



Strategy for New India @ 75

NITI Aayog has released 'Strategy for New India @ 75' document with an aim to **accelerate economic growth to 9-10%** and make the country a **\$4-trillion economy by 2022-23**. The document replaces the now-defunct five-year plans.

- The document defines the strategy for 2022-23 across **forty-one areas**. Each chapter includes:
 - Objectives for 2022,
 - Progress already made,
 - Binding constraints,
 - Way forward for achieving stated objectives.
- The document was prepared after **extensive consultation** with over 800 stakeholders from within the government – central, state and district levels.
- The document has been disaggregated under **four sections: Drivers, Infrastructure, Inclusion and Governance**.

Drivers

- Drivers include chapters on growth and employment, doubling of farmers' incomes, upgrading the science, technology and innovation ecosystem and promoting sunrise sectors like fintech and tourism.

Sunrise Sector: It is a new industry that is expanding rapidly and expected to be rise further in the future. It is characterised by high growth, number of startups, increased investment especially through venture capital funding.

Key recommendations in the section on drivers are

- **Economy:** Accelerate the GDP growth rate to raise the economy's size in real terms from USD 2.7trillion in 2017-18 to nearly **USD 4 trillion by 2022-23**.
 - The paper sets an **annual inflation target of 2% to 6%** by 2022-23.
 - Increase the **investment rate in housing & infrastructure** as measured by gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) from the present 29% to 36% of GDP by 2022.
 - **Rationalise direct taxes** for both corporate tax and personal income tax, ease the tax compliance burden and eliminate direct interface between taxpayers and tax officials using technology.
 - **Increase tax-GDP ratio to 22% of GDP by 2022-23**. India's tax-GDP ratio is around 17%, half of the average 35% for countries part of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
 - States should undertake greater mobilisation of their taxes such as **property tax** and take steps to **improve administration of GST** to better tax collections.
 - The strategy paper also called for having **flexible fiscal deficit targets**, governance reforms in **public sector banks**, performance assessment of executives and **increased flexibility in personnel policy**.
- **Agriculture:** Convert farmers to '**agripreneurs**' by further expanding **e-National Agriculture Markets (e-NAM)** and replacing the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Act with the

Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing Act.

- The document is silent on farm loan waivers but has suggested the concept of a minimum support price for produce be replaced with that of a **Minimum Reserve Price**. The latter should be the starting point for auctioning at official wholesale markets, so that **farmers get at least a basic income**.
- Consider **replacing** the Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices (**CACP**) by an **agriculture tribunal** in line with the provisions of Article 323B of the Constitution.
- The [Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana](#) needs to promote **weather-based insurance**.
- Give a strong push to '[Zero Budget Natural Farming](#)' techniques that reduce costs, improve land quality and increase farmers' incomes.
- **Employment:** Codification of labor laws, upscale and expand apprenticeships.
 - Enhance female labour force participation, by ensuring employers' adherence to the [Maternity Benefit \(Amendment\) Act, 2017](#), and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act.
- **Minerals:** Launch a mission "**Explore in India**" by revamping minerals exploration and licensing policy.

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure deals with the physical foundations of growth.

Key recommendations in section of Infrastructure are:

- **Transport:** Expedite the establishment of already approved **Rail Development Authority (RDA)**, for an integrated, transparent and dynamic pricing mechanism for the railways.
 - Double the **share of freight transported** by coastal shipping and inland waterways.
 - Develop an **IT-enabled platform** for integrating different modes of transport and promoting multi-modal and digitized mobility.
 - **Private investment** in infrastructure should be focused on through a renewed public-private partnership model.
- **Digital India:** Aim to **deliver all government services** at the state, district, and gram panchayat level digitally by 2022-23.

Inclusion

- Inclusion deals with investing in the capabilities of all of India's citizens. The **three themes** in this section revolve around the dimensions of **health, education and mainstreaming of traditionally marginalized sections of the population**.

Key recommendations in section of inclusion are

- **Health:** Successfully implementing the [Ayushman Bharat](#) programme, create a focal point for public health at the central level with state counterparts, promote integrative medicine curriculum.
- **Education:** Upgrade the **quality of the school education** system and skills, including the creation of a new innovation ecosystem at the ground level by establishing at least 10,000 [Atal Tinkering Labs](#) by 2020.
 - Conceptualize an electronic national educational registry for tracking each child's learning outcomes.
- **Housing for all:** Affordable **housing in urban areas** to improve workers' living conditions and ensure equity while creating very large **multiplier effects** in the economy.

Governance

- Governance deals with how the governance structures can be streamlined and processes optimized to achieve better developmental outcomes.

Key recommendations in section of Governance are

- Implement the recommendations of the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission**.
 - Set up a new autonomous body, viz., the **Arbitration Council of India** to grade arbitral institutions and accredit arbitrators to make the arbitration process cost effective and speedy, and to preempt the need for court intervention.
 - Address the **backlog of pending cases** - shift part of workload out of regular court system.
 - Expand the scope of [Swachh Bharat Mission](#) to cover initiatives for landfills, plastic waste and municipal waste and generating wealth from waste.
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GSAT-7A Launched

Indian Space and Research Organization (ISRO) has recently launched communication satellite GSAT-7A onboard the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle F-11 (GSLV F-11).

- GSLV F-11 is the seventh flight of GSLV Mk-II and is equipped with **indigenously developed cryogenic upper stage engine**.
- The satellite is nicknamed as '**angry bird**' as it will enhance Indian Air Force (IAF) capabilities.
- It is heaviest satellite launch in GSLV's Mk-II version launch vehicle.
- In September 2013, Isro launched **GSAT-7 (Rukmini)**, a communication satellite **exclusively for Navy** to monitor Indian Ocean Region up to 2,000 nautical miles and provide real-time inputs to Indian warships, submarines, and maritime aircraft.

Significance

- The satellite will give a boost to the strategic communication and networking capabilities of the IAF.
- GSAT-7A will enable superior real-time aircraft-to-aircraft communication and between aircraft and base station.
- GSAT-7A is expected to boost the IAF's network-centric warfare capabilities by interlinking all ground-based radars, airborne early warning and control aircraft for surveillance, maintain air superiority, gather intelligence by detecting aircraft, vessels and other vehicles in long range.

GSAT-7A

- Weight: **2250 Kg**
 - Orbit: **Super Synchronous Orbit** (Orbit beyond Geosynchronous Orbit)
 - Mission Life: **8 years**
 - GSAT-7A is the **35th communication satellite built by ISRO**.
 - GSAT-7A is an advanced communication satellite with a **Gregorian Antenna**.
 - The satellite will operate in the **Ku band** (This frequency range is often used for satellite communications).
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Lok Sabha Passes Surrogacy Bill

The Lok Sabha passed Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2016, **banning commercial renting of wombs** and allowing only "**altruistic surrogacy**".

- The Bill was approved by the Cabinet in August 2016. It was introduced in the Lok Sabha in

November 2016 and was later referred to a parliamentary standing committee on health and family welfare in January 2017.

Key Provisions

- The Bill seeks to regulate the surrogacy part of a **flourishing infertility industry** in the country.
- It defines 'surrogacy' as a practice in which a woman undertakes to give birth to a child for another couple and agrees to hand over the child to them after birth.
- It allows 'altruistic surrogacy' — wherein **only the medical expenses and insurance coverage** is provided by the couple to the surrogate mother during pregnancy. **No other monetary consideration will be allowed.**
- It allows surrogacy for **infertile married (at least five years) Indian couples only**. The female must be **between 23 and 50 years and the male 26 and 55 years**; and they cannot have any surviving child (biological, adopted or surrogate).
 - However, this would **not include** a 'child who is mentally or physically challenged or suffers from life threatening disorder or fatal illness.'
- Only a **close relative of the couple**, who is able to provide a medical fitness certificate, can be a surrogate mother. She should have been married, having a child of her own, and must be between 25 and 35 years, but can be a surrogate mother only once.
- The stated objective of the new Bill is to constitute a **National Surrogacy Board, State Surrogacy Board** and appointment of authorities for regulation of practice and process of surrogacy. In short, the law is meant to end commercial surrogacy or, as the Supreme Court had once in 2009, termed "fertility tourism" in the country

Challenges

- It does **not allow** single women or men, or gay couples to go in for surrogacy.
- Despite a similar stringent law, the Transplantation of Human Organs Act, illegal organ commerce continues to thrive. Clearly, the issue will have to be handled firmly, even as the sensitivities of people are factored in.
- Adoption of a child borne out of surrogacy: An **unhealthy child borne** out of surrogacy is often not accepted by the parents, due to the lack of legal safeguards for the child and the surrogate mother. The bill has **not addressed** this issue comprehensively.
- The **Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC)** has rejected a blanket ban on commercial surrogacy proposed in the Bill. It said that commercial surrogacy could trigger a **black market for surrogacy** services in India.
 - The whole surrogacy service could **go underground** and it would lead to increased exploitation with no mechanism for protection of any of the parties involved in the surrogacy arrangement.
 - It could result in **trafficking of surrogate mothers** to foreign nations or safe surrogacy havens around the globe for monetary returns.
 - The provision of no monetary incentive in the proposed Bill except medical expenses can make surrogacy **similar to "forced labour"** which is prohibited under Article-23 of the Constitution.
 - Endorsing altruistic surrogacy will enforce **emotional and social pressure on close female relatives** without any compensation for immense emotional and bodily labour of gestation involved in surrogacy as well as loss of livelihood.

Why the Need for a Surrogacy Bill

- **Fertility tourism:** India has emerged as a hub for infertility treatment, attracting people from the world over with its state-of-the-art technology and competitive prices to treat infertility.
- **End exploitation:** India has emerged as a surrogacy hub for couples from different countries and there have been reports of unethical practices such as exploitation of surrogate mothers, abandonment of children born out of surrogacy and cases of intermediaries importing human embryos and gametes.
- Commercial surrogacy has been legal in India since 2002 under the **guidelines of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**. The **Law Commission of India** had also recommended

prohibiting commercial surrogacy and allowing only ethical altruistic surrogacy to the needy Indian citizens by enacting a suitable legislation.

Surrogacy

- When a couple wants a baby but is unable to have a child because either or both partners are medically unfit to conceive, another woman (surrogate mother) is **artificially inseminated** with the sperm of the father. She then carries the child full term and delivers it for the couple.
- In such a case, the **surrogate mother is the biological mother of the child**. In instances when the father's sperm cannot be used, a donor sperm can also be used. This is traditional surrogacy.
- In **gestational surrogacy**, eggs from the mother are fertilised with the father's/donor's sperm and then the embryo is placed into the uterus of the surrogate, who carries the child to term and delivers it. In this case, the biological mother is still the woman whose eggs are used, while the surrogate is called the birth mother.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2016

The Lok Sabha has passed the transgender persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2016. The bill will now be placed in Rajya Sabha.

- The Bill was brought following a 2014 order of the Supreme Court (*NALSA vs. Union of India*) that asked the central and state governments to take steps for the welfare of the transgender community and to treat them as a third gender for the purpose of safeguarding their rights under Part III of the Constitution.

Provisions in the bill

- **Definition of a Transgender Persons:** In the amended bill transgender person means a person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes transman (whether or not such person has undergone sex reassignment surgery or hormone therapy or laser therapy or such other therapy), person with intersex variations, gender-queer and person having such socio-cultural identities as kinnar, hijra, aaravani and jogta.
- **Prohibition against discrimination:** The Bill prohibits the discrimination against a transgender person, including denial of service or unfair treatment in relation to: **(i) education (ii) employment (iii) healthcare (iv) public goods (v) right to movement (vi) right to reside, rent, own or occupy property (vii) opportunity to hold public or private office; and (viii) access to a government or private establishment.**
- **Offenses and Penalties:** The Bill recognizes the following offenses: (i) begging, forced or bonded labor (ii) denial of use of a public place; (iii) denial of residence in the household, village, etc.; (iv) physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and economic abuse.
 - These offenses will attract imprisonment between six months and two years and a fine.
- **Certificate of identity for a transgender person:** A transgender person may make an application to the District Magistrate for a certificate of identity, indicating the gender as 'transgender'.
 - The District Magistrate will issue such certificate based on the **recommendations of a District Screening Committee.**
- **The right of residence:** If the immediate family is unable to care for the transgender person, the person may be placed in a rehabilitation center, on the orders of a competent court.
- **Welfare measures by the government:** The Bill states that the government will take measures to ensure the full inclusion and participation of transgender persons in society.
 - It must also take steps for their rescue and rehabilitation, vocational training and self-employment, create schemes that are transgender-sensitive.

- **Setting up of National Council for Transgender persons (NCT):** Under the Bill, NCT will be set up which will consist of:
 - Union Minister for Social Justice (Chairperson);
 - Minister of State for Social Justice (Vice-Chairperson);
 - Secretary of the Ministry of Social Justice;
 - One representative from ministries like Health, Home Affairs, Minority Affairs, Housing and Poverty Alleviation, Human Resources Development, etc.
 - Other members include representatives of the NITI Aayog, National Human Rights Commission, and the National Commission for Women. State governments will also be represented.
 - The Council will also consist of five members from the transgender community and five experts from non-governmental organizations.

Concerns in the Bill

- The Bill does **not give the right of self-identification to transgender persons**, instead, it is certified by a district screening committee.
- Bill is **silent on granting reservations** to transgender persons. The Bill does not give effect to the directive of the Supreme Court to grant backward class reservation to the transgender community.
- The Bill lacks robustness as it has provision for a **lower punishment for sexual violence against transgender persons**, as against seven years' imprisonment awarded in case of sexual assault on women.
- The Bill treats **transgender persons as victims who need protection** rather than an empowered subject with rights.
- The Bill **criminalizes begging by making it an offense**. When begging itself is no more seen as an offense, it may harm the community if such a means of **livelihood - in the absence of employment - is criminalized**.
- The bill **does not provide a mechanism for appeal if a transgender person is denied a certificate of identity**.
- The Standing Committee's concerns about recognizing rights in marriage, divorce and adoption of transgender person have not been addressed.

Packaging in Jute Bags Made Mandatory

Recently the Government has mandated the packaging of **100% of foodgrain** and **20% of sugar** in jute bags for 2018-19.

- The decision aims to benefit farmers and workers in the Eastern and Northeastern parts of the country like West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura.
- The jute industry is predominantly dependent on the government sector, which purchases jute bags worth more than Rs 6,500 crore every year for packing food grains.
- Initially 10% of the orders of jute bags for packing foodgrain would be placed through reverse auction on the GeM (Government e-Marketplace) portal that would facilitate price discovery.
- The order follows the **Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory Use in Packing Commodities) Act (JPM), 1987** to protect the jute sector from the plastic packaging segment.
- The Act mandates compulsory use of sacks in certain areas to bring buoyancy to the raw jute market.
- Initially there was reservation for sugar, cement, fertiliser and foodgrain packaging. However, certain sectors have been taken out of the ambit due to market demand for alternative synthetic packaging as there was seepage of materials through jute sacks.

About Jute

- Known as the '**golden fibre**' jute is one of the longest and most used natural fibre for various textile applications.
- It thrives in **tropical lowland areas** with **humidity of 60% to 90%**. Jute is a rain-fed crop with little need for fertilizer or pesticides.
- **Retting of Jute** is a process in which the tied bundles of jute stalks are immersed in water by which fibres get loosened and separated from the woody stalk.
- **World's leading jute producing** countries are **India , Bangladesh , China and Thailand . India** is the **world's largest producer** of raw jute and jute goods , contributing to over 50% and 40% respectively of global production.
- The cultivation of jute in India is mainly confined to the eastern region of the country . The jute crop is grown in seven states - West Bengal , Assam , Orissa , Bihar , Uttar Pradesh , Tripura and Meghalaya . **West Bengal** alone accounts for over **50% of the total raw jute production**.
- To promote and popularize jute diversification work, **National Jute Board**, Ministry of Textiles, acts as the **apex body for promotion of the products** in India and abroad.
- The **first jute mill** was established at **Rishra (Bengal - now in West Bengal)**, on the **river Hooghly** near **Calcutta** in the year **1855**, by Mr. George Aclend. In 1959, the first power driven weaving factory was set up.

Potential of Jute Industry

- Jute Geotextile is (a variety of jute available in woven and non-woven fabrics) used in **erosion control**, separation, **filtration and drainage in civil engineering work**, and agricultural uses. It also has application in rural road pavement construction and agro plant mulching.
- **Diversification of jute products** has opened up large opportunity for **employment generation**. Examples of diversified jute products include fancy jute bags, soft luggage, footwear, door panels, check sarees, wide range of furnishing, gift items, table lamps, floor decor, wall decor and many more items.
- Jute bags have porosity, easily withstand the high temperature and are much stronger than poly sacks. Jute bags can be recycled and reused and can be easily repaired.

Government Initiatives for Promoting Jute Industry

- **Jute Corporation of India (JCI)** procures raw jute at **Minimum Support Price (MSP)**, fixed on the basis of recommendation of the commission for Agricultural Cost and Prices (CACP), from jute growers to safeguard their interest.
- **Incentive Scheme for Acquisition of Plants and Machinery (ISAPM)**: Launched in 2013, it aims to facilitate modernization in existing and new jute mills and up-gradation of technology in existing jute mills .
- **Jute-ICARE (Jute: Improved Cultivation and Advanced Retting Exercise)**: This pilot project launched in 2015 is aimed at addressing the difficulties faced by the jute cultivators by providing them certified seeds at subsidized rates, and by popularizing several newly developed retting technologies under water limiting conditions.
- The **National Jute Board** implements various schemes for market development, workers' welfare and promotion of diversification and exports.
- In order to boost demand in the jute sector, the Government has also imposed **anti-dumping duty on import of jute goods** from **Bangladesh** and Nepal.

Important Facts for Prelims (20th December 2018)

Black-necked Crane

- **Black-necked cranes** also known as '**Trung-Trung Karmo**' migrate every winter from Tibet and China's Xinjiang province to Arunachal Pradesh in India.
- **Sangti Valley** in West Kameng district and **Zemithang** of **Arunachal Pradesh** are the only wintering sites of the bird in India. The crane also breeds in Ladakh and Bhutan.
- The bird is revered by the 1 lakh-strong community of **Monpas** (major Buddhist ethnic group of Arunachal Pradesh) as an embodiment of the sixth **Dalai Lama (Tsangyang Gyatso)**.
- It is protected under Schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 - the highest legal protection given to birds and wildlife.
- It has been classified as 'vulnerable' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in its Red List of Threatened Species.

World's First Drone-delivered Vaccine in Vanuatu

- A one-month-old baby in **Vanuatu** has become the first person in the world to be immunised using vaccines delivered by a commercial drone which has raised hopes that the method could save lives in other far-flung areas.
- Vaccines are difficult to transport as they need to be kept at specific temperatures. During the drone flight, they were kept in Styrofoam boxes with ice-packs and a temperature sensor.

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