



DAILY PT POINTERS

19th October, 2023



The Hindu: IR (Page 6)

The BRI at 10, some hits, many misses

The Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation that was convened in Beijing, China (October 17-18) has put the spotlight back on Chinese President Xi Jinping's signature initiative.

Early debates in China reveal the intent behind the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Academic Xue Li likened the BRI to China's Marshall Plan, stating that it was a gateway for China to transition from a regional power with global influence to a global power with comprehensive strength. Academic Wang Yiwei argued that the BRI was an ascendant China's bid to reboot globalisation and rectify its shortcomings. A rising China also felt the need to develop new transport and trade arteries as alternatives, since rivals could put the squeeze on the Strait of Malacca – the jugular vein for China's economy.

Beijing was also putting its money where its mouth was with the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank with a \$100 billion war chest, challenging other lending



Harsh V. Pant

is Vice-President, Studies and Foreign Policy, at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi



Kalpit A. Mankikar

200 BRI cooperation pacts had been inked with over 150 nations. The document also stated that total two-way investment between China and partner countries from 2013 to 2022 touched \$380 billion. As Mr. Xi himself put it, the BRI would provide more public goods to the entire world, highlighting the massive infrastructure deficit.

According to the World Bank, 675 million people are without electricity globally, around 2.3 billion lack potable water, and 450 million live beyond the coverage of a broadband signal. The lending institution calculates that bridging the infrastructure gap will need capital infusion of \$1.5 trillion annually through 2030, which is approximately 4.5% of the GDP of low- and middle-income countries. Under China's Marshall Plan, motorways, power plants, ports, railway networks, and digital infrastructure have been built.

The ugly reality

Himalayas. Yet, a Pakistani legislative report unearthed that while China cornered 91% of Gwadar port's revenue, Pakistan pocketed just 9%. These issues have tarnished the reputation of brand BRI, especially its tagline of 'win-win cooperation' as there are perceptions that it is a win for China twice over at the cost of other stakeholders.

Global alternatives

After much hand-wringing, efforts are being taken to counter the BRI. In the Donald Trump era, the United States and Japan initiated the "United States-Japan infrastructure investment alternatives in the Indo-Pacific region". The Joe Biden administration announced the 'Build Back Better World' (B3W) initiative that seems to have been reorganised as the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, which aims to channelise private capital into climate change and energy security, health care and health security, digital technology, and gender equity.

- India is boycotting **China's Belt and Road Initiative** summit for the third time, citing concerns over sovereignty issues and the financial viability of Beijing's projects.
- The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), previously known as the One Belt One Road Initiative, a mammoth infrastructure project launched by China in 2013.
- The Belt and Road project was started to revive connectivity, trade, and infrastructure along what was China's ancient Silk Road.
- China had announced a two-pronged approach of building a Silk Road Economic Belt on Land and a maritime 21st century Silk Road.
- China wants to build infrastructure such as ports, bridges and rail lines in over 150 countries spanning Asia, Africa and Europe

Do you know?

- India refrained from joining the BRI, voicing its opposition to the CPEC that runs from Xinjiang in China's west, through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), to the Arabian Sea port of Gwadar.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY


The Hindu : Money Laundering (Page 10)

Can refer aspects of PMLA verdict to Constitution Bench, if need be: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI



A three-judge Bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul on Wednesday indicated it may, if required, refer any aspect of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), upheld by a Supreme Court judgment in July 2022, to a Constitu-

 The remit of this Bench is not to reconsider every issue addressed by the three-judge Bench... We are going to look if any of the issues requires reconsideration
SANJAY KISHAN KAUL
SC Judge

the petitions," Justice Kaul said.
Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta said every provision of the PMLA was debated before the Khanwilkar Bench. "This is an abuse of law... You [petitioners] say you are an 'enlightened' citizen and feel the judgment was wrong and file writ petitions?"

- SC sets Nov 22 to hear review petition challenging various PMLA provisions.
 - On July 27, 2022, the Supreme Court upheld the validity of various provisions of the PMLA which empowers ED to make arrests, conduct search and seizures and attach proceeds of crime.
- **The PMLA 2002 was enacted in January, 2003 and** have come into force with effect from 1st July, 2005.
 - **Sec. 3 of PMLA defines** offence of money laundering as whosoever directly or indirectly attempts to indulge or knowingly assists or knowingly is a party or is actually involved in any process or activity connected with the proceeds of crime and projecting it as untainted property shall be guilty of offence of money-laundering.
 - **Section 45 deals** with offences to be cognizable and non-bailable.
 - **Section 50 of the PMLA empowers** the 'authority' i.e. officers of the Enforcement Directorate, to summon any person to give evidence or produce records.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu: S&T (Page 12)

'India will explore building large language models'

High-powered committee will study their development for Indian languages; large amounts of private and foreign capital plus government funds needed for deep tech, says Amitabh Kant



- Large language models (LLMs) are foundation models that use artificial intelligence (AI), deep learning and massive data sets, including websites, articles and books, to generate text, translate between languages and write many types of content.
- There are two types of these generative AI models: proprietary large language models and open source large language models.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



The Hindu : Polity and Governance (Page 12)

Parliamentary Panel examining Bill to increase minimum age of marriage for women gets another extension

The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha in December 2021

October 18, 2023 03:11 pm | Updated 07:36 pm IST - New Delhi

THE HINDU BUREAU

COMMENTS SHARE

READ LATER



- The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was introduced in the Lok Sabha in December 2021
 - It was referred to the Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports.
- The 31-member committee has only three women MPs.
 - The Bill seeks to bring parity in the minimum age of marriage for men and women overriding all existing laws, including any custom, usage, or practice governing the parties in relation to marriage.

Do you know ?

The Government has enacted 'the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006' (PCMA) in order to curb child marriages and to take punitive actions against those associated with child marriages.

since enactment of PCMA, the prevalence of child marriage has reduced by half from 47% in 2006 to 23.3% during 2019-21 (NFHS-5). However, a few States such as Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tripura and West Bengal have higher prevalence of child marriage than national average as per NFHS-5.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu : Economy (Page 14)

Centre raises MSP for Rabi crops, farmers unhappy

Farmers' organisations say the minimum support prices do not match the increase in input costs; For wheat, the major Rabi crop, the increase is ₹150 per quintal

Seeking more

Farmers' organisations have criticised the increase as 'meagre'; they point to a mismatch between the support prices and costs

- They highlight the increase in diesel and fertilizer prices that spur input costs

- Farmer representatives also lament lack of govt participation in actual procurement after MSP is announced



- Highest increase in MSP compared with last year is for lentils (masur) at ₹425 per quintal

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has increased the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for all Rabi crops for the financial year 2024-25.
 - The increase for wheat, the major Rabi crop, is ₹150 per quintal and the new price will be ₹2,275.
- **Do you know ?**
Based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the government declares MSP after considering the views of state governments and Central Ministries/Departments concerned for agricultural crops such as cereal, pulses, oilseeds and commercial crops every year at the beginning of both the crop seasons.
- The MSP, which is a part of the government's agricultural price policy, is the price at which the government offers to procure farmers' produce during the season.
- The factors considered by CACP for fixing MSP include cost of production, domestic and international prices, demand-supply conditions, inter-crop price parity, terms of trade between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

Indian Express: Polity and Governance (Page 11)

OBCs and subcategories: Why this has been a hot-button issue for long

OBCs, the beneficiaries of 27% reservation in Central Govt jobs, are not a monolith. Within the OBC are hundreds of castes, all at different levels of marginalisation. States have long sought to dice the OBC quota to ensure equity, but subcategorisation at the central level has seen difficulties

- The expression ‘**OBC**’ was coined to denote backward/marginalised communities and castes that were not Scheduled Castes (SCs) or Scheduled Tribes (STs).
- OBCs have been generally identified on the basis of their occupation: cultivation of own land, tenant farming, agriculture labour, cultivation and selling of vegetables, fruits and flowers, cattle-rearing, washing of clothes, carpentry, blacksmith, oilseeds crushing, pottery, stone-cutting, etc. The demand for reservation for the “backwards among OBCs” has gained traction as the feeling has grown that a handful of “upper” OBCs have grabbed most of the benefits of the 27% reservation that came with the implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations.
- **FIRST OBC COMMISSION:** The panel, headed by Kaka Kalelkar, was constituted by Jawaharlal Nehru’s government on January 29, 1953, and submitted its report on March 30, 1955. **SECOND OBC COMMISSION:** This was the B P Mandal Commission, which was appointed in 1979 by Morarji Desai’s Janata government, but the implementation of which was announced only in 1990 by the government of V P Singh.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB : Art and Culture

Prime Minister extends best wishes on the auspicious occasion of Kati Bihu to the people of Assam

Posted On: 18 OCT 2023 10:47PM by PIB Delhi



- Bihu is the essence of Assam and is celebrated across the state with a tremendous zeal and enthusiasm.
- There are three Bihu festivals namely
 - 'Bohag Bihu' celebrated in the month of 'Bohag' (Baisakh, the middle of April),
 - 'Magh Bihu' celebrated in the month of 'Magh' (the middle of January), and
 - 'Kati Bihu' celebrated in the month of 'Kati' (Kartik, the middle of October).
- Each of the Bihu festival has its own significance and is celebrated with its own traditions.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB : Infrastructure

PM to launch India's first Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) on 20th October

PM to inaugurate priority section of Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor; flag off RapidX train connecting Sahibabad to Duhai Depot

- RRTS is a new rail-based, semi-high-speed, high-frequency commuter transit system.
- With a design speed of 180 Kmph, RRTS is a transformational, regional development initiative, which is designed to provide high-speed trains for intercity commuting every 15 minutes, which can go up to a frequency of every 5 minutes as per requirement.
- RRTS being developed in the country, is a state-of-the-art regional mobility solution, and is comparable to the best in the world.
- It will provide safe, reliable and modern intercity commuting solutions in the country.
- In line with PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, the RRTS network will have extensive multi-modal-integration with Railway stations, Metro stations, Bus services etc.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB: Polity and Governance

Online registrations for Yuva Sangam (Phase III) commence for participation

More than 3,240 participants across India participated in 73 tours in various phases of Yuva Sangam

Posted On: 18 OCT 2023 2:44PM by PIB Delhi



- Yuva Sangam is an initiative by the Government of India to strengthen people-to-people connect between youth belonging to different States/UTs of India.
- Interested youth in the age group of 18-30 years, mainly students, NSS/ NYKS volunteers, employed/self-employed persons, etc. may register through the YUVA SANGAM portal to participate in the forthcoming Phase.
- Yuva Sangam, launched under EBSB, draws inspiration from the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and focuses on experiential learning and imbibing knowledge of the rich diversity of India on a first-hand basis