developing world” as Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the G-20 summit at sessions on climate change and sustainable development.



**INDIA WILL CUT ITS EMISSIONS INTENSITY BY 33-35% OF 2005 LEVELS BY 2030.**



1. No time-bound agreements were reached as leaders of the world's top economies ended the summit in Rome, recommitting to providing \$100 billion a year to



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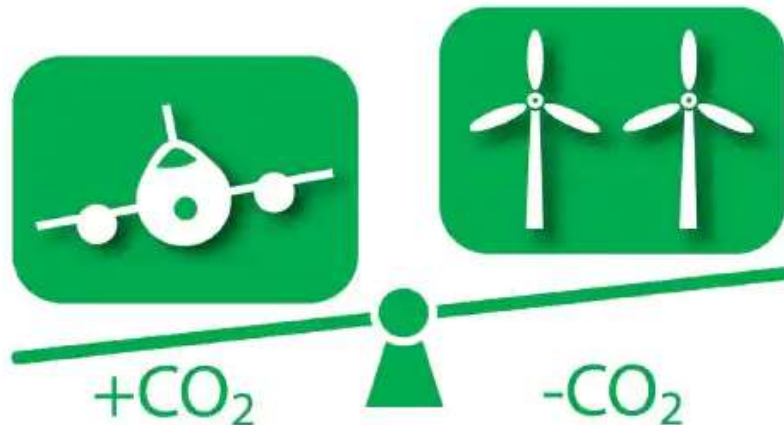
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counter climate change, and pushing for greater vaccine equality to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. G-20 countries also committed to ending international financing for all new coal plants by the end of 2021 but made no mention of domestic commitments on ending coal power generation.
3. The final communique, agreed upon after negotiations overnight, spoke only of the “key relevance of achieving global net zero” on carbon emissions “by or around mid-century”.
4. Amongst the other highlights of the statement was a decision to pursue the recognition of more vaccines by the World Health Organization under a “One Health approach” for the world, and providing finances and technology for vaccine production at “mRNA Hubs” in South Africa, Brazil and Argentina, and to mobilise more international public-private financing for “green” projects.
5. Climate negotiators from the U.S., EU and U.K. had made a number of visits to Delhi over the past few months, pressing for India to update its commitments (NDCs) to include its target of 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030, and to set a date for ending the use of coal in power plants.



## CARBON NEUTRALITY



PHILIPPINES

MALAYSIA

VIETNAM

INDONESIA

INDIA

CHINA





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## 'Informal sector shrank sharply in 2020-21'

Signalling a greater shift towards formalisation of the economy, the share of the large informal sector in overall economic activity dipped sharply in 2020-21 even as informal workers continue to bear the brunt of the pandemic's adverse effects, the SBI said in a research report.

### Still in the red

An SBI report claims the share of the informal economy in India may have shrunk to 20% of the country's economic output from about 52% in 2017-18



Sector	2017-18	2020-21
Agriculture	97.1	-
Mining	22.5	15-17
Manufacturing	22.7	19-21
Utilities	5.3	0
Construction	74.5	35-40
Services	86.6	-
Transport	47.7	-
Financial services	11.9	-
Real estate	52.8	-
Public admin.	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>15-20</b>

### Increasing share of formal Employment

1. Concluding that the share of the informal economy may have shrunk to no more than 20% of the economic output from about 52% in 2017-18, SBI group chief economic adviser Soumya Kanti Ghosh termed this "a positive development" amid the pandemic.
2. There are wide variations in the formalisation levels in different sectors but the SBI estimated that the informal economy is possibly at a maximum of 15% to 20% of formal GDP in 2020-21.
3. An IMF policy paper earlier this year estimated that the share of India's informal economy in the Gross Value Added (GVA) was at 53.9% in 2011-12 and improved only marginally to 52.4% in 2017-18.
4. As per a National Sample Survey (NSS) of 2014, around 93% of the workforce earned their livelihoods as informal workers.
5. The informal sector consists of "own-account" or unorganised enterprises employing hired workers, with the highest share of such unorganised activity being in agriculture where holdings are small and fragmented.

### Agriculture takes a hit

1. The SBI projections suggest that the informal agriculture sector has shrunk from 97.1% of the sector's GVA in 2017-18 to just 70%-75% in 2020-21, driven by the increased penetration of credit through Kisan credit cards.



- Real estate has also seen a significant dip in informal activity from 52.8% in 2017-18 to 20%-25% last year. The report estimated that about ₹1.2 lakh crore of cash usage has been formalised since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Formal agriculture credit flows have grown ₹4.6 lakh crore between 2017-18 and 2020-21, with digital payments for petrol and diesel rising around ₹1 lakh crore in the same period.

## Punjab does a deep dive for Indus dolphins

- The census of one of the world's most threatened cetaceans, the Indus river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica minor*) – a freshwater dolphin that is found in

PUNJAB DECLARED DOLPHIN STATE AQUATIC ANIMAL



One of the spotted dolphins is a juvenile

**T**o save endangered Indus river dolphins from extinction, Punjab government had in February this year declared them as state aquatic animal. Indus river dolphin was first spotted in Harike wildlife sanctuary and Beas conservation reserve in 2007. The state forest and wildlife department has engaged WWF-India with an aim to retain and restore freshwater habitats in the Harike wildlife sanctuary and the Beas conservation reserve and ensure effective management with the help of local communities so that the population of the Indus river dolphins remain stable.

INTERNATIONAL FRESHWATER DOLPHIN DAY

October 24 is observed as the International Freshwater Dolphin Day and, in India, Punjab is home to the only population of Indus river dolphins, one of the seven-freshwater dolphins of the world

**INDUS RIVER DOLPHINS**

- An endangered freshwater aquatic mammal found only in Beas in Punjab
- Are brown/grey in colour
- Are blind
- Can live at least for 30 years
- Grow over 2m in length
- Weigh up to 100kg
- Spend entire life in freshwater rivers

- river Beas, is all set to commence in the winter as part of a project by the Centre.
- However, Punjab's wildlife preservation wing has gone a step ahead to not only protect the dolphins but also their natural habitat.
- The Indus river dolphin is classified as endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and, until recently, it was believed that these dolphins were endemic to Pakistan.
- But in 2007, a remnant but viable population of Indus dolphins were discovered in Punjab's Harike wildlife sanctuary and in the lower Beas river.
- Since its discovery, research is being done by Punjab's Department of Forests and Wildlife Preservation in partnership with WWF-India on the current distribution, habitat use and population abundance of the mammal.
- The Indus river dolphin was declared the State aquatic animal of Punjab in 2019.



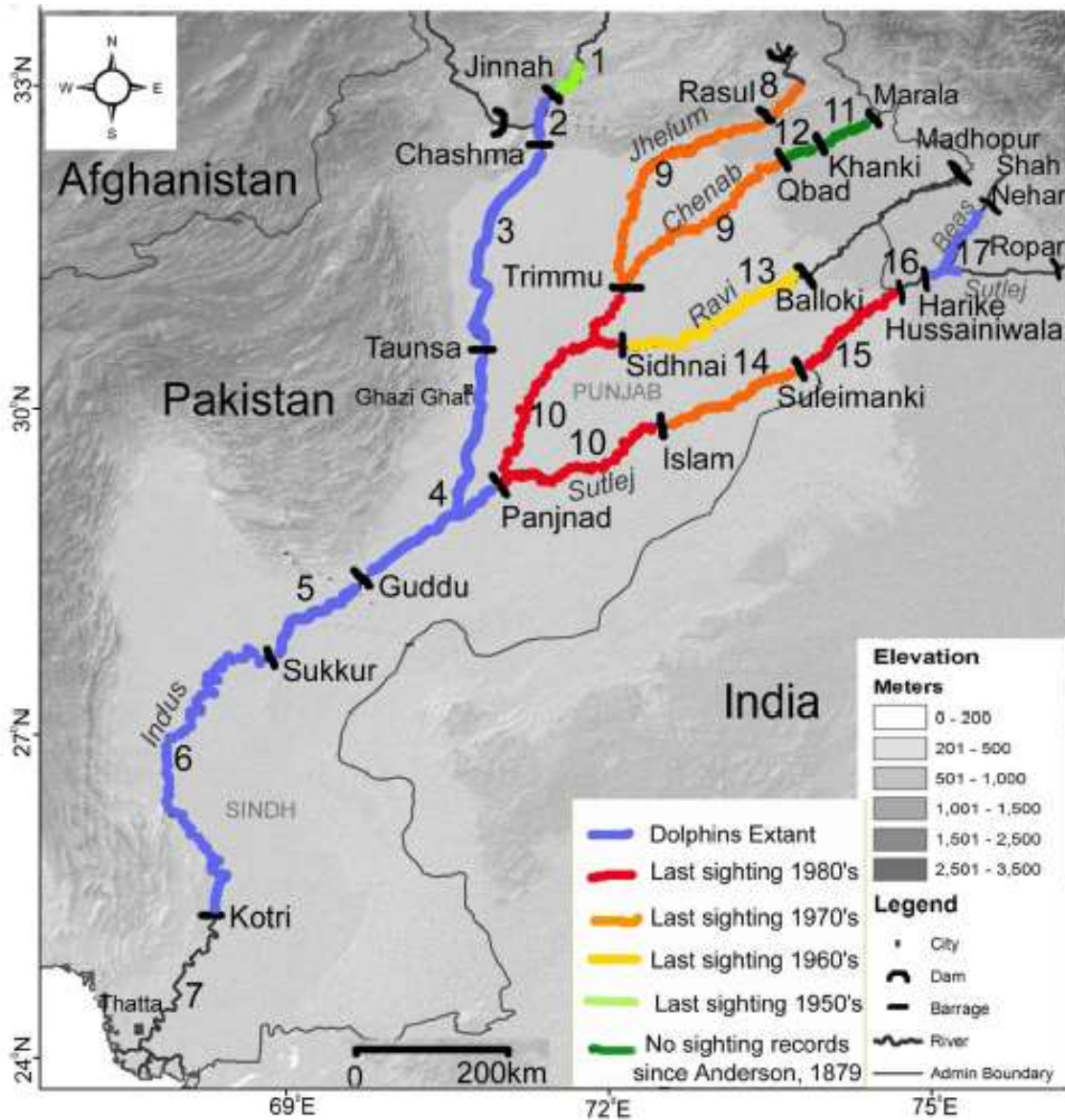
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## PROJECT DOLPHIN

### PRESERVING OUR UNDERWATER FRIENDS



10-YEAR PROJECT TO FOCUS ON BOTH RIVER AND SEA DOLPHINS



AIM TO STRENGTHEN BIODIVERSITY, CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ATTRACT TOURISM



KILLING, HABITAT FRAGMENTATION BY DAMS AND BARRAGES AND INDISCRIMINATE FISHING HAS REDUCED THE GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN POPULATION FROM TENS OF THOUSANDS TO AROUND 3,700 OVER THE LAST CENTURY



GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN, A SPECIES OF FRESHWATER DOLPHINS, IS PRIMARILY FOUND IN GANGA AND BRAHMAPUTRA RIVERS, AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES IN INDIA, BANGLADESH AND NEPAL



IN INDIA, THESE DOLPHINS ARE SIGHTED IN DEEP RIVERS IN ASSAM, BIHAR, JHARKHAND, MADHYA PRADESH, RAJASTHAN, UTTAR PRADESH AND WEST BENGAL



GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN, OFFICIALLY DISCOVERED IN 1801, CAN LIVE ONLY IN FRESHWATER



## COUNTRY'S PRIDE



### Dolphin facts

- Bengal is home to both Irrawaddy dolphins and Ganges river dolphins
- Irrigation projects and river pollution are the main threats to the species
- Habitat of Irrawaddy dolphins is more

protected as it falls in Sunderbans

- Conservation of Ganges river dolphin will also ensure protection of river's ecology
- State has also proposed a dolphin census

### Proposals to be discussed

- Declaration of stretch of river Hooghly between Malda and Sagar Islands as dolphin community reserve
- Declaration of six conservation reserves
- Establishment of East Kolkata Wetland Species Community Reserve
- Expansion of Teesta Wildlife Sanctuary in Dooars
- Formation of standing committee for state board for wildlife