

Pause in Fed rate hikes

- The U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) last week paused its rate hike cycle by deciding to hold interest rates after ten rate hikes since March 2022.

What does a pause in rate hikes mean?

- Central banks around the world try to steer their economies primarily by targeting interest rates at which lending/borrowing happens in the short -term credit markets.
- For instance, if a central bank wants to lower short- term interest rates, it can enter the market where banks borrow funds for their short -term needs with fresh funds, bid up the price of these loans, and thus lower interest rates.
- The fresh money injected into the banking system, in turn, would tend to percolate into the economy and cause prices to rise in the wider economy. A central bank can thus use monetary policy to influence prices in the wider economy.
- And keeping inflation within a certain target range is a major goal of central banks.
- Another policy goal that central banks try to meet along with the inflation target is to keep the economy operating at its full capacity wherein all resources are fully employed.

- Many economists believe that there is a trade-off between inflation and unemployment.
- According to this framework, if inflation falls too low, this can cause a rise in unemployment and hence unused capacity.
- So, the agenda of most central banks is to keep inflation up at a certain level at which the economy functions at full capacity
- Why did the Fed decide to hold rates steady?
- While inflation has dropped from a peak of 9.1% in June last year to 4% in May this year, it is still higher than the Fed's stated target of keeping inflation within 2%.
- In other words, the labor market does not seem to be heavily affected by the Fed's rate hikes since last year.
- Moreover, the effects of monetary policy usually take time to impact prices in the wider economy.
- So, the Fed may be cautious after a series of ten rate hikes about allowing interest rates to rise too much and too soon.

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New Collective Quantified Goal (NCGQ)

- The recently -concluded Bonn

climate conference in Germany, expected to outline the political agenda for the crucial end-of-year Conference of Parties -28 (COP28) in Dubai, was critical for reviewing and reforming the climate finance architecture.

What is the NCQG?

- A commitment of ‘\$100 billion per year till 2020’ to developing nations from developed countries was a target set at the Conference of Parties (COP) in 2009.
- But estimates since then show addressing climate change may cost billions, and even, trillions of dollars.
- Therefore, the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement agreed on setting a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate financing prior to 2025 a reference point that accounts for the needs and priorities of developing nations.
- The NCQG is thus, termed the “most important climate goal”.
- It pulls up the ceiling on commitment from developed countries, is supposed to anchor the evolving needs and priorities of developing countries based on scientific evidence, and should respond “to the ever-increasing sums of funding necessary for Loss and Damage in response to failed and/or delayed financial support

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Alex Muller

- Karl Alexander Müller was a Swiss physicist and Nobel laureate.
- He received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1987 with Georg Bednorz for their work in superconductivity in ceramic materials.
- High-temperature superconductors (abbreviated high-T_c or HTS) are defined as materials that behave as superconductors at temperatures above 77 K (−196.2 °C; −321.1 °F), the boiling point of liquid nitrogen.
- Superconductivity is the property of certain materials to conduct direct current (DC) electricity without energy loss when they are cooled below a critical temperature (referred to as T_c).
- These materials also expel magnetic fields as they transition to the superconducting state

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Gati Shakti portal

- Industry is hopeful that the government may soon agree to open up access to the PM Gati Shakti portal developed for planning multi-modal infrastructure projects, thus helping facilitate greater private capital investments, especially in connectivity projects that are seen

as critical to sustaining the economy's momentum. GatiShakti Sanchar Portal

- GatiShakti Sanchar Portal" is a collaborative institutional mechanism between all stakeholders including Central and State/UT Government(s), Local bodies, and Service Providers to facilitate the Right of Way (RoW) Application Process through a single interface.
- This is a right under which a telecom infrastructure provider will be facilitated the use of public property upon application
- This portal envisages bringing transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to all stakeholders while processing the application.
- This has further been taking a giant leapfrogging towards "Ease of Doing Business" as the application process for installation of Digital Infrastructure is being delayed due to inconsistency and uncertainty of policy and process and it requires maintaining a fast-tracking application process to overcome the challenges of implementation of Right of Way Rules-2016

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SPIEF

- Over the past 25 years, the Forum has cemented its status as a leading

international event focusing on key issues on the global economic agenda. It provides a platform for participants to exchange best practices and expertise in the interests of sustainable development.

- SPIEF has been held annually since 1997. Since 2005, it has been held under the auspices of the President of the Russian Federation, who has also attended each event.
- In 2021, SPIEF was the first business event of such magnitude to be held offline since the unavoidable break caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Forum was also notable for its use of cutting-edge digital technology.

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Gender gap report

- India was ranked 127 among 146 countries in gender parity up eight places from last year's place in the Gender Gap Report, 2023 of the World Economic Forum (WEF). India was ranked 135 in 2022.
- The country had improved by 1.4 percentage points from then, marking a partial recovery towards its 2020 parity level, the report said.
- India had closed 64.3% of the overall gender gap, the report said.

- However, it underlined that India had reached only 36.7% parity in economic participation and opportunity.
- The country had attained parity in enrolment across all levels of education, it said.
- The index ranked Pakistan at 142, Bangladesh at 59, China at 107, Nepal at 116, Sri Lanka at 115, and Bhutan at 103.
- Iceland is the most gender -equal country for the 14th consecutive year and the only one to have closed more than 90% of its gender gap,
- On political empowerment, India has registered 25.3% parity, with women making up 15.1% of MPs.
- Of the 117 countries with available data since 2017, 18 including Bolivia (50.4%), India (44.4%), and France (42.3%) have achieved women's representation of over 40% in local governance. "Compared with top-scoring countries that register a 94.4% gender parity at birth, the indicator stands at 92.7% for India," it said.
- Overall, the Southern Asian region has achieved 63.4% gender parity, the second-lowest of the eight regions.

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