

# DAILY PT POINTERS

13 September,  
2024



## The Hindu-Governance(GSII)-Page 12

### What does dissolution of SCoS entail?

Why was the SCoS dissolved? What are the main roles of the new Steering Committee? How do the SCoS and the Steering Committee differ? How does the SCoS dissolution impact statistical data quality? How will the new committee address the data gaps? What issues have arisen from the delay in the census?

#### EXPLAINER

A. M. Jeevesh

#### The story so far:

The Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has dissolved the 14-member Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS) headed by eminent economist and former chief statistician of the country Pronab Sen. Geeta Singh Rathore, Director General of the Ministry's National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), told the SCoS members that its work overlapped with that of the Steering Committee for National Sample Surveys, headed by Rajeeva Laxman Karandikar, former director of the Central Mathematical Institute and this was cited as the reason for dismantling the SCoS. Dr. Sen has said that the SCoS members had questioned the delay in conducting the census, as censuses have long been a crucial source of reliable data for policymakers. He also complained that the members were not given any specific reason for the committee's dissolution.

#### What were the key responsibilities of SCoS?

The SCoS advised the Centre on survey methodology, including sampling frames, sampling design, survey instruments, questions, etc. It also played a vital role in finalising the tabulation plan of surveys, reviewing the extant framework, and addressing the issues raised from time to time on the subjects, results, methodology, etc. related to all surveys. The Terms of Reference for the SCoS also included providing guidance for conducting pilot surveys/pre-testing, exploring the availability of administrative statistics relating to surveys/statistics, providing guidance for studying or identifying data gaps, providing additional data requirements, and



**Urgent need:** The 2021 census was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and even after three years, the Centre has not provided a roadmap for the next census. M.A. Sessier

Central and State level agencies for conducting surveys.

#### What is the role of the new committee?

The Steering Committee, which replaces the SCoS, has 17 members and one non-member secretary. The Centre has retained at least four members from the SCoS in the Steering Committee other than officials such as Ms. Rathore. Sonalde Desai, Bishwanath Goidar, S. Chandrasekhar, and Mausumi Bose are the four experts who are retained. The tenure of the Steering Committee will be for two years. Its Terms of Reference are quite similar to that of SCoS, including reviewing subject results, methodology questionnaires, sampling frames, sampling design, concepts, definitions, survey instruments etc. related to all National Sample Surveys. It will also

methodology and finalise the tabulation plan of surveys.

The mandates of both the committees clash in a way, though the composition of the Steering Committee is different as it has more official members while the SCoS had several non-official members.

#### Why is there a pressure for a new census?

Serious academicians and policymakers have been demanding the Centre to conduct a census. The Opposition said that the lack of fresh data keeps crores of people away from schemes such as the National Food Security Act. The Opposition has also been questioning the numbers on employment and unemployment. On the periodic labour force surveys too, there were questions. Since the Census is conducted by the Union Home Ministry, the Ministry of

members in its meetings that it has no role in deciding the date of census. Statisticians and academics argue that the census can provide State and sub-district wise data on issues such as education and employment.

#### What are the flaws in administrative data?

While the Centre has been claiming that data provided by the EPFO, ESIC on its enrolments and Reserve Bank of India's KLEMS (K: Capital, L: Labour, E: Energy, M: Materials and S: Services) database gave a rosy picture about the employment scenario in the country. However, questions have been raised as administration data, especially on labour, is threshold-based. It is alleged that such data was airing the perspectives of policy architects or reflecting the government's intentions.

The chances of manipulating the administration data set were also high as Government agencies generated that data and it is also argued that such data has limitations of analytical rigour.

On the other hand, survey-based data, including the census, has universal coverage without any thresholds, providing a wider and bigger platform. However, surveys such as PLFS could not provide State or district-level data, but the census will be able to provide even sub-district data. PLFS also allegedly had an urban bias.

#### How urgent is the next census?

The country's decennial census has been conducted every ten years since the 1870s, with the last census in 2011. The 2021 census was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and even after three years, the Centre has not provided a roadmap for the next census. Economists and policymakers argue that relying on 2011 census data for statistical surveys, even after 13 years, will negatively impact decision making. So they suggested that the way forward is to conduct the next

#### THE GIST

The 14-member Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS), led by Pronab Sen, has been dissolved due to overlap with the Steering Committee for National Sample Surveys.

SCoS advised on survey methodologies, tabulation plans, and addressed issues related to statistical surveys.

The new 17-member Steering Committee, including four former SCoS members, will perform similar functions but with more official members.

There is significant pressure to conduct the next census, delayed from 2021 due to COVID-19, to provide updated data for decision-making.

Economists and policymakers recommend conducting the next census promptly to ensure accurate data for effective decision-making.

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- What were the key responsibilities of SCoS?**
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## The Hindu –Health(GSII)-Page 22

### Panic in the time of cholera: issues critical to managing a resurgence

Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal disease caused by the ingestion of water or food contaminated with *Vibrio cholerae*. It can cause severe diarrhoea, vomiting, and weakness. People with low immunity, such as malnourished children and people living with HIV/AIDS, are at greater risk of death.

By Anurag Kulkarni

There is a compelling case to be made for a resurgence of cholera, a disease that has been largely forgotten in the past few decades. The resurgence is not just a matter of public health, but also a matter of global equity. The resurgence is not just a matter of public health, but also a matter of global equity. The resurgence is not just a matter of public health, but also a matter of global equity.



The most common pathways of contracting the germs are by eating food cooked by infected people, drinking untreated water or contact with it.

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As a paper in Science Advances outlines, a combination of factors, including the resurgence of cholera, is a result of a complex interplay between human behaviour, the pathogen, and the environment, which contribute to both human-to-human and environment-to-human transmission pathways.

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from the Middle East and Asia declining by one-third, and cases from Africa more than doubling, was welcome, given the existing inequalities in access to health care. Not surprisingly, the global cholera crisis has caused a severe shortage of cholera vaccines. Between 2018 and 2021, more than 100 million doses were produced, but only 10% were used.

His prime message though was to focus attention on the important role of drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in curbing the disease. He also stressed the need for a multi-pronged approach to managing cholera outbreaks and preventing future ones.

2 billion people still lack access to safely managed drinking water, and 3.6 billion people lack access to safely managed sanitation. According to the data, the number of reported deaths from cholera increased last year by 37% compared to 2021. The number of cases caused by the disease in 2023 was 400,000 people last year, a decline that is preventable and avoidable.

But, as the WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in his message, "The resurgence of cholera is a result of a complex interplay between human behaviour, the pathogen, and the environment, which contribute to both human-to-human and environment-to-human transmission pathways."

GTFCC came together on the side of the World Health Assembly in a powerful show of multilateral commitment to end the global cholera emergency. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Bank – in partnership with the GTFCC – urged immediate collective action with only six years left to meet the SDG 2030 global roadmaps goals.

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- Climate change worsens cholera by affecting water sources and sanitation. Floods and droughts exacerbate contamination and bacteria concentration. Cholera Overview: Cause: Ingestion of water or food contaminated with vibrio cholerae.
- Symptoms: Severe diarrhea, vomiting, leg cramps, and weakness.
- Risk Groups: Malnourished children and people with low immunity, such as those with HIV/AIDS.
- Global Situation: Access Issues: 2 billion people lack safe drinking water; 3.6 billion lack safe sanitation.
- Increased Cases and Deaths: In 2023, cholera deaths increased by 17% and cases by 13%.
- Current Data: By August 2024, over 5,000 cases reported in South-East Asia; 2,400 deaths globally.
- Global Task Force for Cholera Control (GTFCC): Developed a 'Global Roadmap for Ending Cholera by 2030'.

## Indian Express-History (GSI)-Page 15

### From Ashokan times to now, Sanchi to Europe, story of the Great Stupa

ARJUNSENGUPTA  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 12

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday stopped by the replica of the East Gate of Sanchi's Great Stupa standing in front of Humboldt Forum museum in Berlin. The ornate red sandstone gateway, which was unveiled in December 2022, is a 1:1 reproduction of the original structure standing at almost 10 metres high and 6 metres wide, and weighing roughly 150 tonnes.

**EXPLAINED  
CULTURE**

#### The Great Stupa of Sanchi

A stupa is a Buddhist commemorative monument usually containing sacred relics of the Buddha or other venerable saints. The archetypal stupa is a hemispherical structure, whose origins can be traced to pre-Buddhist burial mounds found in India.

The Great Stupa of Sanchi exemplifies this form. Commissioned in the third century BCE by Emperor Ashoka, it is the largest and oldest structure in a complex of Buddhist monuments comprising numerous other

stupas, temples, and monasteries. The most recent construction in Sanchi can be dated to as late as the twelfth century CE.

"Sanchi is unique not only in its having the most perfect and well-preserved stupas but also in its offering a wide and educative field for the study of the genesis, efflorescence and decay of Buddhist art and architecture [in India]," Debala Mitra, the director-general of the Archaeological Survey of India from 1981 to 1983, wrote in *Sanchi* (1957). The Great Stupa is one of the oldest standing stone structures in India, believed to have been built over the Buddha's relics. Its construction was overseen by Ashoka's wife Devi, who hailed from the nearby trading town of Vidisha. The development of the Sanchi complex was supported by patronage from Vidisha's mercantile community.

#### Gateways of the Great Stupa

While the original stupa itself is a rather plain hemispherical structure crowned by a *chhatra* (parasol), what makes it instantly recognisable are the ornamental gateways or *toranas* that stand in front of it.



The East Gate of the Sanchi Stupa during the process of its restoration, c.1910. Replicas of the gate became famous in Europe after casts were made. Wikimedia Commons

The four *toranas*, oriented to the four cardinal directions, were constructed in the first century BCE, likely within a few decades of each other during the reign of the Satavahana dynasty.

These gateways are made of two square pillars which support a superstructure comprising three curved architraves (or beams) with spirally-rolled ends. The pillars and the architraves are adorned with beautiful bas-relief and sculptures depicting scenes from

The *toranas* and the balustrade surrounding the Great Stupa were once painted.

#### The East Gate and its replica

In Europe, the East Gate is the most famous of the Sanchi *toranas*. There is a historical reason behind this.

The Sanchi complex was in abject ruins when it was "discovered" by British officer Henry Taylor in 1818. Alexander Cunningham, who later founded the ASI, led the first formal survey and excavations at Sanchi in 1851. The site was restored to its present condition by ASI director-general John Marshall in the 1910s with funding from the begums of nearby Bhopal.

Till restoration work began in the late nineteenth century, however, Sanchi was frequently ravaged by treasure hunters and amateur archaeologists, some of whom wanted to take its gates to Europe. They were unable to do so, and had to make do with plaster casts instead.

The East Gate was cast in plaster by Lieutenant Henry Hardy Cole for the Victoria and Albert Museum in the late 1860s. Multiple copies of this cast were later made, and displayed across Europe.

"The art impresses greatly by its rhythm, symmetry, decorative beauty and perfect handling of the floral and plant motifs... They even admitted flagrantly amorous scenes on their sacred monuments, which do not fit in with Buddha's teachings," Mitra wrote. The gates do not, however, represent the Buddha in his human form, as was the norm in the period of their construction.

The latest Berlin replica too traces its origin to this original cast.

According to the website of the Humboldt Forum, "A plaster cast of the original gate, purchased from London, was on display in the entrance hall of the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin from 1886. A cast of this preserved copy was made of artificial stone in 1970."

This is what was used for the Humboldt Forum replica, with 3D scanning, modern robots, skilled German and Indian sculptors, and enlarged photos of the original *torana* for aid.

The upper architrave of the gate represents the seven *Manushi* Buddhas (previous Buddhas, with the historical Buddha being the latest incarnation). The middle architrave depicts the scene of the Great Departure, when prince Siddhartha leaves Kapilavastu to live as an ascetic in search of enlightenment. The lower architrave depicts Emperor Ashoka visiting the Bodhi tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment.

Other decorative elements include the *shalabhanjika* (a fertility emblem represented by a *yakshi* grasping the branch of a tree), elephants, winged lions, and peacocks.

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## Indian Express-History (GSI)-Page 16

### Recalling epic last stand of Saragarhi, 1897

MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA  
CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 12

THURSDAY MARKED the 127th anniversary of the Battle of Saragarhi, regarded today as one of the most heroic last stands in global military history.

On this day in 1897, 21 soldiers of the 36th Sikhs (now 4 Sikh) regiment led by Havildar Ishar Singh held back more than 8,000 Afridi and Orakzai tribal warriors for seven hours, killing 200 and injuring thrice that number.

The Sikhs knew they faced certain death, but they chose to fight. "They could have surrendered, yet they didn't and displayed unparalleled bravery," former Punjab Chief Minister and military historian Capt Amarinder Singh wrote in his book, *Saragarhi and the Defence of the Samana Forts: The 36th Sikhs in the Tirah campaign 1897-98* (2017).

The British, who regained control over the fortress after a few days, used the burnt bricks of Saragarhi to erect an obelisk for the fallen soldiers, and commissioned gurdwaras at Amritsar and Perozpur in their honour. The heroism of the Sikhs is commemorated today in both India and Pakistan.

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#### Saragarhi fortress

Saragarhi was the communication tower between two forts built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, which the British had renamed as Fort Lockhart and Fort Gulistan, in the rugged North West Frontier Province (NWFP), now in Pakistan.

These two forts housed large numbers of British troops; Fort Lockhart was also home to families of British officers. The wife of the commanding officer of 36th Sikh, Lt Col John Houghton, was at Fort Lockhart until May 1897, when she went home to deliver a baby.

#### The fateful day

Saragarhi was usually manned by a platoon of 40 soldiers, but on September 12, 1897, it was being held by only 21 soldiers and a non-combatant called Daad, a Pashtun who did odd jobs for the troops.

Around 9 am, the soldiers saw an approaching haze of dust, which they realised was caused by a marching tribal army of between 8,000 and 15,000 men who wanted

to isolate the two forts by cutting off communication between them.

Sepoy Gurmukh Singh sent a message through Morse code to commanding officer Lt Col Houghton asking for reinforcements, who radioed back, "Unable to breakthrough, hold position." Havildar Ishar Singh knew the consequences of staying, but responded stoically, "Understood."

#### The 22 heroes

Ishar was a maverick whom the British military historian Maj Gen James Lunt described as a "somewhat turbulent character whose independent nature had brought him more than once into conflict with his military superiors". But Ishar, who was a "in camp a nuisance", was "in the field magnificent", Maj Gen Lunt conceded.

Amarinder wrote about Ishar: "While he will always be remembered for his gallant conduct at Saragarhi, within the regiment they will also rue the loss of their best illicit liquor producer, and a man who 'borrowed' meat on hoof for his men, when short of rations, from

a neighbouring unit without asking them."

Of the 22 men – including Daad – at Saragarhi, the signaler, Naik Gurmukh Singh, was the youngest, and Naik Lal Singh 47, the oldest. Describing the last hour of the battle in his book, Amarinder wrote: "Naik Lal Singh, though severely injured was lying on his bed. Although unable to move, he was conscious and able to fire his weapon, and is reported to have kept up a steady fire, killing more pathans, as did Gurmukh Singh and Sep/Swpr Daad."

Gurmukh continued to report the battle as it unfolded. And then finding the soldiers falling one by one, sent one final message: "Permission to join the battle, Sir." The response in the affirmative came almost immediately.

Queen Victoria awarded the 21 fallen soldiers the Indian Order of Merit (comparable with the Victoria Cross) along with two 'marbas' (50 acres), and Rs 500 each.

Daad, a sweeper from Nowshera Pakistan, was denied any honour, even though he too fought bravely, killing five men before being stabbed to death. Capt Amarinder called him the 22nd soldier.

- September 12 marks the 127th anniversary of the Battle of Saragarhi, regarded today as one of the finest last stands in global military history.
- On this day in 1897, 21 soldiers were pitted against over 8,000 Afridi and Orakzai tribal militants and managed to hold down the fort for seven hours. Though heavily outnumbered, the soldiers of 36th Sikhs (now 4 Sikh) regiment, led by Havildar Ishar Singh, fought till their last breath, killing 200 militants and injuring 600.
- Saragarhi was the communication tower between Fort Lockhart and Fort Gulistan. The two forts in the rugged North West Frontier Province (NWFP), now in Pakistan, were built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh but renamed by the British.
- Though Saragarhi was usually manned by a platoon of 40 soldiers, on that fateful day, it was being held by only 21 soldiers from the 36th Sikh (now 4 Sikh) and a non-combatant called Daad, a Pashtun who did odd jobs for the troops.

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## PIB-Defense(GSIII)

Ministry of Defence

### INDIAN ARMY CONTINGENT DEPARTS FOR INDIA- OMAN JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE AL NAJAH V

Posted On: 12 SEP 2024 10:39AM by PIB Delhi

- The Indian Army contingent departed today for the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of India-Oman Joint Military Exercise AL NAJAH. The exercise is scheduled to be conducted from 13<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at Rabkoot Training Area in Salalah, Oman. Exercise AL NAJAH has been held biennially since 2015, alternating between India and Oman. Last edition of the same exercise was conducted at Mahajan in Rajasthan.
- The Indian Army contingent comprising 60 personnel is being represented by a Battalion of the Mechanised Infantry Regiment along with personnel from other arms and services. The Royal Army of Oman contingent also comprising of 60 personnel will be represented by the troops of Frontier Force.
- Aim of the Joint Exercise is to enhance joint military capability of both sides to undertake counter terrorism operations under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. The exercise will focus on operations in the Desert environment.
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# HEADLINES OF THE DAY



## PIB-Economy(GSIII)

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

### 20th Maritime State Development Council Meeting to Drive Strategic Maritime Development and Sustainability

Union Minister Shri Sarbananda Sonowal to Lead Key Discussions on Sagarmala, National Waterways, and Port Connectivity on 20th MSDC

Coastal State Leaders, Union Territory Representatives, and Senior Officials to Chart India's Maritime Development Path

The Maritime State Development Council will review the progress of these initiatives, including the Maritime India Vision 2030 and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, as we align with our future targets: Shri Sarbananda Sonowal

Posted On: 12 SEP 2024 5:07PM by PIB Delhi

- The MSDC, established in 1997, serves as the apex advisory body for the development of India's maritime sector.
- Its primary aim is to promote the integrated growth of Major and Non-Major ports in close coordination with State governments.
- The Council, chaired by the Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, comprises Ministers responsible for ports from all Maritime States, Administrators of UTs, and key stakeholders, including representatives from the Navy, Coast Guard, and other agencies.

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## Air-Economy(GSIII)

### PM Modi Announces Adoption Of Delhi Declaration On Civil Aviation



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced the adoption of the Delhi Declaration on Civil Aviation. The Declaration was adopted unanimously after the 2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference in New Delhi yesterday.
- The Declaration is a comprehensive framework aimed at enhancing regional cooperation, addressing emerging challenges and fostering sustainable growth in the civil aviation sector in the Asia-Pacific region.



Air-IR

## India, China Agree To Intensify Efforts For Complete Disengagement Along LAC



### India, China agree to intensify efforts for complete disengagement along LAC Line of Actual Control (LAC)

- The LAC is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
- India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.

It is divided into **three sectors**:

1. the **eastern sector** which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim;
2. the **middle sector** in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and;
3. the **western sector** in Ladakh. LAC in the eastern sector consisting of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim is called the **McMahon Line** which is 1,140 km long.

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## Air-IR(GSII)

### UN Observes International Day Of South-South Cooperation

Sept. 12



United Nations  
Day for  
South-South  
Cooperation

- The United Nations International Day of South-South Cooperation is being celebrated today. “A better tomorrow through South-South Cooperation” is the theme of this year. Celebration of the day annually on September 12, provides an opportunity for member states to reaffirm the value and benefits of South-South cooperation.
- The South-South cooperation is a manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being, their national and collective self-reliance and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.