

DAILY PT POINTERS

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The Hindu-GS3(Economy)Page1

GDP growth projected to fall to four-year low at 6.4%

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to rise at a four-year low pace of 6.4% in this financial year, down from 8.2% in 2023-24, the National Statistics Office (NSO) said on Tuesday in its first advance estimates of GDP for 2024-25.

This implies that the country's economy, that grew 6% in the first half of this financial year, is expected to rebound with a 6.8% surge in the second half.

The real Gross Value Added (GVA) in the Indian economy is reckoned to rise 6.4% as well, relative to a 7.2% uptick in 2023-24. Just two of eight broad economic sectors are seen to be clocking a higher growth than last year – Agriculture that is expected to rise 3.8% from 1.4%

Moving to the slow lane

Growth seen skidding to a 4-year low in FY 25; next Union Budget has its task clearly cut out



Source: MOSPI

Other Services, seen growing 9.1% from a 7.8% increase recorded in 2023-24.

Manufacturing GVA growth is expected to nearly halve from 9.9% in 2023-24 to 5.3% this year, while GVA in Mining and Quarrying is estimated to rise just 2.9% from 7.1% a year ago.

Investment growth

A broader worry is the NSO's projection that gross

fresh investments in the economy, is expected to grow at a pace of just 6.4% compared with a 9% rise in 2023-24.

"Real GDP or GDP at Constant Prices is estimated to attain a level of ₹184.88 lakh crore in the financial year 2024-25, against the Provisional Estimate of GDP for the year 2023-24 of ₹173.82 lakh crore," the NSO said.

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- This implies that the country's economy, that grew 6% in the first half of this financial year, is expected to rebound with a 6.8% surge in the second half.
- The real Gross Value Added (GVA) in the Indian economy is reckoned to rise 6.4% as well, relative to a 7.2% uptick in 2023-24. Just two of eight broad economic sectors are seen to be clocking a higher growth than last year – Agriculture that is expected to rise 3.8% from 1.4% last year, and Public Administration, Defence and Other Services, seen growing 9.1% from a 7.8% increase recorded in 2023-24.
- Manufacturing GVA growth is expected to nearly halve from 9.9% in 2023-24 to 5.3% this year, while GVA in Mining and Quarrying is estimated to rise just 2.9% from 7.1% a year ago.

The Hindu –GS2(Governance)-Page 8

Why is there a drop in school enrolments?

What does the data from the Unified District Information System for Education Plus reports tell us about student dropouts and school reduction? Why has the Ministry of Education said that 2022-23, 2023-24 UDISE+ report data is not strictly comparable with the years before it?

EXPLAINER

Maitri Porecha

The story so far:

The total enrolment of students in schools across India studying from grade 1-12, dropped by over a crore in 2023-24 as compared to 2018-19. After a gap of two years, the Ministry of Education (MoE) released the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) for 2022-23, 2023-24 on December 30, 2024.

What do the figures say?

Since 2012-13, when the MoE started maintaining UDISE+ data, it was believed that the total number of students studying in India were 26.3 crore. Till November 22, 2022 when the 2022-23 data was released, the number hovered around 26 crore, until last month, when the 2022-23 data reflected enrolment at 25.18 crore, which has further fallen to 24.8 crore in 2023-24 (a drop of 6% or 1.22 crore students) as compared to earlier years.

How did such a drop happen?

MoE officials in the UDISE+ reports have given a disclaimer that the UDISE+ reports of 2022-23 and 2023-24 are not strictly comparable to previous years reports because of a change in the 'methodology' of data collection. However, former professor and HOD, Department of Educational Management Information System at Delhi-based NIEPA, Arun Mehta, said that the UDISE+ reports are silent on the sharp dip in total enrolment of students, and the dip in government schools. "The reports do not explain the reasons behind the dip. Only change in methodology of data collection is not reason enough," said Prof. Mehta, who has worked on UDISE reports for 15 years.

What is the change in methodology?

While the MoE claims that the exercise of



Low numbers: Students go for school during a cold morning in Srinagar in November 2024. (www.istock.com)

number, was implemented from 2022-23. Prof. Mehta said that a similar exercise was initiated in 2016-17 and went on for a year. "We had anticipated even back then that there was no way of verifying data that was sent by schools regarding the number of students studying in their facilities, and so for one year NIEPA had attempted to collect individual student data with consent from the MoE. However, over subsequent years this exercise was discontinued and restarted only in 2022-23."

Prof. Mehta explains that the enrolment decline since 2022-23 can be attributed to the elimination of duplicate enrolments (of students changing schools, but their records being maintained at two or more places), inflated enrolment

comparable with previous years, upon reviewing the UDISE+ 2022-23 report, Prof. Mehta noted that efficiency indicators like dropout, transition, and retention rates of students were computed depending on UDISE+ 2022-23 data. "Despite differences in data collection methodology, indicators, rates, and ratios remain comparable as this reflects the situation at a specific point of time, regardless of the methodology used," he says. Even after revamped data collection methods were put in place, there has been a decline in the enrolment of students between 2022-23 and 2023-24 by 37 lakh. "The UDISE+ report is silent on this steep decline, nor is there an explanation for declining number of schools covered under UDISE+, whether this decline of schools is due to merging or closing down of schools is not clear," Prof. Mehta says. There is also a stark decrease in the number of schools covered under UDISE+. There was a drop in the number of schools covered – from 15, 58, 903 (2017-18) to 14,71,891 (2023-24), a decline of 87,012 schools. Most of these schools are government-run, with 76,883 lesser schools recorded in the latest 2023-24 data. "MoE must furnish reasons for the decline of schools. Was this due to the shutting down and merger of schools? and while shutting down schools, were the Right to Education norms of having one primary school within a kilometre followed?," Prof. Mehta said.

For instance, in 2022-23, ₹32,515 crore (actual) was incurred under the Samagra Shiksha scheme, during the time when enrolment dropped (the latest figure reveals). In the current financial year of 2024-25, the allocation under the scheme is higher at ₹37,010 crore.

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How comparable is UDISE+ data of last years with 2022-23, 2023-24 data?

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THE GIST

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Which States are the most affected? Jammu and Kashmir experienced the most decline in total schools, with a decline of 4,509 schools, while in Assam 4,229 schools reduced, and in Uttar Pradesh 2,967. Other affected states are Madhya Pradesh (2,170) and Maharashtra (1,368). "With the shutting down of schools, parents seek re-admission of their children to another nearby school. It is not an automatic transfer. Students drop out during this process, where parents are not comfortable seeking

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The Hindu –GS1(Geography)-Page 8

Why the location of China's earthquake matters

What is a terrane? Was China's construction of the world's largest hydroelectric-power dam near the area where the 7.1 quake happened? What is the significance of the location?

The Hindu Bureau

The story so far:

At 6:35 am IST on January 7, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.1 struck Tibetan China and Nepal. The epicentre was located 10 km below a spot around 80 km north of Mt Everest. As of 7 pm, Chinese state media had reported 95 people dead, 130 injured, and hundreds of houses flattened on its side of the border. Updates on damage and casualties from other areas, including Nepal, are awaited. There have also been reports of the tremors being felt as far away as

Tibet. This region lies 4.5 km above sea level on average and is home to some eight lakh people; the county itself is home to around 7,000 people.

The region's capital city is the seat of the important Panchen Lama of Tibetan Buddhism and thus bears considerable spiritual significance. The Dalai Lama issued a statement in which he said: "I offer my prayers for those who have lost their lives and extend my wishes for a swift recovery to all who have been injured." Tingry county is also a 'gateway' to Mt Everest and the surrounding terrain, which is a popular tourist destination. Local authorities have said however that

the quake's mainshock may have emerged in the Lhasa terrane. A terrane is a specific fragment of the crust.

The Lhasa terrane includes sites involved in China's construction of the world's largest hydroelectric-power dam. The Chinese government approved the project last month. Once completed, the project will straddle the Yarlung Tsangpo River and generate around 300 billion kWh per year.

The project has elicited expressions of concerns from India since the river subsequently flows into Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, where it becomes the Brahmaputra.

of people who depend on this water. Earthquakes have been known to force rivers to change course and to destabilise glaciers and lakes and increase the risk of flooding.

Third, the cause of the quake is also related to the significance of its location.

What caused the quake?

The tale of how the Himalayan mountains were created is well-known. Around 50 million years ago, the Indian plate collided with the Eurasian plate, causing rocks to fold and rise to create the mountains.

The tension between the two plates has continued to build as the Indian plate is still pushing in at around 60 mm/year. Earthquakes and tremors occur when the rock formations in the region shift ever so slightly as they adjust to the tension.

Since 1950, geologists have recorded more than 21 earthquakes of magnitude 6 or higher in the Lhasa terrane alone. The strongest of these occurred near Mainling in 2017 with a magnitude of 6.9, according to Reuters. Mainling is 960 km east of Tingry county.

To understand where the next quake

THE GIST

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The Hindu-IR (GSII)-Page 9

India, U.S. to jointly manufacture interoperable sonobuoys for Navy

These undersea instruments are niche equipment effective in detecting submarines lurking deep in the oceans; both countries are cooperating on high-end technology amid rapid expansion of Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

In a significant development, India and the United States announced cooperation on co-production of U.S. sonobuoys for undersea domain awareness (UDA) for the Indian Navy, a high-end technology that allows tracking submarines in the deep seas and oceans.

This is the latest in a series of cooperation measures between the two countries as both grow wary of the rapid expansion of Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean Region.

"Welcoming the advancement of discussions between Ultra Maritime (UM) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) to enhance undersea domain awareness through a first-of-its-kind partnership on co-production of U.S. sonobuoys in support of the U.S. and Indian defence industrial bases," said a fact sheet titled "The U.S. and



State of the art: Discussions are on between Ultra Maritime and Bharat Dynamics Ltd. on a partnership for the co-production of sonobuoys. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan's visit to India on the aspect of deepening defence innovation and industrial cooperation.

Mr. Sullivan, on his final trip to the region as NSA, held a capstone meeting with his Indian counterpart, Ajit Doval.

"In line with the U.S.-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) launched in May 2022, the Ultra Maritime and BDL teams will also pursue new sonobuoy technologies to optimise their acoustic performance in the unique environment

tra Maritime, a U.S.-based world leader in the design and production of undersea warfare capabilities, said in a statement.

They will jointly manufacture and supply sonobuoys for the Indian Navy as per U.S. Navy standards, with production split across the U.S. and India, in accordance with "Make in India" principles, it stated.

"The announcement today by NSA Jake Sullivan reflects Ultra Maritime's commitment to the Indian Navy in partnering with BDL for production and

solutions to unique undersea challenges," said Ultra Maritime CEO Carlo Zaffanella in the statement.

BDL Chairman Commodore A. Madhavarao (retd.) said BDL was completely aligned with the Indian Navy to meet the operational demand for 'Make in India' sonobuoys and committed to joint production with Ultra Maritime in Visakhapatnam.

Highlighting the aspect of interoperability, a key focus area, Rear Admiral Mark Kenny (retd.), senior vice-president at Ultra Maritime for strategy and busi-

erable between U.S. Navy, Indian Navy and allied P-8, MH-60R and the MQ-9B Sea Guardian aircraft."

Significant move

This is particularly significant as India has over the years acquired a series of military platforms from the U.S. that are also operated by other countries in the region, especially Australia and Japan, all four of which comprise the Quad grouping and also hold the Malabar naval exercise.

The Indian Navy operates the P-8I long range maritime patrol aircraft, is inducting the MH-60R multi-role helicopters and has two MQ-9A armed High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems on lease and signed a \$3.5 billion contract in October 2024 for 31 MQ-9B - 15 Sea Guardians for the Indian Navy and 16 Sky Guardians, eight each for the Army and Air Force, with deliveries to begin from January 2029. After Maritime

- India and the United States have announced a collaboration to co-produce U.S. sonobuoys for undersea domain awareness (UDA) to help the Indian Navy track submarines. This partnership is part of growing defense cooperation between the two countries, especially in response to China's expanding naval presence in the Indian Ocean Region.
- The U.S.-based company, Ultra Maritime, and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) will jointly manufacture sonobuoys in India, adhering to "Make in India" principles. This collaboration follows the U.S.-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) launched in 2022. The sonobuoys will be optimized for the Indian Ocean's unique acoustic environment and be interoperable with U.S., Indian, and allied military platforms like P-8, MH-60R, and MQ-9B.

The Hindu-Space(GSIII)-Page 12

V. Narayanan, spacecraft and rocket propulsion expert, appointed ISRO Chairman

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

V. Narayanan has been appointed the new Space Secretary. Dr. Narayanan, who is currently the Director of Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), will be the new Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), and he will take over from S. Somanath on January 14.

"The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved appointment of V. Narayanan, Director, Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre, Valiamala, as Secretary, Department of Space, and Chairman, Space Commission for a period of two years with effect from 14.01.2025, or until further orders, whichever



V. Narayanan

Dr. Narayanan, who is a rocket and spacecraft propulsion expert, joined the ISRO in 1984 and functioned in various capacities before becoming Director of the LPSC.

During the initial phase of his career he worked in the solid propulsion area of sounding rockets and Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV) and Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). He has also

He will take over from Somanath, who oversaw landmark missions such as Chandrayaan-3

namely GSLV Mk-II & GSLV Mk-III.

"As the Chairman of the National Expert Committee constituted to study the reasons for hardlanding of Chandrayaan-2 lander, contributed in pinpointing the reasons and corrective actions required to overcome the observations. Realised and delivered all the Propulsion Systems for Chandrayaan-3," Dr. Narayanan's profile says.

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- V. Narayanan has been appointed the new Space Secretary. Dr. Narayanan, who is currently the Director of Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), will be the new Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), and he will take over from S. Somanath on January 14.
- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is the space agency of India.
- The organisation is involved in science, engineering and technology to harvest the benefits of outer space for India and the mankind. ISRO is a major constituent of the Department of Space (DOS), Government of India. The department executes the Indian Space Programme primarily through various Centres or units within ISRO.

Indian Express-IR(GSII)

Indonesia joins BRICS bloc as full member



Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto

Sao Paulo: Indonesia will formally join BRICS as a full member, Brazil's government said on Monday, further expanding the group of major emerging economies that also includes Russia, India, China and South Africa. Indonesia's foreign ministry said in a statement Tuesday that it welcomed the announcement and that "BRICS membership is a strategic way to increase collaboration and partnership with other developing nations." Indonesia, the world's fourth

- Indonesia has officially joined the BRICS as a full member, Brazil's government announced on Monday. The group, which brings together major emerging economies, now consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and Indonesia.
- BRICS has been expanding its membership in recent years. Alongside Indonesia, the bloc also includes Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, reflecting its growing influence among developing nations.

EXPLAINED CLIMATE

Earth's water cycle, and how climate change is impacting it


ALIND CHAUHAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 7

CLIMATE CHANGE has been "wreaking havoc" on Earth's water cycle by disrupting how water circulates between the ground, oceans and atmosphere, according to a new report. This has led to extreme precipitation, ferocious floods and droughts, which affected billions of people across the world in 2024.

The report, '2024 Global Water Monitor Report', was produced by an international team of researchers from universities in Australia, Saudi Arabia, China, Germany, and elsewhere. For their analysis, the researchers used data from ground stations and satellites to access water variables such as soil moisture, rainfall etc.

What is the water cycle?

The water cycle is the constant movement of water in all its phases — solid, liquid and gas — on the ground, inside the



A flood-affected area following heavy rainfall in Ostrava, Czech Republic, in September 2024. Reuters

snow. Climate change has intensified this cycle — as air temperatures soar, more water evaporates into the air. Warmer air can hold more water vapour, which makes storms more dangerous as it leads to an increase in precipitation intensity, duration and/ or frequency, which ultimately causes severe flooding.

- Climate change is disrupting Earth's water cycle, affecting the circulation of water between the ground, oceans, and atmosphere.
- This disruption has led to extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall, severe floods, and droughts, impacting billions of people globally in 2024.
- The '2024 Global Water Monitor Report' was produced by an international team of researchers from universities in Australia, Saudi Arabia, China, Germany, and other countries.
- Researchers used data from ground stations and satellites to study variables like soil moisture and rainfall.
- Understanding the Water Cycle:
The water cycle refers to the continuous movement of water in its solid, liquid, and gas forms on Earth (ground, atmosphere, and oceans).
- The process is driven by solar energy and temperature changes. Water evaporates from the ground or water bodies, rises into the atmosphere as vapor, and is later released through precipitation.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air-Governance(GSII)

1st Meeting Of Joint Parliamentary Committee On 'One Nation One Election' Bills To Be Held



- The first meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on two bills related to the One Nation One Election will be held today.
- The Bills are officially named as the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024 and Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024. The representatives of the Ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative Department) will brief the members on the provisions of the proposed laws.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air-IR(GSII)

India Malaysia Agree To Enhance Cooperation In Critical Minerals And Rare Earth Elements



- India and Malaysia have agreed to deepen cooperation in counter-terrorism and deradicalization, cyber security, defence industry, and maritime security. During the India-Malaysia Security Dialogue in New Delhi today, both countries explored ways to enhance cooperation in critical minerals and rare earth elements.
- The First India-Malaysia Security Dialogue was co-chaired by National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval and Director General of the National Security Council of Malaysia Raja Dato Nushirwan Bin Zainal Abidin. The Ministry of External Affairs in a statement said that during the dialogue both sides exchanged views on the global and regional security environment. It also reviewed ongoing bilateral cooperation in the security, defence and maritime fields.