



News Analysis (12 Mar, 2021)

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Expansion of Mid-day Meal Scheme

Why in News

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education has **recommended** that **all government schools** start providing **free breakfast in the coming academic year**, as a part of an **expansion of midday meal** scheme envisaged by National Education Policy.

The **National Education Policy** identifies “**providing food and nutrition**” as one of the key long-term thrust areas for **financing to cultivate a robust education system**.

Key Points

- **Need:**

Research shows that the **morning** hours **nutritious breakfast** can be **productive for the study** of cognitively more demanding subjects and hence these hours may be leveraged by providing a simple but energizing breakfast in addition to midday meals.

- **Challenges:**

- Severe **funding Crunch** is likely to **delay the scheme**.
- The Centre's **current expenditure** on the Midday meals scheme is about **11000 crore**. **Free breakfast** would **involve** an additional budget of **4000 crore** but the **School Education Department** saw a **budget cut** of almost **5000 crore** for the year 2020-21.

Midday Meal Scheme

- **About:**

- The Midday meal scheme (under the **Ministry of Education**) is a **centrally sponsored scheme** which was launched in 1995.
- It is the **world's largest school meal programme** aimed to attain the goal of universalization of primary education.
- Provides **cooked meals** to every child within the age group of **six to fourteen years** studying in **classes I to VIII** who enrolls and attends the school.

- **Objective:**

Address hunger and malnutrition, increase enrolment and attendance in school, improve socialisation among castes, provide employment at grassroot level especially to women.

- **Quality Check:**

AGMARK quality items are procured, **tasting of meals by two or three adult members** of the **school management committee**.

- **Food Security:**

If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains or any other reason, the State Government shall pay **food security allowance** by 15th of the succeeding month.

- **Regulation:**

The **State Steering-cum Monitoring Committee (SSMC)** oversees the implementation of the scheme including establishment of a mechanism for maintenance of nutritional standards and quality of meals.

- **Nutritional Standards:**

Cooked meal having nutritional standards of **450 calories and 12 gm of protein** for **primary (I-V class)** and **700 calories and 20 gm** protein for upper primary (**VI-VIII class**)

- **Coverage:**

All **government** and **government aided schools, Madarsa and Maqtab**s supported **under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**.

- **Issues and Challenges:**

- **Corrupt Practices:** There have been instances of plain chapatis being served with salt, mixing of water in milk, food poisoning etc.
- **Caste Bias and Discrimination:** Food is central to the caste system, so in many schools, children are made to sit separately according to their caste status.
- **Covid-19:** Covid-19 has posed serious threats to children and their health and nutritional rights. The nationwide lockdown has disrupted access to essential services, including **Mid-Day Meals**.
- **Menace of Malnutrition:** According to the National Family Health Survey-5, several states across the country have **reversed course** and recorded **worsening levels of child malnutrition**.
India is home to about 30% of the world's stunted children and nearly 50% of severely wasted children under the age of five.
- **Global Nutrition Report-2020:** As per the Global Nutrition Report 2020, India is among 88 countries that are likely to miss global nutrition targets by 2025.
- **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020:** India has been ranked at 94 among 107 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020. India has a level of hunger that is “**serious**”.

Way Forward

Children will be unable to learn optimally when they are undernourished or unwell. Hence, the nutrition and health (including mental health) of children will be addressed, through nutritional breakfast including mid day meals. This expansion would further help to stop hunger from keeping children away from schools and to improve enrolment.

Source -TH

Licensing Conditions for Telecom Companies Amended

Why in News

The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** has amended **licensing conditions for telecom companies**. The new norms will be implemented from **15th June 2021**.

In March 2021, the Union Cabinet approved **the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the telecom sector** to **reduce imports** and move towards **self-reliance**.

Key Points

- **New Licensing Conditions:**

- **Aim:**

- To **include defence and national security as parameters** when purchasing **‘trusted telecom products’** and sourcing equipment from **‘trusted telecom equipment sources’**.

- **Provisions:**

- Telecom companies can use **telecom products only from trusted sources** in its network and **must take permission** from the designated authority (**National Cyber Security Coordinator**) if they plan to upgrade their existing network **using telecom equipment that has not been designated as a trusted product**.
 - The new norms **will not impact the annual maintenance contracts or upgrades to existing equipment** already being used by the telcos in their networks.

- **Trusted Telecom Products/Trusted Telecom Equipment Source:**

- **About:**

- It is simply **a product, a company, or a technology that has been deemed safe by the government** of a nation for use in its crucial and critical infrastructure.

- **Classification:**

- In December 2020, India’s Cabinet Committee on Security had approved the setting up of a new **National Security Directive** on the telecommunication sector with an intent **to classify telecom products** and their sources under the **‘trusted’** and **‘non-trusted’** categories.
 - **National Cyber Security Coordinator** has been made the **designated authority for deciding on the list of trusted and non-trusted telecom** equipment sources and products.
 - Its decisions will be made based on approval of a committee headed by the deputy **National Security Advisor (NSA)**.
 - Apart from the deputy NSA, **the expert committee will have members from other departments and ministries, and independent experts as well** as two members from the industry.

- **Impact:**

- The new policy could potentially make it more **difficult for Chinese telecom equipment vendors** like Huawei and ZTE to supply equipment to Indian telecom players in the future.

- Both Huawei and ZTE **have been under global scrutiny for allegedly installing ‘backdoor’ or ‘trapdoor’ vulnerabilities and spying for the Chinese government** and have been banned by several countries.

- **Significance:**

- Telecom equipment plays a vital role in telecom connectivity and data transfer, which has a direct impact on the national security of India therefore this change will **help in strengthening national security of India.**
- Demand for local equipment will rise which will further promote the vision of **Make-in-India** and **Atmanirbhar Bharat.**

Source:TH

Challenges Faced by Nomadic Tribes

Why in News

In a written reply in Rajya Sabha, the **Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment** stated that a **Development and Welfare Board for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DWBDNCs)** was constituted for development and welfare of **Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities in 2019.**

The welfare board was constituted for a period of **three years extendable upto 5 years.**

Key Points

- **Challenges Faced by Nomadic Tribes:**

- There are nearly 1,500 nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes and 198 denotified tribes, comprising 15 crore Indians, according to the **Renke Commission, 2008.**

These tribes remain **socially and economically marginalised** even now, **depriving** many of them of **basic human rights.**

- The most pressing issue is of their **identity.**
- **Lack of Basic Infrastructure Facilities:** Like drinking water, shelter, and sanitation facilities are not available to the communities. Healthcare and education facilities are also not available.
- **Bad Treatment by Local Administration:** Due to the stigma of Criminals bestowed upon them in the past, they are still treated criminals and tortured by the local administration and police.
- **Lack of Social Security Cover:** Since they are on move frequently, they do not have a permanent settlement. As a result, they lack social security cover and are **not issued Ration Card, Aadhar Card**, etc. and hence they are not getting benefits under the government welfare schemes.
- The **caste categorization is not very clear** for these communities, in some states some of the communities are included under the SC category, in some other states they are included under OBCs.

However, most of the groups from these communities do not have caste certificates and hence are not able to avail the benefits of government welfare programs.

- **DWBDNCs Responsibilities:**

- To **formulate and implement Welfare and Development programmes**, as required, for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DNCs).
- To **identify the locations/areas** where these communities are densely populated.
- To **assess and identify gaps** in accessing existing programmes and entitlements and to collaborate with Ministries/implementing agencies to ensure that ongoing programmes meet the special requirements of DNCs.
- To **monitor and evaluate the progress of the schemes** of the Government of India and the States/UTs with reference to DNCs.

- **Schemes for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities:**
 - **Dr. Ambedkar Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNTs:**
 - This **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** was launched in 2014-15 for the **welfare of those DNT** (Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes) **students** who are not covered under SC, ST or OBC.
 - The income ceiling for eligibility is Rs. 2.00 lakh per annum.
 - The scheme is implemented through State Governments/UT Administrations. The **expenditure is shared** between the **Centre and the States** in the ratio of **75:25**.
 - The scheme of Pre-matric Scholarship for DNT students is helpful in spreading education amongst DNT children especially the girl child.
 - **Nanaji Deshmukh Scheme of Construction of Hostels for DNT Boys and Girls:**
 - This Centrally Sponsored Scheme, launched in 2014-15, is implemented through State Governments/UT Administrations/Central Universities.
 - The aim of the scheme is to provide **hostel facilities to those DNT students**; who are not covered under SC, ST or OBC; to enable them to pursue higher education.
 - The income ceiling for eligibility is Rs. 2.00 lakh per annum.
 - The Central Government provides a maximum of 500 seats per annum throughout the country.
 - The expenditure is shared between the Centre and the States in the ratio of 75:25.

Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities

- Denotified tribes are those that were notified under the **Criminal Tribes Acts** enforced during British Rule, whereby entire **populations were branded criminals by birth**.
 In 1952, the Act was repealed and the communities were de-notified.
- The **Nomadic tribes maintain constant geographical mobility** while **semi-nomads are those who are on the move but return to fixed habitations once a year**, mainly for occupational reasons.
 The distinction between nomadic and semi-nomadic do not involve distinguishable ethnic categories or social groups, it rather describes the degree of mobility practiced by them.

Source: PIB

India's Biggest Floating Solar Power Plant

Why in News

India's **biggest floating solar power plant** by generation capacity (100MW) is being developed by the **National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC)** at **Ramagundam in Peddapalli district of Telangana.**

The project is in line with India's commitment to attain the target of 175 GW of installed **renewable energy** capacity by 2022 including 100 GW of solar installed capacity.

Key Points

- **Floating Solar Plants:**

- It refers to the **deployment of photovoltaic panels on the surface of water bodies.** They are **a viable alternative to land-based solar arrays** with applications in India.

There are **a large number of major reservoirs in the Southern Region** which provides a huge opportunity to go for renewable energy in the floating solar method.

- **Projects Coming up in India:**

- The thermal plant at **Ramagundam** would be one of the renewable (solar) energy plants being developed by NTPC with an installed capacity of 447MW in the Southern Region and the entire capacity would be commissioned by March 2023.
- The renewable energy plants that are likely to be commissioned in the next three months are 25MW floating solar plant at **Simhadri thermal power plant** near **Visakhapatnam** and 92MW floating solar plant at **Kayamkulam in Kerala.**

- **Advantages:**

- **Address Land Acquisition Issues:** The key challenges that face renewable energy plant owners are land acquisition, grid connectivity, regulations and off-take.

Floating solar plants balance high population density and competing uses for available land. The land can be used for other purposes, such as farming or construction.

- **Cooling Effect:** The bodies of water exert a **cooling effect**, which improves the performance of solar photovoltaic panels by 5-10%.

Over time, this translates into **significant cost savings.**

- **Other Advantages:** Reduced grid interconnection costs, reduced water evaporation, improved water quality, and reduced **algal blooming.**

- **Challenges:**
 - **Increased Cost:** Engineering and construction costs are usually higher than those of a ground-mounted solar farm.
 - **Safety Issues:** Since floating solar involves water and electricity, more consideration must be given to cable management and insulation testing than on land, especially when cables are in contact with water.
 - **Degradation and Corrosion:** A floating solar plant has moving parts that are subject to constant friction and mechanical stress.
 - Systems that are poorly designed and maintained could suffer from catastrophic failures.
 - The installation is at risk of degradation and corrosion due to moisture, especially in more aggressive coastal environments.
 - **Understanding of Water-bed Topography:** Developing floating solar projects requires a thorough understanding of water-bed topography and its suitability for setting up anchors for floats.
- **Other Solar Energy Initiatives:**

National Thermal Power Corporation Limited

- NTPC Ltd. is a **central Public Sector Undertaking (PSU)** under the Ministry of Power.
- It is India's largest energy conglomerate with roots planted way back in 1975 to accelerate power development in India.
- It aims to provide reliable power and related solutions in an economical, efficient and environment-friendly manner, driven by innovation and agility.
- It became a **Maharatna company** in May 2010.
- It is located in New Delhi.

Source: TH

Dandi March to Mark 75 Years of Independence

Why in News

The Prime Minister has flagged off a commemorative '**Dandi March**' (on 12th March) to launch the **celebrations of the 75th year of Independence - 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'**.

Key Points

- **About the 2021 Dandi March:**

- The padyatra is being undertaken by 81 marchers from **Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to Dandi in Navsari**, a journey of 386 km. The march will **end after 25 days**, on 5th April 2020.
- **Descendants of those who walked the Salt March (in 1930) will be honoured.**
- Marchers will traverse the route **in memory of the 78 who accompanied Mahatma Gandhi in 1930** from Ahmedabad to Dandi and **two others** who had joined mid-route.
- Big events will be organised at **six places** associated with Gandhi. These include **MK Gandhi's birthplace Porbandar**, along with **Rajkot, Vadodara, Bardoli (Surat), Mandvi (Kutch) and Dandi (Navsari)**.
- Cultural programmes are planned at **21 spots** on the route **at the nightly stops for the walkers.**

- **About the 1930 Dandi March:**

- The Dandi March, also known as the **Salt March** and the **Dandi Satyagraha** was an act of **nonviolent civil disobedience** led by **Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi**.
- The march lasted from **12th March, 1930 to 6th April, 1930** as a direct action campaign of tax resistance and nonviolent protest **against the British salt monopoly.**
- On **12th March**, Gandhiji set out from Sabarmati with **78 followers on a 241-mile** march to the coastal town of **Dandi on the Arabian Sea**. There, Gandhi and his supporters were to defy British policy by making salt from seawater.
- At Dandi, thousands more followed his lead, and in the coastal cities of Bombay and Karachi, Indian nationalists led crowds of citizens in making salt.
- **Civil disobedience broke out all across India**, soon involving millions of Indians, and British authorities arrested more than 60,000 people. Gandhiji himself was arrested on 5th May, but the satyagraha continued without him.
- On **21st May**, the poet **Sarojini Naidu** led 2,500 marchers on the **Dharasana Salt Works**, some 150 miles north of Bombay. The incident, recorded by American journalist Webb Miller, prompted an international outcry against British policy in India.
- In January 1931, Gandhiji was released from prison. He later met with Lord Irwin, the viceroy of India, and **agreed to call off the satyagraha in exchange for an equal negotiating role at a London conference** on India's future.

In August 1931, **Gandhiji traveled to the conference as the sole representative of the nationalist Indian National Congress**. The meeting was a disappointment, but British leaders had acknowledged him as a force they could not suppress or ignore.

- **1930 Dandi March (Background):**
 - The **Lahore Congress of 1929** had authorized the **Congress Working Committee (CWC)** to launch a programme of civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes.
 - On **26th January 1930**, “**Independence Day**” was observed, with the national flag being hoisted in different venues, and patriotic songs being sung.
 - In February 1930, CWC meeting at Sabarmati Ashram, invested Gandhiji with full powers to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement at a time and place of his choice.
 - Gandhiji’s ultimatum to **Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India (1926-31)**, stating the minimum demands had been ignored and there was only one way out-civil disobedience.
- **Effect of the Movement:**
 - Civil Disobedience in different forms continued in different provinces. Special stress was laid on the boycott of foreign goods.
 - In eastern India, **payment of chowkidari tax was refused**. This **no-tax campaign became very popular in Bihar**.
 - In Bengal, **J.N. Sengupta defied Government laws** by reading openly the books banned by the government.
 - **Defiance of forest laws** assumed a mass character in Maharashtra.
 - The movement had taken a fire hold in provinces of U.P., Orissa. Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Assam.
- **Significance:**
 - **Imports from Britain had fallen considerably**. For example, imports of cloth from Britain had fallen by half.
 - The movement was **more widespread than the previous one**. Mass participation including **women, peasants, workers, students, urban elements like merchants, shopkeepers** provided the Congress a new all-India status.
 - The support that the movement had garnered from the **poor and the illiterate both in the town and countryside** was remarkable.
 - For **Indian women**, the movement was the most liberating experience to date and can truly be said to have marked their entry into the public space.
 - Although the **Congress withdrew the Civil Disobedience in 1934**, the movement received global attention and marked a critically important stage in the progress of the anti-imperialist struggle.

Source: IE

International Cooperation: ISRO

Why in News

Recently, **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)** reviewed cooperation in **earth observation, lunar cooperation and satellite navigation**.

Key Points

- **About the Cooperation:**

- They also agreed to explore opportunities for cooperation in “space situational awareness and professional exchange programme”.
- Both agencies signed an **Implementing Arrangement** for collaborative activities on **rice crop area** and **air quality monitoring** using satellite data.
- **India and Japan** are already working on a joint **lunar polar exploration (LUPEX)** mission.

LUPEX aims to **send a lander and rover to the Moon’s south pole around 2024**.

- **Agreements with Other Countries:**

- **India and Italy** have decided to explore opportunities in **earth observation, space science and robotic and human exploration**.
- **India and Australia** signed an amendment to the MoU which will build on the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.

Both countries are also in discussions for **Australia to host vital tracking infrastructure** to support the **Gaganyaan** manned space flight mission.

Few Achievements Through International Cooperation

- **Chandrayaan-1:**

- ISRO’s maiden mission to Moon, the **Chandrayaan-1**, has been an exemplary example of international cooperation with its international payloads.
- It has also earned several national and international laurels and was instrumental in the **ISRO-NASA joint discovery of water molecules** on the moon surface, unattained by any of the previous missions of such nature.

- **Megha-Tropiques:**

The **Indo-French joint satellite mission** called **MEGHA-TROPIQUES** was launched in 2011 for the study of the tropical atmosphere and climate related to aspects such as **monsoons, cyclones**, etc.

- **Saral:**

The **Indo-French** joint mission, named **SARAL (Satellite for ALTIKA and ARGOS)** for studying the ocean from space using altimetry was successfully launched in 2013.

- **NISAR:**
 - **ISRO and NASA** are realizing a joint satellite mission called **NISAR (NASA ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar)** for earth science studies.
 - The mission will observe Earth and measure its changing ecosystem and masses globally.
 - It is the world's most expensive imaging-satellite and the two space agencies intend to launch the satellite by 2022.
- **UNNATI:**

ISRO has launched capacity building programme on nano satellite development, named as UNNATI (UNISpace Nanosatellite Assembly & Training by ISRO) as an initiative of **UNISPACE+50** (the 50th Anniversary of the first United Nations conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space).
- **TRISHNA:**

ISRO and the French space agency **CNES** have partnered in developing advanced upgradation satellites like TRISHNA to **monitor the water cycle** to help in finding out proper ways to utilize it.

Source:TH

Project Information System & Management: SERB

Why in News

The **Science and Engineering Board (SERB)** has set up a **portal called PROject Information System & Management (PRISM)** that offers real time information on the various research projects supported by it.

Key Points

- **About PROject Information System & Management (PRISM):**
 - It is called '**SERB – PROject Information System & Management (SERB – PRISM)**'.
 - The **e-platform will provide a whole range of information** regarding all projects sanctioned by SERB from 2011 onwards, including funding details, status, research summary and project output details such as publications and patents.

- **Significance of PRISM:**
 - The portal is expected to work as a **comprehensive tool** to help forge **stronger scientist-scientist, and science-society connections**.
 - It may be linked with important sectors such as water, energy, and climate and with the new concept of **Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR)**.
 - It helps in the **democratisation of Research & Development funding trends**.
- **Science and Engineering Board (SERB):**
 - It is a **statutory body** under the **Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology** established by an Act of the Parliament of India in 2009.
 - It is **chaired by the Secretary to the Government of India** in the Department of Science and Technology and has other senior government officials and eminent scientists as members.
 - It was set up for **promoting basic research in science and engineering** and to provide financial assistance to scientists, academic institutions, Research and Development laboratories, industrial concerns and other agencies for such research.
 - It has a mandate to plan, promote and fund **internationally competitive research in emerging areas**.
 - Some important schemes of SERB:

Source: DTE

France's First Space Military Exercise: AsterX

Why in News

Amid the growing competition among the world powers in the field of space, France has begun its **first space military exercises** to test its ability to defend its satellites.

Key Points

- **About the Exercise:**

- The exercise drills are codenamed "**AsterX**" to commemorate the first French satellite **Asterix** from 1965.
- The exercises are part of France's strategy to become the world's **third-largest space power**, after the USA and China.
- These space military exercises are the first ever attempt not only for the French army but also for Europe.
- Moreover, France has planned to develop **anti-satellite laser weapons** and to strengthen surveillance capabilities to close the gap with rivals; China and Russia.
- **Aim of the Exercise:**
 - To monitor a potentially dangerous space object as well as threats to its own satellite from another foreign power possessing a considerable space force.
- **Participants:**
 - Along with France, the new **US Space Force and German space agencies** are taking part in the exercises.

- **Background:**

- In 2018, **Olymp-K**, a Russian satellite attempted to intercept transmissions from the **Athena-Fidus satellite** which is used by both Italian and French armies for secure communications. This was **termed as an act of 'espionage'**.
 - In 2020, the United States also **accused Russia** of having "conducted a non-destructive test" of an anti-satellite weapon from space.
- In 2019, France announced its **Commandement de l'Espace (CdE)** (French Space Command).
 - It is set to have 500 personnel by 2025.

- **Similar Initiatives of India:**

- **IndSpaceEx:** India's first ever simulated space warfare exercise.
- **Mission Shakti:** An Anti-Satellite (ASAT) Missile Test.

Source: IE

Indonesia's Mt. Sinabung

Why in News

Recently, Mt. **Sinabung**, an active volcano on Indonesia's Sumatra island has erupted.

Earlier, other volcanoes of Indonesia- **Merapi volcano** and **Semeru volcano**- had erupted.



Key Points

- **Mt. Sinabung:**
 - Mt. Sinabung (**2,600-metre**) is located in **Karo regency**, North Sumatra.
 - Sinabung is among more than **120 active volcanoes** in Indonesia, which is prone to seismic upheaval due to its location on the **Pacific Ring of Fire**.
 - The volcano was dormant for 400 years before exploding in **2010**.
It exploded again in **2014**, **2016** and **2020**.
- **Ring of Fire:**
 - The Ring of Fire, also referred to as the **Circum-Pacific Belt**, is a path along the Pacific Ocean characterized by **active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes**.
 - It traces boundaries between several **tectonic plates**—including the Pacific, Cocos, Indian-Australian, Nazca, North American, and Philippine Plates.
 - The abundance of volcanoes and earthquakes along the Ring of Fire is caused by the amount of movement of tectonic plates in the area.
75% of Earth's volcanoes i.e. **more than 450 volcanoes** are located along the Ring of Fire. **90% of Earth's earthquakes** occur along its path.



Source:IE

Autocratisation Goes Viral Report

Why in News

Recently, India has been classified as an “**electoral autocracy**” in the annual report named **Autocratisation Goes Viral** of Sweden-based Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute.

This report comes just after the US watchdog **Freedom House** **downgraded India’s status to “partly free”** in its **‘Freedom in the World 2021’** report.

TOP-10 AUTOCRATIZING COUNTRIES, 2010–2020

	CHANGE	LDI 2010	LDI 2020	REGIME TYPE 2010	REGIME TYPE 2020
1 Poland	-0.34	0.83	0.49	Liberal Democracy	Electoral Democracy
2 Hungary	-0.32	0.68	0.37	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
3 Turkey	-0.29	0.40	0.11	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
4 Brazil	-0.28	0.79	0.51	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Democracy
5 Serbia	-0.27	0.51	0.24	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
6 Benin	-0.26	0.55	0.29	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
7 India	-0.23	0.57	0.34	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
8 Mauritius	-0.23	0.73	0.50	Liberal Democracy	Electoral Democracy
9 Bolivia	-0.18	0.41	0.231	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
10 Thailand	-0.17	0.34	0.17	Electoral Autocracy	Closed Autocracy

Key Points

- **About V-Dem:**
 - The V-Dem Institute, an **independent research organisation** founded in 2014 by Swedish political scientist Staffan Lindberg.
 - It produces its **annual report on the state of democracy** around the world based on a dataset of almost 30 million data points for **202 countries**.
- **Global Scenario:**
 - The global **decline of liberal democracies** was ‘steep’ in the past 10 years in the Asia-Pacific region, Central Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America.
 - Apart from India, countries like **Brazil and Turkey** **figured among the top 10 countries that slipped in rankings** that were part of the **G-20** nations.
- **India’s Position:**
 - India was previously classified as an **electoral democracy**, however the latest report classified it as **electoral autocracy**.
 - India is now as autocratic **as is Pakistan**, and **worse than** both its neighbours **Bangladesh and Nepal**.
 - **Political rights** and **civil liberties** in the country have **deteriorated since 2014**, with increased pressure on human rights organizations, rising intimidation of academics and journalists, and a spate of bigoted attacks, including lynchings, aimed at Muslims.
- **Reasons for the Downgrade:**

Source: TH
