

13th June – 19th June Weekly Compilation

(The Hindu+ Indian Express + PIB + Other World-Wide News)

Election Commission

(Source: Indian Express)

In News: The EC sent six key proposals to the Law Ministry

- **Linking of Aadhaar with voter IDs**
- Allowing **four qualifying dates for eligible people to register as voters**
- **Ban on exit polls and opinion polls** and said there should be some restriction on conducting and disseminating the results of opinion polls right from the day of the first notification of an election till the completion of the election in all its phases
- Also recommended **limiting the seats from which a candidate can contest to just one**
- The EC has also sought **powers to deregister political parties**
- EC has sought the modification of Form 24A to mandate **the disclosure of all donations above Rs 2,000 instead of Rs 20,000**

Linking Aadhaar with voter IDs

- In December 2021, **Parliament passed the Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021** enabling “the linking of electoral roll data with the Aadhaar ecosystem”

Enrollment

- As of now, for an election to be held in a particular year, **only an individual who has attained the age of 18 years as on January 1 of that year or before is eligible to be enrolled** in the voters’ list.
- The ECI had told the government that the January 1 cut-off date set for the purpose **deprives several youngsters from participating in the electoral exercise** held in a particular year.

What are exit & opinion polls?

- An **opinion poll is a pre-election survey to gather voters’ views** on a range of election-related issues.
- An **exit poll is conducted immediately after people have voted, and assesses the support for political parties and their candidates.**

Why is the Election Commission (EC) against these polls?

- Both kinds of polls can be **controversial if the agency conducting them is perceived to be biased.**

- The projections of these surveys can be **influenced by the choice, wording and timing of the questions, and by the nature of the sample drawn.**
- Political parties often allege that many opinion and exit polls are **motivated and sponsored by their rivals**, and could have a distorting effect on the choices voters make in a protracted election, rather than simply reflecting public sentiment or views.

Number of Seats

- The EC has sought an **amendment of Section 33(7) of the Representation of People Act, 1951 to restrict the number of seats a candidate can contest from.**
- The Act currently **allows a person to contest a general election or a group of by-elections or biennial elections from up to two constituencies.**

Registration and De registration

- Section 29A of the **Representation of the People Act, 1951 empowers the commission to register associations and bodies as political parties.**
- However, there is **no constitutional or statutory provision that gives power to the EC to deregister parties.**
- Many political parties get registered, but never contest election. Such parties exist only on paper.
- The possibility of forming political parties with an eye on availing the benefit of income tax exemption also cannot be ruled out.
- It would only be logical that the commission which has the power to register political parties is also empowered to deregister in appropriate cases

Abnormal' dinosaur egg in India

(Source: The Hindu)

In News: A team of researchers from the University of Delhi has **discovered a unique set of fossilised dinosaur eggs, with one egg nesting within the other** at the **Dinosaur Fossil National Park**, in Dhar District of Madhya Pradesh.

- While **eggs-within-eggs are rare phenomena**, they are so far **known to occur only in birds and have never known in reptiles.**
- This discovery brings out newer connections between reptilian and avian evolution.
- **Dinosaurs of the Sauropod family were among the largest land animals that have ever lived and were widespread millions of years ago in the territory that is now India.**
- Fossils of these animals have been found in **Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh as well as Meghalaya.**
- Latest findings, documented 52 titanosaurid sauropod nests near Padlya village close to Bagh town in Madhya Pradesh. One of these nests consisted of 10 eggs, one of which **was the "abnormal" egg.**

- The egg has **two continuous and circular eggshell layers separated by a wide gap** like that observed in birds.
- It was believed that dinosaurs had a **reproductive function similar to that of turtles and other reptiles (unsegmented oviduct) in contrast to segmented reproductive tract** of crocodiles and birds with separate regions of membrane and shell deposition.
- The finding of ovum-in-ovo egg from a titanosaurid nest opens up the possibility that sauropod dinosaurs had an oviduct morphology similar to those of crocodiles or birds and they may have adapted to a mode of an egg-laying characteristic of birds



The new find highlights the fact that Central and Western India hold great potential for dinosaur fossils which may offer important information on dinosaur diversity, nesting behaviour and reproductive biology, the authors note.

Ramsay Hunt Syndrome

(Source: Indian Express)

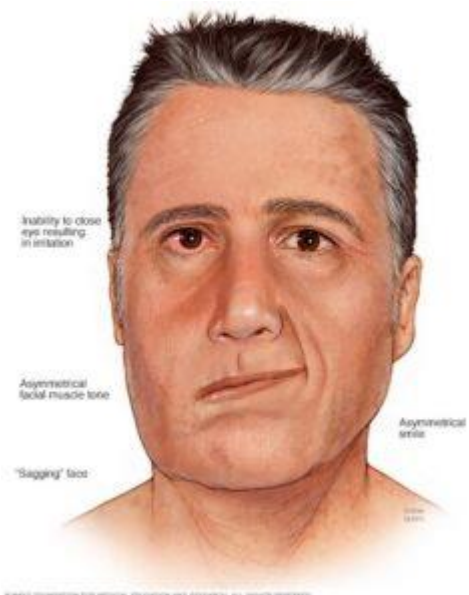
What is Ramsay Hunt Syndrome?

- Ramsay Hunt syndrome (herpes zoster oticus) occurs **when a shingles outbreak affects the facial nerve near one of your ears.**
- In addition to the **painful shingles rash**, Ramsay Hunt syndrome **can cause facial paralysis and hearing loss in the affected ear.**
- Ramsay Hunt syndrome is **caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox – the varicella-zoster virus (VZV)**
- **After chickenpox clears up, the virus still lives in your nerves.**
- **Years later, it may reactivate.** When it does, it can affect your facial nerves

Symptoms

The two main signs and symptoms of Ramsay Hunt syndrome are:

- **A painful red rash with fluid-filled blisters on, in and around one ear**
- **Facial weakness or paralysis on the same side as the affected ear**



Risk factors

- Ramsay Hunt syndrome can **occur in anyone who has had chickenpox**.
- It's more **common in older adults**, typically affecting people older than 60.
- Ramsay Hunt syndrome is **rare in children**.
- Ramsay Hunt syndrome **isn't contagious**.
- However, reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus can cause chickenpox in people who haven't previously had chickenpox or been vaccinated for it.
- The infection can be serious for people who have immune system problems.

Sant Tukaram

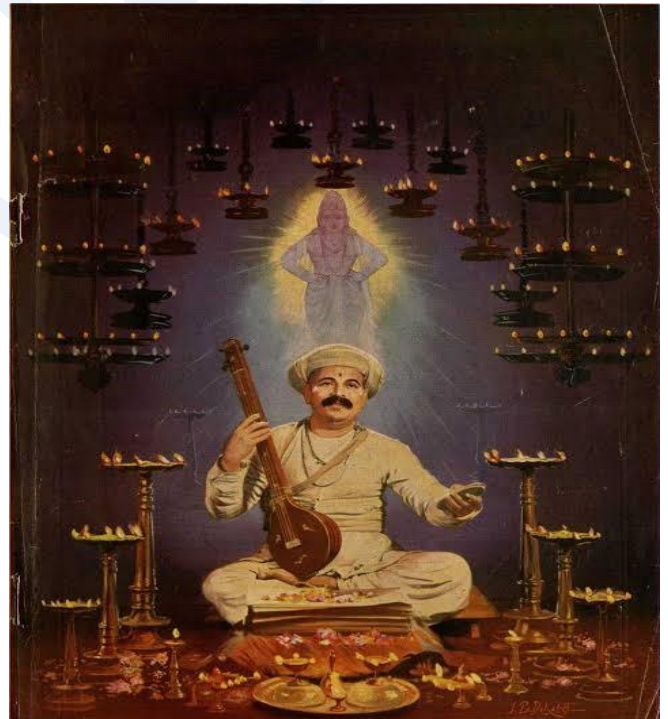
(Sources: Indian Express)

Context:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate **the Sant Tukaram Shila Mandir in the temple town of Dehu in Pune district**.

About Sant Tukaram:

- He was the contemporary of **Shivaji**.
- He is considered as **the greatest Maratha Bhakthi reformer**.
- He made **the Vithoba cult popular**.
- He composed devotional songs on **Vithalswamy called as Abhangs**.
- He preached the message of equality and universal brotherhood.
- Sant Tukaram and his work are central to **the Warkari sect spread across Maharashtra**.
- Sant Tukaram is credited with starting **the Wari pilgrimage**.
- His master was **Saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu** of the Bhakti movement.



Social reforms:

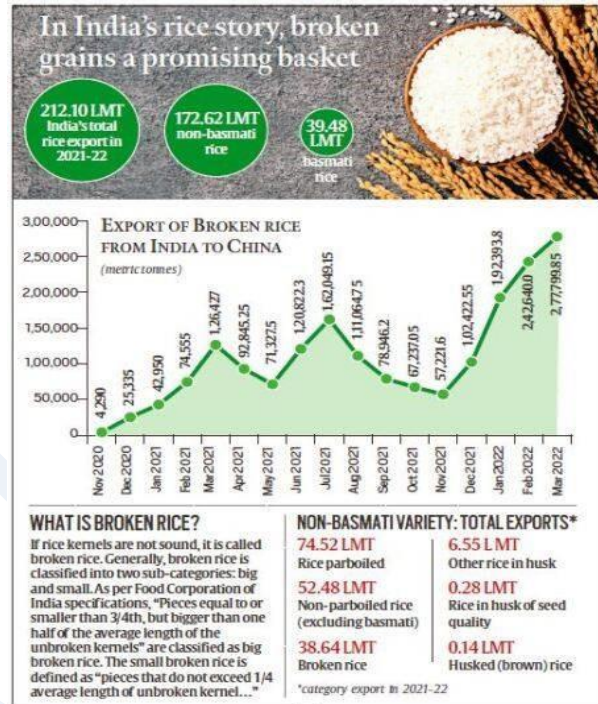
- Tukaram accepted disciples and devotees without discriminating gender.
- Tukaram taught that "pride of caste never made any man holy", "the Vedas and Shastras have said that for the service of God, castes do not matter", "castes do not matter, it is God's name that matters".

China Imports Indian Broken Rice

(Source: Indian Express)

In News: China takes over as biggest importer of Indian broken rice

- China emerged as the **top buyer of Indian rice during the pandemic, with the import of 7.7 per cent** — of India's total rice export in financial year 2021-22
- The analysis shows that **out of China's total rice import from India of 16.34 LMT, nearly 97 per cent was broken rice**, which has seen a spike in demand from that country.
- Thus making **China the top buyer of Indian broken rice**, which was earlier, exported mostly to African countries.



Rice exports of India

- In 2021-22, **India's total rice exports — both basmati and non-basmati — was 212.10 LMT, which is 19.30 per cent higher** than 177.79 LMT exported in 2020-21
- Of India's total rice export in 2021-22, **basmati rice accounted for 39.48 LMT**, which was 14.73 per cent lower than 46.30 LMT exported in 2020-21.
- **Non-basmati rice accounts for the lion's share in the basket** of Indian rice exports.
- During 2021-22, export of rice other than basmati was 172.62 LMT, which was 31.27 per cent higher than 131.49 LMT in 2020-21.

Reasons for import by China

- The reason for this increase in export of broken rice to China is the **higher demand of rice for making noodles and wine in that country.**

Lake Sawa

(Source: India Today)

In News: This year, for the first time in its centuries-long history, Iraq Lake Sawa dried up

- A combination of mismanagement by local investors, government neglect and climate change has ground down its azure shores to chunks of salt.

Sawa Lake

- Sawa Lake is an **endorheic basin** located in the Iraqi governorate of Muthanna near to the **Euphrates River**
- This lake has **no inlet or outlet**, but it **draws water from the Euphrates through a system of joint cracks and fissures** which transport water to aquifers beneath it.
- The **water's level fluctuates** during dry and wet seasons
- **Sawa Lake is characterized by arid climate**
- Because of its **saline water, no plants grow in the lake or on its shores**. Fish and algae are the most important aquatic organisms.



Web 5.0

(Source: Indian Express)

In News: Former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey recently announced his vision for a new decentralized web platform that is being called Web 5.0

What do the terms Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 mean?

- Web 1.0 was the **first generation of the global digital communications network**.

- It is often referred to as the “read-only” Internet made of static web-pages that only allowed for passive engagement.
- The next stage in the evolution of the web was the “read and write” Internet.
- Users were now able to communicate with servers and other users leading to the creation of the social web. This is the World Wide Web that we use today.
- **Web 3.0 is an evolving term that is used to refer to the next generation of Internet – a “read-write-execute” web – with decentralization as its bedrock.**
- It speaks about a digital world, built leveraging the blockchain technology, where people are able to interact with each other without the need of an intermediary.
- **Web 3.0 will be driven by Artificial Intelligence and machine learning** where machines will be able to interpret information like humans.

What is Web 5.0?

- Web 5.0 is aimed at “building an extra decentralized web that puts you in control of your data and identity”.
- Simply put, **Web 5.0 is Web 2.0 plus Web 3.0** that will allow users to ‘own their identity’ on the Internet and ‘control their data’.
- Both Web 3.0 and Web 5.0 envision an **Internet without threat of censorship** – from governments or big tech, and without fear of significant outages.

What are the use cases for Web 5.0?

- The control of identity
- Giving users control over their own data

Enforcement Directorate

(Source: Indian Express)

Context: Congress MP Rahul Gandhi recently appeared before the Enforcement Directorate for the second day for questioning in a money-laundering case related to the National Herald newspaper.

About Enforcement Directorate:

1. The origin of this Directorate goes back to 1st May, 1956, when an ‘**Enforcement Unit**’ was formed, in the Department of Economic Affairs, for handling Exchange Control Laws violations under **Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947 (FERA '47)**.
2. In the year 1957, this Unit was renamed as ‘**Enforcement Directorate**’.
3. Presently, it is part of **the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance**.
4. The Organization is mandated with the task of enforcing the provisions of two special fiscal laws – **Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA)** and **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA)**.

Composition:

Besides directly recruiting personnel, the Directorate also draws officers from different Investigating Agencies, viz., Customs & Central Excise, Income Tax, Police, etc. on deputation.



The National Herald case explained

- ~ The National Herald was a newspaper that India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru helped set up in pre-Independence India in the year 1938. The newspaper closed down in 2008.
- ~ The newspaper was part of a company named Associated Journals Ltd (AJL), which was funded by the Congress.
- ~ In 2011, a company named Young India Limited (YIL) was formed, allegedly with the aim of taking over the liabilities of (AJL).
- ~ According to the petition filed by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy, YIL paid merely Rs 50 lakh to recover an amount of Rs 90.25 crore that AJL is said to have owed to the Congress.
- ~ Going by the current value of the properties of National Herald, the scam could involve money between Rs 1,600 crore and Rs 5,000 crore.
- ~ Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi allegedly own 38 percent of shares each in Young India Limited.
- ~ In August, reports had suggested that the ED had decided to close the case citing lack of evidence. However, after the reports surfaced, ED director Rajan S Katoch was removed from service
- ~ In September, the ED decided to reopen the case against Sonia and Rahul Gandhi.
- ~ Subsequent to the Delhi HC order, the National Herald issue has reverberated in Parliament, with the Congress disrupting both Houses in protest.

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Other functions:

1. Processing cases of fugitive/s from India under **Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018**.
2. Sponsor cases of preventive detention under **Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974(COFEPOSA)** in regard to contraventions of FEMA.

Special courts:

For the trial of an offence punishable under **section 4 of PMLA, the Central Government (in consultation with the Chief Justice of the High Court), designates** one or more Sessions Court as Special Court(s). The court is also called "PMLA Court".

- **Any appeal against any order passed by PMLA court** can directly be filed in the High Court for that jurisdiction.

Agnipath scheme

(Source: Indian Express)

In News: The GoI unveiled its new Agnipath scheme for recruiting soldiers across the three services

- The soldiers recruited under the scheme will be called **Agniveers**.

What is the Agnipath scheme?

- Under the new scheme, **around 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers will be recruited annually, and most will leave the service in just four years.**
- Of the total annual recruits, **only 25 percent will be allowed to continue for another 15 years under permanent commission.**

What is the eligibility criterion?

- The new system is **only for personnel below officer ranks**
- Under the Agnipath scheme, **aspirants between the ages of 17.5 years and 21 years will be eligible to apply.**
- The recruitment standards will remain the same, and recruitment will be done twice a year through rallies.

What happens after selection?

- Once selected, the aspirants will **go through training for six months and then will be deployed for three and a half years.**
- During this period, they will get a starting **salary of Rs 30,000**, along with additional benefits which will go up to Rs 40,000 by the end of the four-year service.
- **30 per cent of their salary will be set aside under a Seva Nidhi programme**, and the **government will contribute an equal amount every month**, and it will also accrue interest.
- **At the end of the four-year period**, each soldier will get **Rs 11.71 lakh as a lump sum amount**, which will be tax-free.
- They will also get an **Rs 48 lakh life insurance cover for the four years.**
- In case of death, the payout will be over Rs 1 crore, including pay for the unserved tenure.
- For those who are re-selected, **the initial four-year period will not be considered for retirement benefits.**
- Recruitment will begin within 90 days under the scheme which will bring “all India, all class” recruitment to the services.

Benefits

- The **average age in the forces is 32 years today**, which will go down to **26 in six to seven years**, the scheme envisions.
- It will create **“future-ready” soldiers**
- This is especially **significant for the Army**, where the **regiment system has region and caste bases**, and with time that will be eliminated to allow anybody from any caste, region, class or religious background to become part of existing regiments.
- The move will make the **permanent force levels much leaner for the over 13-lakh** strong armed forces in the country.
- This will, in turn, considerably **reduce the defence pension bill**, which has been a major concern for governments for many years.

- It will **increase employment opportunities** and because of the skills and experience acquired during the four-year service such soldiers will get employment in various fields.

Bharat Gaurav express trains

(Source: The Hindu)

In News: The ‘Bharat Gaurav’ train service from Coimbatore to Shirdi, a first of its kind in the country, was inaugurated at the Coimbatore North Railway Station

Bharat Gaurav scheme

- To **promote and attract tourism business**, the Indian Railways launched **Bharat Gaurav trains that will be operated by private players and run on theme-based circuits.**
- Through this policy, which offers operators the “**Right of Use**” of its rakes and **infrastructure**, the Railways has liberalised and simplified a part of operations that was otherwise carried out mostly by the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC).
- **While any entity can run these trains, including state governments, it is implied that the policy is targeted at four operators.**
- According to the Bharat Gaurav policy, any operator or service provider, **or virtually anyone, can lease trains from Indian Railways to run on a theme-based circuit as a special tourism package.**
- The tenure of the **arrangement is a minimum of two years and maximum of the codal life of the coach.**
- The operator has the freedom to decide the route, the halts, the services provided, and, most importantly, the tariff.
- Anyone can approach Railways to lease the 3033 conventional Integral Coach Factory-design coaches earmarked for this segment.
- These trains cannot be used as ordinary transport trains between an origin and destination.

5G auction

(Source: The Hindu, Indian Express)

In News: The Union Cabinet has approved the auction of airwaves capable of offering fifth generation, or 5G

- Taking the first step towards **rolling out 5G services**, the government has invited **bid applications for spectrum auctions starting in July** after it proposal to auction over 72,000 megahertz (MHz), or 72 GHz, of airwaves with a **validity period of 20 years.**
- The auction will be held for spectrum in the **frequencies of 600 MHz, 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1,800 MHz, 2,100 MHz, 2,300 MHz, 3,300 MHz and 26 GHz**

- It is expected that the **Mid and High band spectrum will be utilised by telecom service providers** to roll out 5G technology-based services capable of providing speed and capacities which would be about 10 times higher than what is possible through the current 4G services

5th generation

- 5G is the **5th generation mobile network**. It is a new **global wireless standard after 1G, 2G, 3G, and 4G networks**.
- It enables a new kind of network that is designed to connect virtually everyone and everything together including machines, objects, and devices.
- **Internet speeds in the high-band spectrum of 5G** has been tested to be as high as 20 Gbps

Different Bands of 5G:

- **5G mainly works in 3 bands**, namely low, mid and high frequency spectrum — all of which have their own uses as well as limitations.
- **Low Band Spectrum:** In terms of coverage and speed of Internet and data exchange, the **maximum speed is limited to 100 Mbps**
- **Mid Band Spectrum:** It offers **higher speeds compared to the low band**, but has **limitations in terms of coverage area and penetration of signals**.
- This band may be used by **industries and specialised factory units** for building captive networks that can be moulded into the needs of that particular industry.
- **High Band Spectrum:** It offers the **highest speed of all the three bands**, but has **extremely limited coverage and signal penetration strength**

Unemployment has decreased, says Labour Survey (Source: The Hindu)

Context:

As per the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** for 2020-21 released by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**, the unemployment rate saw a decrease of 0.6% and fell to **4.2%** in 2020-21, compared with 4.8% in 2019-20

What does the survey say:

- **Unemployment rate:** Data show the rate of joblessness fell to 4.2% in 2020-21, compared with 4.8% earlier
 - **Rural areas** recorded an unemployment rate of **3%** and **urban areas** recorded an unemployment rate of **6.7%**.
- **The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)**e., the percentage of persons in the labour force (that is, working or seeking work or available for work) in the population was **41.6%** during 2020-21 (higher than 40.1% in 2019-20).

- **All-India female labour force participation rate (LFPR)** in usual status has increased from 2.3% in 2021 to 25.1% as compared to 22.8% a year ago
- **Worker Population Ratio** (the number of employed people per thousand people) was 39.8% (an increase from 38.2% of the previous year)
- **Migration rate:** The migration rate, according to the survey, is 28.9%. The migration rate among women was 48% and 47.8% in rural and urban areas, respectively.
 - Migrants are defined as a household members whose last usual place of residence, at any time in the past, was different from the present place of enumeration.
- **Employment-related migration:** 4.4% of migration happened due to employment, which is a drastic reduction from the 10% in 2011
- **Reverse migration:** During the pandemic, reverse migration led to a higher rate of unemployment agglomeration in rural areas, which caused rural distress. However, the annual report on the unemployment rate shows a contradiction.

How does NSO collect sample?

The **National Statistical Office (NSO)** uses “**rotational panel sampling design**” in urban areas to assess the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Worker Population Ratio (WPR) and the unemployment rate, and visits selected households in urban areas four times. There was, however, no revisit for the rural samples.

What does report indicate?

Overall, the report suggests **shifting the government’s policy** directions as it has become **more rural-centric**. Creation of rural jobs other than in the agricultural sector and MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) could be priorities for the government at the Union and State levels.

Issues with the survey: Experts point out that a second visit to the households in rural areas could have provided a bigger and larger picture of unemployment, which did not happen in the survey.

Measuring unemployment

Usual Status Approach: It records only those persons as being unemployed who had no gainful work for a major time during the 365 days preceding the date of the survey and are actively seeking work.

Weekly Status Approach: A person is considered to be employed if he or she pursues any one or more of the gainful activities for at least one hour on any day of the reference week.

The individual who may be employed on a usual status approach may however become intermittently unemployed during some seasons or parts of the year. Therefore, unlike the usual status approach, the weekly status approach can measure not only open chronic unemployment but also seasonal unemployment.

Current Daily Status Approach: Accordingly, a person having no gainful work even for 1 hour a day is described as unemployed for a full day. It is beneficial in sectors like farming and non-farming households where employment often fluctuates over a small period within a week.

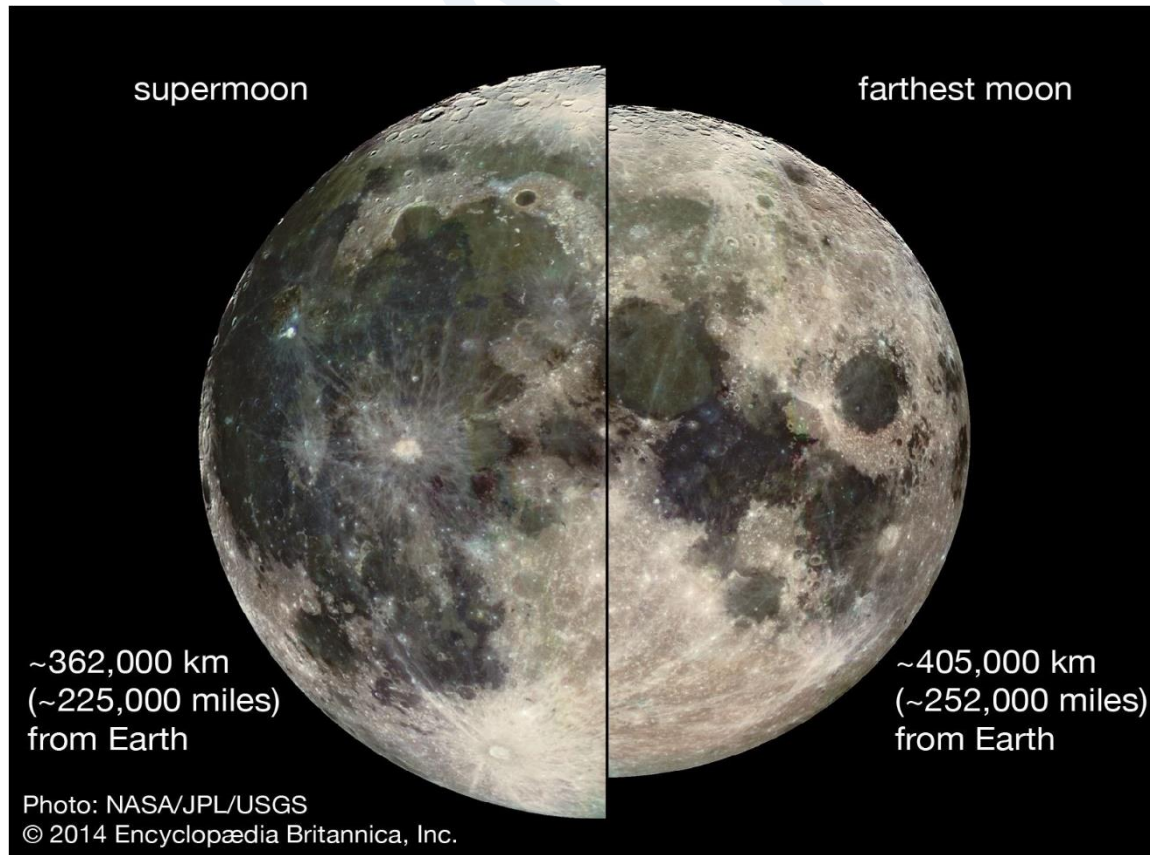
Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS): PLFS was launched by National Statistical Office (NSO) in 2017 and is India's first computer-based survey. It was constituted based on the recommendation of the **Amitabh Kundu committee**.

Supermoon

(Source: Indian Express)

In News: The Supermoon was seen worldwide in different time zones

- A supermoon occurs when the Moon's orbit is closest to the Earth at the same time that the Moon is full.
- As the Moon orbits the Earth, there is a point of time when the distance between the two is the least (perigee).
- Also, there is a point of time when the distance is the most (apogee)
- Now, when a full moon appears at the point when the distance between the Earth and the Moon is the least, not only does it appear to be brighter but it is also larger than a regular full moon.
- In a typical year, there may be two to four full supermoons and two to four new supermoons in a row



Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for 2020-21

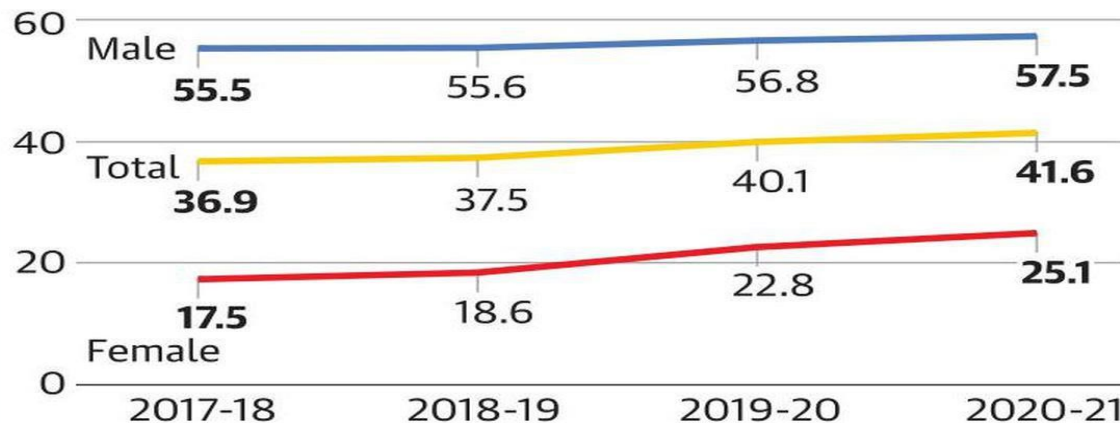
(Source: The Hindu)

In News: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for 2020-21 was released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

Findings

- The **unemployment rate saw a decrease of 0.6% and fell to 4.2% in 2020-21**, compared with 4.8% in 2019-20
- **Rural areas** recorded an unemployment rate of **3%** and **urban areas** recorded an unemployment rate of **6.7%**.
- The **National Statistical Office (NSO)** uses “**rotational panel sampling design**” in urban areas to assess the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Worker Population Ratio (WPR) and the unemployment rate, and visits selected households in urban areas four times.
- The **LFPR**, the percentage of persons in the labour force (that is, working or seeking work or available for work) in the population was **6%** during 2020-21. It was 40.1% in the previous year.
- The **WPR was 39.8%**, an increase from 38.2% of the previous year.
- The **migration rate is 28.9%**. The migration rate **among women was 48% and 47.8% in rural and urban areas,**

Looking for work | The labour force participation rate (LFPR) has continued to improve further in 2020-21, according to the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey. The graph shows LFPR over years across genders



What is the Periodic Labour Force Survey?

- The NSO launched the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** in April 2017.

The objective of PLFS is primarily twofold:

- To **estimate the key employment and unemployment indicators** namely Worker Population Ratio, Labour Force Participation Rate, Unemployment Rate in the short time interval of three months for the urban areas only in the Current Weekly Status (CWS)
- To estimate **employment and unemployment indicators in both usual Status and CWS in both rural and urban areas annually.**

Key Terms

Unemployment Rate (UR):

- It is defined as the **percentage of persons unemployed among the persons in the labour force.**

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):

- It is defined as the **percentage of persons in the labour force** (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population.

Worker Population Ratio (WPR):

- It is defined as the **percentage of employed persons in the population.**

National Statistical Office

- It is the central **statistical agency of the Government** mandated under the **Statistical Services Act 1980** under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.**
- It is responsible for the **development of arrangements for providing statistical information services** to meet the needs of the Government and other users for information on which to base policy, planning, monitoring and management decisions.