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**Law, Policy and Governance**

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[Daily snippets](#)

**1. [Indians concerned about privacy: CJI](#)**

- Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde said Indians have “grave apprehensions” about privacy from Facebook and WhatsApp. “We are telling you what we heard and read - people think that if A sends a WhatsApp message to B and B to C, the circuit of messages is revealed to Facebook,” he addressed senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Arvind Datar, for the companies. The hearing concerned the new privacy policy introduced by WhatsApp on January 4. The allegation is that it scraps users’ ‘**opt-out policy**’. SC issued notices to WhatsApp, Facebook

**2. [Lawyers flag violation of norms in Disha arrest](#)**

- The Delhi police have claimed that all norms and procedures were followed when they arrested 22 year - old climate activist Disha A. Ravi from her residence in Bengaluru. Several leading advocates and jurists have raised concerns over reported violations of norms and guidelines laid down by the Ministry of Home Affairs and multiple Delhi High Court and Supreme Court judgments.

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**National News/ Interventions**



[Daily snippets](#)

## 1. [Geospatial data policy liberalized](#)

- In sweeping changes to the **country's mapping policy**, the government announced liberalisation of norms governing the acquisition and production of geospatial data, a move to help **boost innovation** in the sector and create a **level playing field for public and private entities**. Under the new guidelines, the sector will be deregulated and aspects such as prior **approvals for surveying, mapping and building applications** based on those have been done away with.
- **For Indian entities**, there will be **complete deregulation with no prior approvals**, security clearances and licences for the acquisition and production of geospatial data and geospatial data services, including maps. The Prime Minister said that "*the reform will benefit the country's farmers, start-ups, the private sector, the public sector, and research institutions to drive innovations and build scalable solutions leveraging the potential of geospatial and remote sensing data*".



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## International NEWS/Events/ Personalities

### [Daily snippets](#)

#### 1. ['Israeli missile strikes in Syria kill 9'](#)

- Israeli missile strikes against several targets near **Syria's capital Damascus** killed at least nine pro-regime militia fighters. Since the **outbreak of Syria's civil war in 2011**, Israel has routinely carried out raids in the country, mostly targeting **Iranian forces and Lebanese Hezbollah fighters** as well as government troops. Iran and Hezbollah have backed **Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's** regime in the neardecadelong war.

#### 2. [Nigeria's Okonjoweala appointed WTO head](#)

- Nigeria's **Nguzi Okonjo Iweala** was appointed as the **first female and first African head** of the beleaguered **World Trade Organization (WTO)**, saying a stronger WTO would be vital for the global COVID-19 recovery. The WTO called a virtual special General Council meeting at which member states officially selected the **former Nigerian Finance Minister and World Bank veteran** as the global trade body's new Director-General.
- She will take up her post on March 1 and her term, which is renewable, will run until August 31, 2025. The near paralysed institution desperately needs a kick start - something Ms. Okonjoweala immediately addressed after being confirmed in the job. "*A strong WTO is vital if we are to recover fully and rapidly from the devastation wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic,*" the 66-yearold economist said in a statement.

#### 3. [Bangladesh authorities send more Rohingya to island](#)

- Bangladesh authorities sent a fourth group of **Rohingya refugees from Myanmar** to a newly developed island in the Bay of Bengal despite calls by human rights groups for a halt to the process. The roughly 2,000 Rohingya, who had been living in the sprawling refugee camps of Cox's Bazar, were sent to **Bhasan Char, an island**

specifically developed to accommodate 1,00,000 of the 1 million Rohingya who have fled from neighbouring Myanmar.

- With Monday's group, more than 7,000 refugees have moved to the island since the process started in December. While human rights groups have criticised the move and some are being forced to go against their will, the government has insisted that refugees moving to the island have done so voluntarily.



## Opinions and Analysis

### Commentary : Continuity, not change, is Biden's plan for Palestine

#### 1. Background

- Will **President Joe Biden** change the U.S.'s policy towards the Palestinian issue? The short answer is no. There are many reasons for this gloomy prognosis.

#### 2. Why the same line?

- The most important is **Mr. Biden's track record on Israel** and especially on its continued occupation of Palestinian territories. He has been a **firm supporter of Israel for decades** and relatively **unsympathetic to the Palestinian's** political concerns despite his support for a **two-state solution**.
- The Biden administration is willing to **live with the status quo** that allows Israel to continue its harsh occupation, build settlements, cantonise the West Bank, and eventually foreclose the two-state option leaving the Palestinians stateless in their own land.
- Thanks to Israeli propaganda, the conventional wisdom in Washington, D.C. has been that Palestinians "*never miss the opportunity to miss an opportunity*". The U.S. has stuck to this narrative despite evidence to the contrary over decades that Israeli governments through the building of settlements and confiscation of Palestinian lands have negated the possibility of a viable Palestinian state emerging in the occupied territories.
- Although the U.S.'s unquestioning support for Israel has complicated its relations with the Arab world for decades, the perception of **Israel's importance to American strategy in West Asia as the U.S.'s one stable ally persists**. Consequently, many in the region believe that American policy towards West Asia is made in Jerusalem and not in Washington.

### Critical Analysis : Farm laws and 'taxation' of farmers

#### 1. Background : Net Taxation

- Over the past three decades, a major rationale offered in favour of liberalising Indian agriculture was that farmers were "net taxed". It was argued that this "**net taxation**" existed because **protectionist policies** deprived farmers of higher international prices, and the **administered price system** deprived farmers of higher domestic market prices.

## 2. A case for farm laws

- If there were more liberal domestic markets and freer global trade, prices received by farmers would rise. Farm laws are necessary to end the net taxation of agriculture. For this purpose, **data on Producer Support Estimate (PSE) are used**. The farm laws would *weaken restrictive trade and marketing policies* in India and “*get the markets right*”. This, in turn, would **eliminate negative support and raise farmers’ prices**.

## 3. The case of milk

- There is *no Minimum Support Price (MSP) in milk*, and a substantial share of milk sales takes place through the private sector, including multinationals like Nestle and Hatsun. Yet, **India’s milk sector is growing faster than the foodgrain sector**. If the milk sector can grow without MSP and with private corporates, why cannot other agricultural commodities.

## 4. How is the PSE estimated?

- The PSE is estimated using a methodology advocated by the OECD. The PSE has two components - the first is **market price support (MPS)**, the second is **budgetary transfers (BOT)**.
- The OECD estimates of MPS and PSE to show the perils of restrictive markets. By the same logic then, if the increasing penetration of private companies and the absence of MSP in milk are positive features, we should expect positive and rising MPS and PSE for milk.
- Milk had the highest negative MPS among India’s major agricultural commodities in 2019. The reason is that the OECD methodology, either for milk or for other commodities, does not offer any realistic assessment of the extent of taxation or subsidisation.

## 5. Building a logic

- To conclude, In the debates, it is telling that these advocates (a) use the OECD estimates to highlight the overall negative MPS for agriculture as a problem; (b) but conveniently remain silent on the negative MPS for milk; and (c) yet, argue in the same breath that milk producers have benefited from the growth of private firms. The absence of logic in this line of argument is nothing but appalling. [Link to article](#)

## Story : Giant Leatherback turtle nesting sites and Andaman development project

### 1. Background

- Proposals for **tourism and port development in the Andaman and Nicobar (A&N) Islands** have conservationists worried over the fate of some of the most important nesting populations of the **Giant Leatherback turtle** in this part of the Indian Ocean.

### 2. About the Leatherback turtles

- The largest of the seven species of sea turtles on the planet and also the most long ranging, Leatherbacks are found in all oceans except the Arctic and the Antarctic.
- Within the Indian Ocean, they nest only in **Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands** and are also listed in **Schedule I of India’s Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, according it the **highest legal protection**.
- There is concern now, however, that at least three key nesting beaches - two on Little Andaman Island and one on Great Nicobar Island - are under threat due to mega “development” plans announced in recent months.

### 3. The development-conservation dichotomy

- **The Little Andaman plan**, which proposes phased growth of tourism on this virtually untouched island, has sought the de-reservation of over **200 sq km of pristine rainforest** and also of about **140 sq km of the Onge Tribal Reserve**. Two sites where key components of the tourism plan are to be implemented are both Leatherback nesting sites - **South Bay** along the southern coast of the island and **West Bay** along its western coast. The roughly 7-km long beach at West Bay has been the **site of ongoing marine turtle research** projects.
- Not only are the **numbers of females nesting here significant**, **satellite telemetry** has revealed hitherto unknown migration patterns. Satellite tagged female turtles have been tracked swimming up to 13,000 km after nesting on West Bay, towards the western coast of Australia and southwest towards the eastern coast of Africa.

#### 4. National Marine Turtle Action Plan

- The A&N Islands are prominent in the **National Marine Turtle Action Plan** released on February 1, 2021, by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. West Bay on Little Andaman and Galathea on Great Nicobar, along with other nesting beaches in the islands, find a specific mention here as “**Important Marine Turtle Habitats in India**” and the largest Leatherback nesting grounds in India.
- The plan identifies **coastal development**, including construction of ports, jet ties, resorts and industries, as *major threats to turtle populations*. It also asks for assessments of the environmental impact of marine and coastal development that may affect marine turtle populations and their habitats.



## Economics and Finance

### Daily snippets

#### 1. States fiscal deficit to narrow to 4.3% of GDP in FY22 : Ind-Ra

- The aggregate fiscal deficit of States is likely to be at **4.3% of the gross domestic product (GDP)** in 2021-22 compared with 4.6% in 2020-21, says a report by **India Ratings and Research**. The rating agency has revised the outlook on State finances to stable for FY22 from stable to negative.
- The agency estimates the **nominal GDP to grow 14.5% in FY22**, and believes a gradual pickup in revenue collections could lead to an improvement in the capital expenditure from FY22. The report said due to the economic downturn, even the **union government’s finances are under pressure**, leading to a lower than budgeted devolution of ₹5.50 lakh crore to States in FY21.

#### 2. Indian smartphone market fell 1.7% in 2020

- While the Indian smartphone market **declined by 1.7% in 2020**, it is expected to witness high single digit growth in the current year, mainly driven by **customers upgrading their devices**, according to a report by the **International Data Corporation (IDC)**. The India smartphone market **exited 2020 at 150 million units**, a 1.7% year-on-year decline.

#### 3. IT revenue to grow to \$194 bn in FY21 : NASSCOM

- Indian IT industry's revenue is estimated to **grow 2.3% year-on-year in FY21 to \$194 billion** on the back of a rapid acceleration in digital transformation and technology adoption, according to industry apex body NASSCOM. During the fiscal, **software exports are expected to touch \$150 billion**, a 1.9% growth over the year earlier period.
  - India has a huge opportunity to become a talent nation for the entire world and investments will go where the talent is, said **Debjani Ghosh, president, NASSCOM**. The industry **added more than 1.38 lakh to its head count** in FY21, taking the total to **4.47 million**, as per a NASSCOM survey.
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### Suggested Readings

1. Remembering Justice P.B Sawant, [Link to article](#)
2. Disha Ravi case, [Link to article](#)

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Sources referred to : [The Hindu](#), [The Indian Express](#), [Live Law](#), [Bar & Bench](#)

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