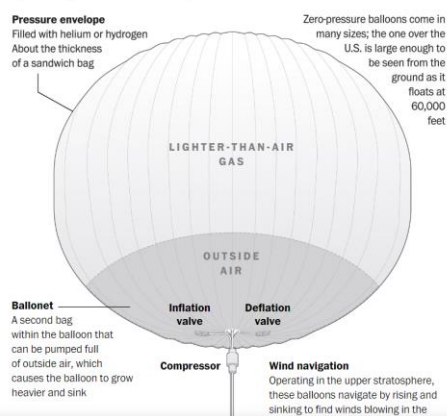


Stratospheric balloon

- The balloon floating over the United States appears to match the general characteristics of what aerospace engineers call a zero-pressure ultra-long duration balloon a high-tech eye in the sky that can hover over a target area for weeks or months.



-
- The balloon is using to maneuver through the stratosphere.
- Some high-altitude balloons are carried by the current, while others may use a semi-autonomous navigation system to set their course.
- In some cases, they navigate by finding a wind current heading in the

intended direction and lock into it by moving up or down in the air

- The Thunderhead balloon, for instance, made by the aerospace and defense contractor Aerostar for stratospheric missions, can search independently for optimal wind conditions.

THE HINDU

Just Energy Transition Partnership (JET-P)

- Just Energy Transition Partnership (JET-P) is emerging as the key mechanism for multilateral financing by developed countries to support an energy transition in developing countries.
- This has taken on particular significance following the insertion of the phrase 'phase-down' of coal in the Glasgow Pact.
- After South Africa, Indonesia, and Vietnam, India is considered the next candidate for a JET- Partnership. India's G-20 presidency could potentially be an opportune moment to forge a deal.
- However, India must develop a coherent domestic just energy transition (JET) strategy in order to negotiate a financing deal that addresses its unique set of socio-economic challenges

Issues that concern transitions

- Energy transitions could give rise to intra-generational, intergenerational, and spatial equity concerns.
- Transitions affect near-term fossil-dependent jobs, disrupt forms of future energy access, shrink State's capacity to spend on welfare programs, and thus exacerbate existing economic inequities between coal and other regions.
- Existing JET-P deals, pay limited attention to intra-generational inequity, such as job losses resulting from a coal phase-down.
- Energy transition in the industrialized world involves a natural tapering of energy consumption alongside fuel switching to clean energy sources;
- India's transition requires significant simultaneous growth in energy demand.
- The Central Electricity Authority projects a near doubling of electricity demand by 2030.
- A country that is likely to multiply its energy demand requires adequate supply from a diverse mix of sources. India cannot afford to put its development on hold while decarbonizing.

The path to a clean energy quest

- India has signaled a commitment to clean energy with ambitious targets like 500GW of non-fossil, including 450 GW renewable energy (RE) capacity addition and 43% RE purchase obligation by 2030.
- These targets are supported through complementary policy and legislative mandates (Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act), missions (National Green Hydrogen Mission), fiscal incentives (production-linked incentives), and market mechanisms (upcoming national carbon market).
- Acceleration in RE deployment rates to match the pace of demand growth is critical to India's JET solarisation of agricultural electricity demand; electrification of diesel-powered Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); and decentralized RE for residential cooking and heating.
- Stimulation of energy demand through rural productivity enhancement will further aid RE acceleration as well as help to address the rural-urban economic divide, create rural jobs, and thereby address inter-generational and spatial inequities.
- Second, domestic manufacturing of clean energy components is critical

to sustain a JET, build energy self-sufficiency, and tap the green jobs promise of 21st-century energy

- While India has recognized the importance of domestic manufacturing, the challenge is in achieving cost competitiveness. Indian components are 20% costlier than Chinese components.
- Giving preference to domestic components without addressing cost competitiveness may slow down the pace of deployment.
- Third, there is a case for re-aligning the current use of coal resources to enhance efficiencies until the period of phase-down.
- One option is to optimise the use of coal-fired power plants closer to where coal is mined rather than based on energy demand in States.

THE HINDU

Collegium

What is the work of the Collegium?

- The Collegium system, one in which a group of the senior-most judges makes appointments to the higher judiciary, has been in practice for nearly three decades.
- Its importance lies in the fact that its opinion has primacy in the matter of appointments to the high courts and

the Supreme Court, as well as transfers.

- Its legal basis is found in a series of three judgments usually referred to as the 'Judges Cases' concerning the higher judiciary.
- Its manner of functioning has been laid down in the form of a 'Memorandum of Procedure'.
- The Constitution says a Supreme Court judge is appointed by the President in consultation with the Chief Justice of India. In the 'First Judges Case', the court held that the consultation with the CJI should be "full and effective".
- The Second Judges case introduced the collegium system in 1993. It ruled that the CJI would have to consult a collegium of his two senior-most judges in the apex court on judicial appointments.
- The 'Third Judges Case' case in 1998, which was a Presidential reference, expanded the collegium to its present composition of the CJI and four of his senior-most judges

How does it discharge its functions?

- The Collegium's functioning has been criticized for being opaque.
- Its resolutions and recommendations are hosted on the Supreme Court's website, giving

relevant information about its decisions.

- However, the nature of the deliberations and whether there are any internal differences of opinion on the suitability of a particular candidate are unknown.
- It functions mainly through the system of adopting resolutions and sending them to the Union Law Ministry for further action.
- If a proposal for the appointment of a judge is returned for reconsideration, the Collegium may either drop it or reiterate it.
- When the Collegium reiterates its decision after reconsideration, it is binding on the government.

THE HINDU

Anti-Defection law

- The recurrence of this evil phenomenon led to the 1985 Anti-Defection Law, which defined three grounds for disqualification of MLAs giving up party membership; going against the party whip; and abstaining from voting.

Resignation is not a condition

- Resignation as MLA was not one of the conditions. Exploiting this loophole, the 17 rebel MLAs in Karnataka resigned, their act aimed

at ending the majority of the ruling coalition and, at the same time, avoiding disqualification.

- However, the Speaker refused to accept the resignations and declared them disqualified.
- This was possible as the legislation empowers the presiding officer of the House (i.e. the Speaker) to decide on complaints of defection under no time constraint.
- The law originally protected the Speaker's decision from judicial review. However, this safeguard was struck down in *Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu and Others* (1992).
- While the SC upheld the Speaker's discretionary power, it underscored that the Speaker functioned as a tribunal under the anti-defection law, thereby making her/his decisions subject to judicial review.
- This judgment enabled the judiciary to become the watchdog of the anti-defection law, instead of the Speaker, who increasingly had become a political character contrary to the expected neutral constitutional role.
- The Anti-Defection Law provided a safeguard for defections made on genuine ideological differences.
- It accepted a "split" within a party if at least one-third of the members of the legislative party defect and

allowed the formation of a new party or “merger” with other political parties if not less than two-thirds of the party’s members commit to it.

- The 91st Constitutional Amendment introduced in 2003 deleted the provision allowing split.
- The 91st Amendment also barred the appointment of defectors as Ministers until their disqualification period is over or they are re-elected, whichever is earlier.
- But, obviously, such laws have not put to rest the trend of defection.

THE HINDU

Global factors and economy

- Three global factors are important for our economy. One, significant slowdown in the global economy is the general consensus, even if there are different opinions on whether a particular economy or set of economies will go into recession.
- The massive slowdown will have an impact on our exports and pose a downside for our growth because a significant part of our economy is dependent on exports.
- Second, we are seeing inflation somewhat moderating in major economies, and as a result, those central banks are no longer very aggressive in increasing their policy

rates, like the U.S. Federal Reserve just did.

- The third element is which way global prices of major commodities, oil, gas, or even major metals, will move.
- If the global economy were to slow down significantly, then perhaps, the prices should cool down.
- At the same time, which direction the Russia and Ukraine conflict goes, can put the oil and gas prices into a spin either way.
- When we know these factors are uncertain, uncertainty can lead to an accident as well as an economic accident that will not be confined to a particular economy.

THE HINDU
