

Fault with solar energy

- According to the Central Electricity Authority, which was once the final arbiter in electricity matters, moving electricity through high-voltage wires is cheaper than moving coal.
- Solar electricity is intermittent and coal electricity is continuous.
- So, you have to add the cost of storage by battery.
- Protagonists of solar power will want us to add the environmental cost of carbon to coal for its greenhouse gas emissions.
- Solar energy is made financially viable by misguiding the people by leaving out storage battery costs;
- Handicapping it with subsidies and concessions that are front-loaded by the government, and forcing it on the industry and hapless discoms through state policy.
- We can do more renewable energy in large hydro, which is both low carbon and least cost.
- India has utilized only about 15% of its hydro potential whereas the U.S. and Europe have utilized 90% and 98% of their potential, respectively.
- The extent of utilization of hydro potential seems to be an index of civilizational development and evolution.

- While China relies on renewable energy, it banks more on coal and hydro.
- The Three Gorges project on the Yangtze is the world's biggest hydroelectric project.

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Myanmar crisis

- There are three camps now in Myanmar:
- The military, which wields power in major towns.
- The opposition named the National Unity Government (NUG) and its partners, which call the shots in the countryside; and the ethnic groups on the geographic periphery, which are divided into those which are paramilitary, pro-NUG, or neutral, the economy traverses a difficult terrain, marked by a sharp decline in GDP, and a massive rise in poverty, unemployment, and inflation.

The currency is in free fall

- On December 21, 2022, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2669, expressing deep concern about the situation and urging the release of all political prisoners.
- It attracted no veto, only abstentions by China, Russia, and India.
- But even with such rare unity, the UN has failed to move the military,

known for its stubbornness and inflexibility.

- The UN is supportive of ASEAN, ever keen to play a mediator's role in Myanmar.
- But the Myanmar government refuses to cooperate with ASEAN.
- In April 2021, Commander-in-chief Min Aung Hlaing accepted ASEAN's 'Five Point Consensus' formula as a way out, but later he resiled from it, refusing to make any concessions to the opposition. The ASEAN persists, but only in the form
- China has extensive interests ranging from the strategic to economic domains.
- It dislikes instability, but has enough partners enabling it to keep consolidating its position.
- Shunned by the West due to the war in Ukraine, Russia has found a willing partner in Myanmar's generals who need Russian arms, training and political support.

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MGNREGA

India's dilemma

- New Delhi follows the policy of dealing with the government of the day. It needs assistance to tackle the Indian Insurgent Groups sheltered in Myanmar; its mega infrastructure

projects aimed at the people's welfare require the authorities' cooperation; and it is resolved to stay in competition with China for influence in Myanmar.

- The Economic Survey 2022-23 showed that 6.49 crore households demanded work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).
- The survey credited the scheme for having a positive impact on income per household, agricultural productivity, and production-related expenditure.
- During the first COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, when the scheme was given its highest- ever budget of ₹1.11 lakh crore, it provided a critical lifeline for a record 11 crore workers.
- This is reflected in the fact that the demand for work under MGNREGA spiked to record -high levels during the pandemic years.
- About 8.55 crore households demanded MGNREGA work in 2020-21.
- While the scheme guarantees 100 days of employment per household per year, an analysis by PRS Legislative Research shows that since 2016-17, on average, less than 10% of the households completed 100 days of wage employment.

- Another issue that continues to hamper the scheme's proper implementation is the delay in wage payments.
- if the government intends to provide legally guaranteed 100 days of work per household for at least those that worked in the scheme in the current financial year, that minimum budget for it in the upcoming financial year 2023--24 should be at least ₹2.72 lakh crore
- Another concern pointed out by a panel of the Rural Development Ministry is that the minimum wage rate under MGNREGS is fixed by the Centre on the basis of the Consumer Price Index -Agricultural Labourers.
- Fake job cards, widespread corruption, late uploading of muster rolls, and inconsistent payment of unemployment allowance are some of the other issues hampering the implementation of MGNREGA

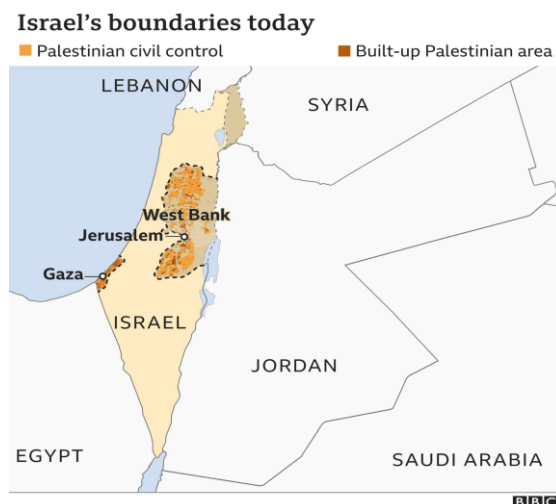
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Shipbuilding industry

- Identifying the shipbuilding industry as a strategically important industry for its role in energy security, national defense, and the development of the heavy engineering industry, the Economic Survey, 2022-23 noted that it has the potential to increase the contribution of the industry and the services sector to the national GDP.
- With its various direct and indirect linkages with most other leading industries, and its huge dependence on the infrastructure and services sectors of the economy, the shipbuilding industry has the potential to strengthen the mission of an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', the survey said.
- "Based on international shipbuilding statistics, if one takes a conservative Marginal Consumption to GDP Ratio (MCGR) of 0.45 for the shipbuilding sector, the investment multiplier would be approximately 1.82.
- For example, an injection of approximately ₹1.5 lakh crore in naval shipbuilding projects would accrue a circulation of ₹2.73 lakh crore in the shipbuilding sector due to the multiplier effect," the survey said.
- In this regard, the survey said that among manufacturing activities, shipbuilding has one of the highest employment multipliers of 6.48 and is capable of generating mass employment in remote, coastal and rural areas, thereby absorbing the labour migrating from agricultural pursuits.

- “The indigenisation initiatives implemented by the Indian Navy have resulted in a significant infusion of economic activity by creating employment opportunities for Micro, Medium and Small Enterprises (MSME) and other industries,
- The survey said that a study undertaken by the Indian Navy for the construction of seven P-17A frigates reveals that around three-fourths of the total project cost of warships is invested back into the Indian economy.
- This investment is ploughed back into the economy through indigenous sourcing of raw materials, development of equipment and systems installed onboard ships, and other manpower services, it stated.
- Stating that the Navy’s shipbuilding projects currently in progress at various Indian shipyards are poised to provide the requisite impetus to the industry.
- The report also pointed to ship building’s links to other ancillary industries, including steel, engineering equipment, port infrastructure, trade, and shipping services, which have the potential to create a collaborative production ecosystem.

2 STATE solution



- Two-state solution, proposed framework for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by establishing two states for two peoples: Israel for the Jewish people and Palestine for the Palestinian people.
- In 1993 the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) agreed on a plan to implement a two-state solution as part of the Oslo Accords, leading to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA).

Oslo peace process

- In the 1990s a breakthrough agreement negotiated between Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Oslo, Norway, set out a process for a mutually negotiated two-state solution to be gradually implemented by the end of the decade.

- Although the process showed initial promise and progress, a combination of dissatisfaction and distrust led to the breakdown and delay of the process.
- After frustration and provocation led to the outbreak of violence in 2000, the process proved difficult to restart before coming to a virtual halt after 2008

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Core sectors

- India's 8 core sectors' output growth hit a 3- month high of 7.4% in December, from a revised uptick of 5.7% in November, with all sectors save crude oil reporting a rise.
- Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) refers to a production volume index that measures the collective and individual production performances of eight selected core industries.
- These industries are Natural Gas, Coal, Refinery Products, Crude Oil, Cement, Electricity, Steel, and Fertilizers.
- The compilation and releasing of the index are done by the Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA), Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- These industries comprise a total of 40.27% of the total weight of the

overall items that are included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

- The Index of Eight Core Industries highest weight is currently possessed by the Refinery Products Industry.

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ECLGs

Objective of the Scheme

- Launched by Government of India as a special scheme in view of COVID-19 crisis
- To provide 100% guarantee coverage to Banks and NBFCs to enable them to extend emergency credit facilities to Business Enterprises / MSMEs in view of COVID-19 to meet their additional term loan/additional working capital requirements.

Salient Features of the Scheme

Emergency Credit line	100% Guarantee Coverage	Eligible Borrower
The amount of Emergency Credit line to be extended to Business Enterprises / MSMEs would be upto 20% of total outstanding as on Feb 29, 2020.	100% Guarantee Coverage for the additional funds sanctioned under the Emergency Credit Line Scheme.	Business Enterprises / MSMEs with outstanding loan of upto Rs.50 crore as on February 29, 2020 and turnover of upto Rs.250 crore in FY 2019-20.
Interest Rate	Tenure	Moratorium
Interest rate charged is capped at 9.25% for banks and 14% for NBFCs.	Maximum tenure of 4 years from the date of disbursement.	Moratorium period on Principal amount is 12 months.
Charges		
No charges / guarantee fees to be charged by MSMEs/NCSTC.		

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