



Current Affairs of the Day

IMD forecasts 'normal' monsoon, no El Nino

1. The India Meteorological Department (IMD), while forecasting a “normal” southwest monsoon for this year also, revised downwards the definition of what constitutes average rainfall.
2. At a press briefing on Thursday, the agency said India would get 99% of the long period average (LPA) rainfall — which changed from 89 cm to 88 cm in 2018, and in the periodic update in 2022, again revised to 87 cm.
3. Monsoon is considered “normal” when rainfall falls between 96% and 104% of the LPA.



No El Nino

1. The IMD does not expect an El Nino, a phenomenon associated with a warming of the Central Pacific and drying up of the rains over northwest India, the coming monsoon.
2. Currently, La Nina conditions are prevailing over the equatorial Pacific. The latest forecasts indicate it will continue during the monsoon.
3. Current indications suggest “normal” to “above normal” rainfall in the northern parts of peninsular India, central India and the Himalayan foothills. Many parts of northeast India and southern parts of South India are expected to see a subdued monsoon.



‘Classroom on wheels’ goes to rural areas

1. A unique digital “classroom on wheels”, launched in Rajasthan, will provide education to the students living in villages and remote areas and address the issue of scarcity of good teachers in small towns. It will also generate awareness about digital education among the students and parents.



2. The Shiksha Rath, a modified bus equipped with a digital studio, was flagged off at Jaisalmer district’s Ramdevra village. The students in the village will benefit from the digital classroom comprising a smart interactive panel and high-resolution cameras and with high-speed internet connectivity.

Indian Exports Set To Cross \$650bn In Fy22 As Services Hit Record \$250bn

1. India exported \$250 billion in services during the 2021-22 financial year thus the total value of goods and services exported in the last fiscal is set to surpass \$650 billion.
2. Earlier, the Government announced a record \$400 billion in merchandise exports in 2021-22.
3. The country’s mercantile trade deficit has, however, increased by 55% during the period because of high prices of crude oil, metals and other inputs, in addition to inventory building by the domestic industry to pre-empt supply-chain disruptions due to the Ukraine war.



Centre sets the ball rolling for quota in promotions

Reservation in promotion for SC and STs is a fraught issue that has been stalled for years due to a lack of quantifiable data on SC/ST employees, leading to repeated protests and simmering resentment among the numerically significant communities that view government jobs as a key avenue for social and economic mobility.

Years-long logjam close to end?

1. The Centre is set to start the process of collecting data on the representation of Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) employees at all levels of government, according to an official order, marking the crucial first step in implementing

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Union government is set to start the process of collecting data on SC/ST representation at all levels of government, according to a DoPT order seen by HT

NEED FOR QUANTIFIABLE DATA

For 18 years, the Supreme Court has insisted that data on inadequacy of representation of social groups is a prerequisite condition for providing quotas in promotion. The latest of these verdicts came on Jan 28

RESERVATION IN PROMOTION for SC/STs has been stalled for years due to a lack of quantifiable data on SC/ST employees, leading to repeated protests and simmering resentment among the numerically significant communities that view government jobs as a key avenue for social and economic mobility

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The DoPT order is the first on-ground action in six years where the govt has initiated the process of giving reservation in promotion. It will assuage communities angry at the years-long delay in clearing promotions

- reservation in the promotion for these groups that have emerged as key electoral forces in recent years.
2. Collection of quantifiable data on the inadequacy of representation of social groups is a prerequisite condition for providing quotas in promotion, according to a raft of judgments by the Supreme Court over the last two decades.
3. An order by the central department of personnel and training (DoPT) asked all ministries and departments to adhere to the Supreme Court's guidelines – the first time in six years that it has initiated the process of giving reservations in the promotion to SCs and STs.
4. The move appears to be aimed at ameliorating the two communities that are angry at the years-long delay in clearing promotions for officers belonging to these groups. SCs and STs have 15% and 7.5% reservations in government jobs, respectively, and together form more than a quarter of the country's population.



Nagraj Verdict:

1. Several state governments and the Centre have repeatedly asked the apex court to relax its stipulation on data, arguing that it was impossible to collect at short notice and was leading to administrative problems, but the top court has not budged.
2. Experts also point out that since the government has never had cadre-level data on the representation of SC/ST employees at all levels, the collection of such information may take a long time.
3. The logjam in reservation in promotion dates back to 2006 when a Constitution bench ruling in the M Nagaraj case laid down three conditions:
 - collect quantifiable data showing the backwardness of the group,
 - its inadequacy of representation in a particular level of public employment and
 - ensuring administrative efficiency.
4. After the judgment, some high courts struck down reservations in promotion policies by state governments.
5. In 2018, another Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court endorsed the stipulation of quantifiable data in the Jarnail Singh case. The court said that governments need not collect data on the backwardness of these groups but upheld the two other criteria while mandating the exclusion of the “creamy layer” before providing reservation.

Nod for ₹5,911 crore outlay to extend rural bodies scheme

1. The Union Cabinet approved an extension to the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), a centrally-sponsored scheme to help rural India achieve key targets of the United Nations' Sustainable Development

Other approvals by Cabinet

A look at other key decisions cleared by the Union Cabinet

Approval of policy for use of land acquired under the Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition & Development) Act, 1957

The changes will unlock the non-minable land for the purpose of development and setting up of infrastructure relating to coal and energy

MoU with Japan for Decentralised Domestic Wastewater Management

MoU signed between SEBI and Canada's Manitoba Securities Commission



Goals (SDGs) that were part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. RGSA, worth ₹5,911 crores, is aimed at empowering 278,000 Panchayati raj institutions, or elected rural local governments, to implement the SDGs.
3. The programme will focus on developing the “governance capabilities” of Panchayati raj institutions.

MAINS DAWP	<p>Q1. Discuss the need for “quantifiable data” to determine the backwardness of vulnerable groups for the application of affirmative action.</p> <p>Q2. <i>Data on migration and development indices show that there is a stronger case for English to be the link language rather than Hindi. Critically Discuss.</i></p>
MCQs	<p>Q1. Which of the following is/are the aims of the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To focus on developing the “governance capabilities” of Panchayati raj institutions2. To help rural India achieve key targets of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) <p>Select the correct answer from the codes given below</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. 1 onlyb. 2 onlyc. Both 1 and 2d. Neither 1 nor 2