



## Current Affairs of the Day

### Retail inflation quickens to an almost eight-year high at 7.8%

1. Inflation faced by Indian consumers raced to an almost eight-year high of 7.8% in April, from 6.95% in March, with rural inflation accelerating to 8.4%, and urban shoppers experiencing an almost 1 percentage point month-on-month quickening at 7.1%, data released by the National Statistical Office show.

2. Food costs led the surge with inflation measured by the Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) jumping to a 17-month high of 8.4% from March's 7.7%. Food prices rose at a faster clip of 8.5% in rural India.

3. This is the fourth month in a row that retail inflation has remained above 6%, which is the upper tolerance threshold for inflation under the monetary policy framework.

#### Composition of Wholesale Price Index



##### Primary Articles



##### Fuel & power

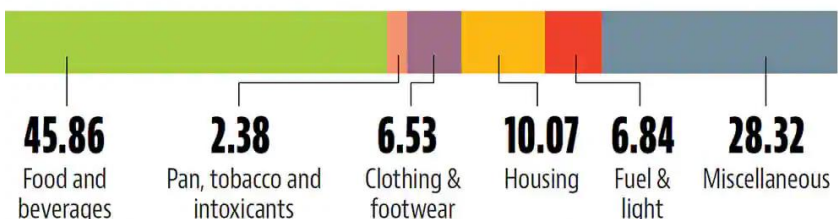


##### Manufactured products



#### Composition of Consumer Price Index basket

Figures in %, weights shown are for the combined (rural and urban) CPI category



Source: CMIE



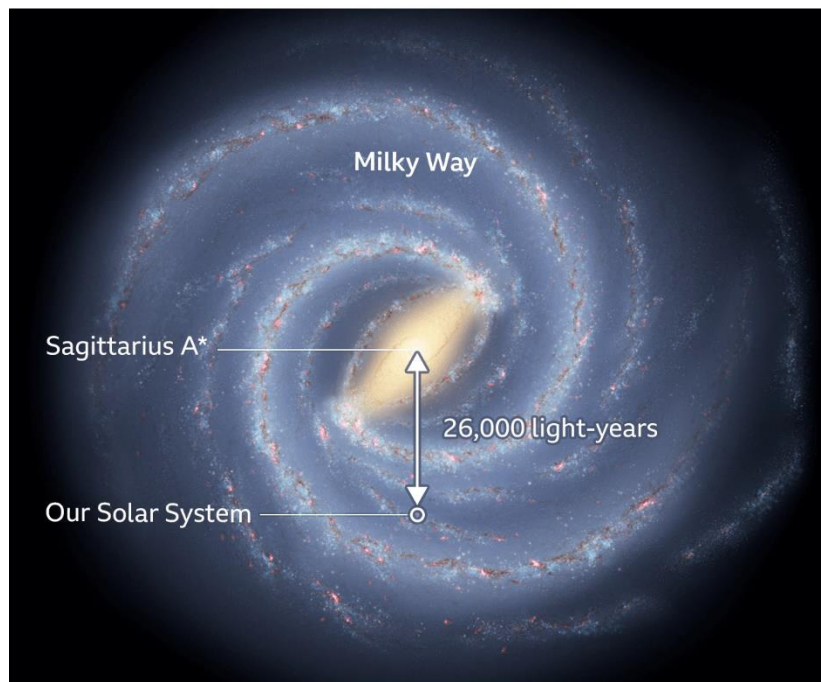
## Crude price surge

Driven by continued global crude price upsurge which impacts food, fuel and light, and transport and communication prices in the CPI basket, India's April 2022 CPI inflation turned out to be a 95-month high of 7.8%.

## Event Horizon reveals the true colours of SgrA\*

1. Scientists from the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) facility revealed the first image of the black hole at the centre of the Milky Way.
2. The image of Sagittarius A\* (SgrA\*) gave further support to the idea that the compact object at the centre of our galaxy is indeed a black hole, strengthening Einstein's general theory of relativity.

### Our Solar System is in the Milky Way Galaxy



Source: Nasa illustration



3. The ring-shaped image of SgrA\*, which looked a lot similar to the one of M87\*, occupied 52 microarcseconds in the field of view, which is as big a span of our view as a doughnut on the moon. Sagittarius A\* is 27,000 light years from us.

In 2019, the Event Horizon Telescope facility, a collaboration of over 300 researchers, made history by releasing the first-ever image of a black hole, M87\* — the black hole at the centre of a galaxy Messier 87, which is a supergiant elliptic galaxy.



## Event Horizon Telescope (EHT)

A Global Network of Radio Telescopes

**2018 Observatories**

- ALMA: Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array, CHAJNANTOR PLATEAU, CHILE
- APEX: Atacama Pathfinder Experiment, CHAJNANTOR PLATEAU, CHILE
- 30M: IRAM 30-M Telescope, PICO VELETA, SPAIN
- JCMT: James Clerk Maxwell Telescope, MAUNAKEA, HAWAII
- LMT: Large Millimeter Telescope, SIERRA NEGRA, MEXICO
- SMA: Submillimeter Array, MAUNAKEA, HAWAII
- SMT: Submillimeter Telescope, MOUNT GRAHAM, ARIZONA
- SPT: South Pole Telescope, SOUTH POLE STATION
- GLT: The Greenland Telescope, THULE AIR BASE, GREENLAND, DENMARK
- Kitt Peak: Kitt Peak 12-meter Telescope, KITT PEAK, ARIZONA, USA
- NOEMA: NOEMA Observatory, PLATEAU DE BURE, FRANCE

Observing in 2020

Logos: AU, NRAO

### On the question of notifying minorities

1. A PIL specifically questions the validity of Section 2(f) of the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions or NCMEI Act 2004, terming it arbitrary and contrary to Articles 14, 15, 21, 29 and 30 of the Constitution. Section 2(f) says “minority,” for the purpose of this Act, means a community notified as such by the Central Government.”
2. Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act, 1992 also gives the Centre similar powers.

### What does the PIL argue?

1. The petitioner argues that the Centre’s decision was arbitrary since the SC had held, in the T. M. A. Pai Foundation vs State Of Karnataka case of 2002 that, “for the purpose of determining minority, the unit will be State and not whole India.”



2. The petitioner argued that the Centre's notification has created an anomalous situation in which the communities declared as minorities by the Centre enjoy the status even in States/UTs where they are in majority (Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir and Christians in Nagaland for instance) while followers of Hinduism, Judaism and Bahaim who are minorities are not accorded the same status under the Act.

3. The petition seeks the SC to curtail the Centre's power to notify national minorities or direct the Centre to notify followers of Hinduism, Bahaim and Judaism as minorities in States/UTs where they are actually fewer in numbers; or direct that only those communities that are "socially, economically and politically non-dominant" besides being numerically smaller in States/UTs be allowed the status of minorities.

**WHO ARE THE MINORITIES IN INDIA?**

Religious communities notified as minority communities under National Commission for **Minorities Act, 1992**

Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Jains (notified in 1954)

**Did you know?** Minority communities in **India are extended certain basic rights guaranteed under Articles 25 to 30**. They also benefit in getting access to education and government jobs among other things.

### How has the Centre responded?

1. The Centre categorically defended the concept of minorities at the national level.
2. The Centre had earlier pointed out that it had concurrent powers with States to take measures for the welfare of minorities. States could have minorities notified as such within their jurisdiction, and it even cited the examples of Maharashtra recognising Jews as a minority community and Karnataka recognising speakers of several languages as linguistic minorities.



## In which states is the Hindu community a minority?

State	% of Hindus (2011 Census Data)
Lakshadweep	2.77%
Mizoram	2.75%
Nagaland	8.75%
Meghalaya	11.53%
Jammu & Kashmir	28.44%
Arunachal Pradesh	29.04%
Manipur	31.39%
Punjab	38.49%



**Note:** In Feb'2020 Hon. Supreme Court had rejected a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) which sought 'minority' status to Hindus in the above eight states.

## Ujjwala LPG scheme: 90-lakh beneficiaries don't take refills

- In the financial year 2021-22, 90-lakh beneficiaries of the Narendra Modi government's flagship welfare scheme, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), did not take refill gas cylinders. And over one crore beneficiaries got their refills only once.

**Low usage** | The chart lists the States where LPG coverage was at least 98% but the share of households that used clean fuel (LPG/natural gas, biogas) for cooking was less than 80%

State	Clean fuel usage (%)	State	Clean fuel usage (%)
West Bengal	40.2	Manipur	70.4
Rajasthan	41.4	Kerala	72.1
Assam	42.1	Punjab	76.7
U.P.	49.5	Sikkim	78.4
Himachal	51.7	Karnataka	79.7
Uttarakhand	59.2	Maharashtra	79.7
Haryana	59.5		

SOURCE: NFHS 5 (2019-20)



- The scheme was originally launched with a target of releasing eight crore connections by March 2020. So far, over nine crore connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana have been released. The PMUY 2.0 was launched in 2021-22, making a provision for the release of additional one crore connections.

## ‘Hunger risk from climate threat’

- India’s food production could drop 16% and the number of those at risk for hunger could increase 23% by 2030 due to climate change, says a report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on climate change and food systems.
- The number of Indians at risk from hunger in 2030 is expected to be 73.9 million in 2030 and, if the effects of climate change were to be factored in, it would increase to 90.6 million. The aggregate food production index will, under similar conditions, drop from 1.6 to 1.5.

<p><b>MAINS DAWP</b></p>	<p>Q1. The legislative route is more appropriate in making marital rape a criminal offence. Comment.</p> <p>Q2. Discuss problems inherent in inflation targeting through monetary policy in India.</p>
<p><b>MCQs</b></p>	<p>Q1. <i>Sagittarius A*</i> (<i>SgrA*</i>) recently seen in the news is</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Distant Galaxy</li> <li>A Constellation of stars in the sky</li> <li>A new addition to the standard model of particle physics</li> <li>A Black hole at the centre of the Milky way</li> </ol>