



PIB, THE HINDU Newspaper and Editorial

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1. **Om Birla named as NDA's choice for Speaker's post:**

Why in news?

Two-term BJP MP from Rajasthan, Om Birla, will be the new Speaker of the Lok Sabha, after he was nominated by the ruling NDA for the post. Mr. Birla has been a three-term MLA in the Rajasthan Assembly and represents the Kota constituency in the Lok Sabha. He will assume office on June 19 after being elected by the House MPs.

Political Consensus:

- Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Prahlad Joshi said that apart from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, and Roads and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari were the proposers of Mr. Birla's name.
- Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Shiv Sena, National People's Party, Mizo National Front, Akali Dal, Lok Janshakti Party, YSRCP, Janata Dal (U), AIADMK and Apna Dal have signed the proposal," said Mr. Joshi.
- The BJP also reached out to the Congress during the day and by evening newly appointed leader of the Congress legislature party in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Choudhary, said that his party too would be supporting Mr. Birla's candidature.

Experienced MP:

- While it is the norm for experienced MPs to be considered for the position of Speaker, it will not be the first time that a second-term MP will be appointed to the post.
- Before this, Balram Jakhar was Speaker between 1980-1989 in his first and second terms respectively.
- Manohar Joshi of the Shiv Sena was appointed Speaker in his first term in the Lok Sabha while late Speaker G M C Balayogi of the TDP got the position in his second term.
- The choice of Mr. Birla although disclosed at the last moment is not surprising, with the BJP sending out several signals with one appointment.
- A man with an RSS background, Mr. Birla is also an influential member of the

Agarwal community, a bedrock of support of the BJP.

- In State politics, Mr. Birla is not considered very close to the Raje camp, but enjoys the confidence of Prime Minister Modi. He has been popular among partymen for much generosity, lending out his official bungalow to indigent party workers and helping out those in need of medical assistance.

2. **Uptick for India on sanitation in UN report:**

Why in news?

India has made great gains in providing basic sanitation facilities since the start of the millennium, accounting for almost two-thirds of the 650 million people globally who stopped practising open defecation between 2000 and 2017.

Findings of the report:

- However, a **monitoring report** by UN organisations released shows that there has been absolutely no growth in the population with access to piped water facilities over that period, while large inequalities remain between rural and urban areas.
- As for drinking water, the Joint Monitoring Programme report by UNICEF and WHO shows India has increased the percentage of its population with access to a protected drinking water source less than 30 minutes away, from 79% in 2000 to 93% in 2017.
- However, the percentage of households getting **piped water has remained stagnant at 44%** over the 17-year period.
- **In rural India, only 32% of the population has access to piped water, less than half of the 68% who have access in urban India.**
- Drinking water is now the highest priority of the development agenda for this government.
- The contours of a new scheme, tentatively called **Nal Se Jal**, are being drafted this month.

Sanitation status:

- With regard to sanitation, India's record has been better.
- The country is responsible for almost single-handedly dragging the world towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal of ending open defecation.
- The South Asian region, including India, accounted for almost three-fourths of the population who stopped defecating in the open between 2000 and 2017, according to the report.
- Of the 2.1 billion people who gained access to basic sanitation services over this time period globally, 486 million live in India.
- India's Swachh Bharat mission has been an example and inspiration to other countries.

- Nigeria sent a delegation to study the programme.
- This programme had four reasons for its success: political leadership, public financing, partnerships and people's participation."

Solid waste management:

- The millions of new toilets which mark the progress of the Swachh Bharat mission are, however, producing large amounts of solid and liquid waste that India simply does not have the ability to treat and dispose of safely.
- According to the report, **only 30% of the country's waste water is treated** at plants providing at least secondary treatment, in comparison to an 80% global average.
- Solid and liquid waste management will be the focus of Swachh Bharat phase 2. Govt. will launch the roadmap and strategy for that programme next month.

Right to sanitation:

- The human right to sanitation implies that people not only have a right to a hygienic toilet but also have a right not to be negatively affected by unmanaged faecal waste.
- This is most relevant to poor and marginalised groups who tend to be disproportionately affected by other people's unmanaged faecal sludge and sewage, says the report, highlighting inequalities beyond toilet access.

3. India to be most populous by 2027:

Why in news?

India is set to overtake China as the most populous country by 2027 and will have almost **1.64 billion inhabitants by 2050**, says a United Nations report, adding that South Asia's opportunity to reap the "**demographic dividend**" will peak by 2047.

Demographic Prospects:



- Globally, people aged above 65 are the fastest growing age group, putting pressure on **social protection systems** as the proportion of the working-age population shrinks.
- According to the **World Population Prospects 2019** report released, India is expected to add 273 million people by 2050, which will be the largest national increase in the world.
- China, on the other hand, is expected to become smaller, dropping from its current 1.43 billion people to approximately 1.4 billion by 2050.
- However, while India may have the highest absolute increase in numbers, its rate of growth is slowing.
- The Central and the Southern Asia region, of which India is a part, is expected to see a 25% increase in population between now and 2050.

Rate of population growth:

- The rate of population growth is the highest in sub-Saharan Africa, where the fertility rate stand at 4.6 births per woman over a lifetime.
- The region is expected to double its population by mid-century.
- Nigeria is expected to add 200 million people over the next three decades and overtake the U.S. to become the third most populous nation.

Age Cohorts:

- Moving from geographical areas to age cohorts, India is still among the countries where the **working-age population** (25-64 years) is growing faster than other groups, creating an opportunity for accelerated economic growth.
- However, the “demographic dividend” will peak by 2047 in the region, meaning that countries such as India must rush to invest in education and health, especially for young people, the report says.
- Globally, it’s the post-working-age group that is growing the fastest. By 2050, one in six people will be above 65, compared with one in 11 people in 2019.
- In 2018, for the first time in history, people above 65 outnumbered children under five years of age. By 2050, the number of people over 80 is expected to triple to 426 million.
- This trend has also led to falling proportions of working-age people to support an ageing population.
- By 2050, almost 50 countries are expected to have less than two working-age people to support every person above 65.

Impact of ageing:

- These low values underscore the potential impact of population ageing on the labour market and economic performance as well as the fiscal pressures that many countries will face in the coming decades as they seek to build and maintain public systems of health care, pensions and social protection for older persons.

4. SC defers doctors’ plea for security:

Why in news?

The Supreme Court deferred the hearing on a plea seeking protection for doctors in government hospitals, in view of doctors having called off their strike in West Bengal and other States.

Serious Concerns:

- A Bench of Justices Deepak Gupta and Surya Kant said there was no urgency in the matter as the strike had been called off. It, however, noted that the issue of

providing security to doctors was a “serious” one and needed a holistic view

- Can we direct state to deploy police force, [when] we don't know the strength. It's like saying there should not be any murder,” the Bench said adding, “we know it is a serious issue, but we can't provide protection to doctors at the cost of other citizens. We have to take a holistic picture”.
- Meanwhile, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has moved an application seeking to be made a party in the case. Advocate Alakh Alok Srivastava, in his petition, has sought to depute government-appointed uniformed security personnel at all government hospitals across the country for ensuring the safety of doctors.
- He said that as per a study conducted by IMA, more than **75% of doctors across the country had faced some form of violence**. “This study concluded that 50% violent incidents took place in the hospital ICUs and in 70% of cases, the relatives of the patients were actively involved,” he said.

5. **15 more Finance Ministry officials get marching orders:**

Why in news?

In another action aimed at cleaning up government service, the Union government sent 15 senior Finance Ministry officials into compulsory retirement.

Cleansing government:

- This comes a week after President Ram Nath Kovind issued orders for the retirement of 12 senior officials of the Ministry for alleged corruption, extortion and sexual harassment.
- While last week's action was against officers of the Income Tax Department, this time, senior officers of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) faced action.
- In exercise of the powers conferred by **Clause (J) of Rule 56 of the Fundamental Rules**, the President of India has retired 15 officers of Indian Revenue Service (C&CE) in public interest with immediate effect on completing 50 years of age.
- The 15 officers of the ranks of Assistant Commissioner, Principal Commissioner or Commissioner are to be paid a sum equivalent to the amount of pay and allowances for a period of three months at the same rate at which they would have received immediately before their retirement.
- Finance Ministry sources said complaints against the officials included corruption, extortion, acquisition of moveable and immoveable assets that were not disclosed to the competent authorities, smuggling and bribery.
- The President chose to remove the officials immediately rather than opting for the choice of giving them three months' notice.
- Clause (J) of Rule 56 of the Fundamental Rules says: “The Appropriate Authority shall, if it is of the opinion that it is in the public interest to do so, have the

absolute right to retire any government servant by giving him notice of not less than three months in writing or three months' pay and allowances in lieu of such notice."

6. **U.S. deploys more troops to West Asia:**

Why in news?

China and Russia warned about escalating West Asian tensions after Washington said it would deploy 1,000 more troops to the region and renewed accusations that Iran was behind a tanker attack.

More tensions in the middle east:



- The U.S. moves came as Iran set a 10-day countdown for world powers to fulfil their commitments under a nuclear deal abandoned by Washington, saying it would otherwise surpass the uranium stockpile limit mandated by the accord.
- I have authorised approximately 1,000 additional troops for defensive purposes to address air, naval, and ground-based threats in the Middle East," acting Pentagon chief Patrick Shanahan said in a statement.
- The recent Iranian attacks validate the reliable, credible intelligence we have received on hostile behaviour by Iranian forces and their proxy groups that threaten U.S. personnel and interests across the region."
- Mr. Trump said he would order a U.S. military response if Iran had to be stopped getting nuclear arms, but he was not eager for war otherwise, downplaying the attacks on the oil tankers. He, though, accepted the U.S. intelligence assessment that Iran was behind the explosions.

Tanker attacks:

- The U.S. has blamed Iran for last week's attacks on two tankers in the Gulf of Oman, a charge Tehran denies as "baseless".
- The Pentagon released new images on Monday that it said showed Iran was behind the attack on one of the ships.
- The U.S. argument centres on an unexploded limpet mine on the tanker ship Kokuka Courageous that it says was removed by Iranians on a patrol boat.
- Iran is responsible for the attack based on video evidence and the resources and proficiency needed to quickly remove the unexploded limpet mine," the Pentagon said in a statement
- The U.S. released a grainy video last week it said showed the Iranians removing the mine. The images released on Monday show the site where the unexploded mine was allegedly attached, the Iranians on a patrol boat who are said to have removed it, and damage from another device that did explode.

Won't wage war:

- However, Iran President Hassan Rouhani insisted that Tehran would “not wage war against any nation.
- Despite all of the Americans’ efforts in the region and their desire to cut off our ties with all of the world and their desire to keep Iran secluded, they have been unsuccessful,” Mr. Rouhani said.
- In Moscow, President Vladimir Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov urged all sides “to show restraint.” “We would prefer not to see any steps that could introduce additional tensions in the already unstable region.”
- China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi warned all sides not to take any actions to provoke the escalation of tension in the region, and not to open a Pandora's box.
- He urged Washington to “change its practice of extreme pressure but also called on Tehran not to abandon the nuclear deal.

7. **E-com firms take up data localisation issues with Goyal:**

Why in news?

E-commerce companies voiced their concerns about the Reserve Bank of India’s **data localisation norms** with Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal.

Towards a framework:

- They also highlighted the data-related provisions of the draft e-commerce policy during the meeting. Mr. Goyal asked them to submit their concerns in writing within 10 days and assured them that his Ministry would take them on board.
- The meeting was held by [Mr.] Piyush Goyal in order to understand their concerns and take their suggestions towards building a robust data protection framework that will achieve the dual purpose of privacy and innovation and strengthen India’s position as a global tech leader with focus on trust and innovation, the Commerce Ministry said in a statement.
- Some of the companies also raised concerns about the draft e-commerce policy released by the government, especially provisions related to treatment of data.
- For example, we tried to explain to them that the provision that the government should have the sovereign right over all data at all times was unviable,” the CEO of one of the companies present at the meeting told.
- For many businesses that is the only intellectual property that they have. I think, on the aggregate data point, they are coming around.
- The other issue was the government’s demand for data from companies, where the companies argued that the data should be shared only for law and order and investigation situations.

8. **Incentivise investments in IPOs, MFs, set up development mission:**

Why in news?

Capital market participants have suggested the government establish a '**National Development Mission**' by incentivising investments in public issues and mutual funds that could help the exchequer garner Rs. 1.75 lakh crore during the current financial year.

Incentivising investment:

- The funds can be used for national development activities.
- The suggestion, which is part of the pre-budget proposals submitted by market participants, states that the government can provide certain tax benefits for such investments that could also, in turn, enhance the equity investment culture in the country.
- We propose that all individuals and HUFs should be eligible to invest in IPO/FPOs/mutual funds for a sum of Rs. 50,000 per annum.
- To incentivise this investment, 50% of the amount invested should be allowed as a deduction from the gross total income of the individual/HUF," stated the memorandum submitted to the Finance Ministry.
- The memorandum further states that the government would be able to garner at least Rs. 1.75 lakh crore in 2019-20 even if only 50% of the tax assesses use this avenue to invest.

No-obligation capital:

- The advantage of this fund raising is that as it is in the form of equity so it is sunk capital with no obligation to either return the funds or to give regular return on the funds invested, added the note.
- Interestingly, the amount mobilised could go up to as much as Rs. 2.45 lakh crore in the next five years as the number of assesses rise and more tax-payers use the incentives to invest in equity, as per the note.

9. **Lunar orbiter spacecraft arrives in Sriharikota:**

Why in news?

The mother orbiter spacecraft of Mission Chandrayaan-2 has reached the launch port of Sriharikota from Bengaluru and will soon be joined by its lander and rover companions, the ISRO said.

Payload Arrival:

- Their epic journey of 3.84 lakh km to Moon, to land on it and explore its surface will begin on July 15.
- The orbiter was despatched from the **U.R. Rao Satellite Centre** here late last week and reached the launch port of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre on June 15.

- ISRO Chairman K. Sivan flagged off the road shipment carrying the lander and the rover at the URSC in the presence of URSC Director P. Kunhikrishnan and Chandrayaan-2 project director M. Vanitha.

10. **Grey wolf from India killed in Bangladesh:**

Why in news?

An Indian grey wolf that was recently killed by farmers in Bangladesh, where the carnivore was believed to have been wiped out eight decades ago, could have been the one that was caught on camera in a part of the Sundarbans in West Bengal two years ago.

last remaining:

- The grey wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*) was killed in the first week of June by farmers near the Bangladesh part of the Sundarbans because it had attacked their livestock.
- In April 2017, a wildlife photographer had shot a photograph of a lone wolf in the Indian part of the Sundarbans.
- It is possible that the one that got killed in Bangladesh is the same wolf spotted in West Bengal two years ago, as both individuals were male.
- Zoologists collected DNA samples from the animal to confirm it as a grey wolf.

11. **Educational norms for drivers may be eased:**

Why in news?

The government is likely to waive mandatory educational qualification for truckers and bus drivers for seeking a driver's licence in what it says is an attempt to provide employment opportunities.

Relaxation of norms:

- Under Rule 8 of the **Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989**, a transport vehicle driver needs to have passed class 8.
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said that it would amend this rule and issue a draft notification shortly for comments from stakeholders.
- The removal of this requirement will open up employment opportunities for a large number of unemployed persons, especially the youth," the Ministry said in a press statement.
- The statement said the move would help meet the shortage of 22 lakh drivers in the transport and logistics sector.
- The relaxation is applicable for drivers of medium and heavy transport vehicles,

which include trucks as well as State transport, school and private buses.

