

CURRENTLY - FROM NEWS TO NOTES

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Hindu & The Indian express

Headline	Source
Trout farming in trouble in Himachal as flash floods take toll on fisheries sector	The Hindu, Page 2
Bills to steer voyage to 'Amrit Kaal'	The Hindu, Page 13

Headline	Source
The new Constitution Bill, the need for a balancing act	The Hindu, Editorial, Page 10
India and the world in dairy	The Indian Express, Page 14
T.N. school introduces uniforms with QR code to enhance students' safety	The Hindu, Page 2

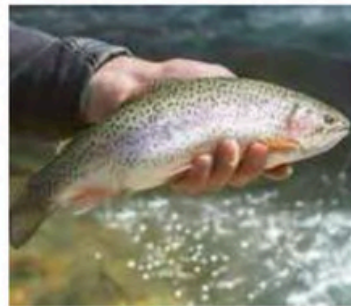
Trout farming in trouble in Himachal as flash floods take toll on fisheries sector

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

The rise in flash flood incidents in Himachal Pradesh over the years has been hurting the fragile aquatic habitat of the State's rivers and streams, posing a threat to species like trouts, the exotic Salmonidae that thrives in the cold, fresh waters of high-altitude Himalayan mountains.

In the hill State, brown trout (*Salmo trutta fario*) and rainbow trout (*Salmo gairdneri gairdneri*) are found in the Beas, Sutlej, and Ravi rivers in the upper Himalayan region.

The trouts were introduced in the country mainly to encourage sports fisheries. But trout farming is increasingly being identified as a commercial venture for table fish production. Experts and officials believe that extreme weather events, including rise in flash flood incidents, are a matter of concern, which



Brown trout and rainbow trout are found in the State's rivers, including Beas, Sutlej and Ravi.

Fisheries Department has urged the State govt. to include trout farmers in disaster relief manual

could cause damage to the aquatic habitats, eventually adversely hitting the livelihood of those involved in business activities surrounding fisheries.

"As far as the fisheries are concerned, the impact surrounding trouts is legitimate. Those involved in trout farming have constructed raceways near rivers and rivulets, and dam-

age has been reported this year following flash floods and heavy rains, particularly in Kullu and Mandi districts. Fisheries were impacted, specifically trouts, and many have faced economic loss," Vivek Chandel, Director of Fisheries, Himachal Pradesh, told *The Hindu*.

"Trout is a cold water species, which thrives in high-altitude streams and rivulets. Flash floods, accompanied by debris, cuts off the water supply. Trouts need high oxygen, but when muddy water comes to raceways, mortality occurs. It's a matter of concern," he said.

Concerned over the losses, the department has urged the State government to include trout farmers under disaster relief. "As of now, trout fish farming has not been included in the relief manual. We have requested it to be included," he added.

Scores of families in the

State rely on fisheries for their livelihood. Currently, around 742 families are engaged in trout production.

Pointing out that Himachal Pradesh has established itself as a leading player in trout farming, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu recently stated that his government's initiatives have not only boosted aquaculture but have also inspired the youth to explore opportunities in the sector, eventually contributing to the nation's economic growth.

The State has seen a steep rise in flash flood incidents in the past few years, especially during the monsoon season. The natural calamities have killed hundreds of people, damaged critical infrastructure, and have raised concern about the ecologically fragile Himalayan region.

Government data show there have been 75 flash flood incidents in the State this year till August 22.

Trout farming in trouble in Himachal as flash floods take toll on fisheries sector

Source: The Hindu, Page 2

GS Paper: Environment

Context of the Article

- Himachal Pradesh has witnessed a sharp rise in flash flood incidents, particularly during monsoon.
- These floods are damaging fragile aquatic habitats, especially in rivers and streams where trouts thrive.
- Trout farming, which started as a sports fish initiative, is now a commercial activity with over 742 families dependent on it.
- Fisheries Department has urged the State government to include trout farmers under the disaster relief manual, as recurring floods cause severe economic loss.

Trout Farming Origin

- Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta fario*) and Rainbow Trout (*Salmo gairdneri gairdneri*) were introduced in India to encourage sports fisheries.
- Over time, trout farming turned into a commercial venture for table fish production.



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Habitats

- Trouts are cold-water species, thriving in high-altitude Himalayan rivers, rivulets, and streams.
- Found in Beas, Sutlej, Ravi, and other upper Himalayan waters.
- They need:
 - Clean, cold, fresh water
 - High oxygen levels
 - Stable aquatic ecosystems

Impact of Flash Floods on Farms

- Habitat destruction due to debris and siltation.
- Disruption of water supply → high mortality of trout.
- Economic losses for families dependent on trout farming.
- Threat to Himachal's position as a leading state in trout farming.
- Ecological concern for fragile Himalayan aquatic systems.

Which of the following is not a bird ?

- (a) Golden Mahseer
- (b) Indian Nightjar
- (c) Spoonbill
- (d) White Ibis

(2022)

Bills to steer voyage to 'Amrit Kaal'

The just concluded Monsoon Session of Parliament cleared five key legislations, replacing archaic laws; together, they aim to ease business processes, align India with international conventions, and accelerate investments in ports, shipbuilding, and shipping services

NEWS ANALYSIS

Abhishek Law

In a first, India has enacted a sweeping overhaul of its maritime sector, replacing all pre-Independence era laws with a modernised framework that seeks to make the country a global maritime hub.

The just concluded Monsoon Session of the Parliament cleared five key legislations, namely, the Merchant Shipping Bill; the Indian Ports Bill; the Coastal Shipping Act (after receiving Presidential assent); the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act (after Presidential assent), and the Bills of Lading Act (after Presidential assent).

Together, they aim to ease business processes, align India with international conventions, and accelerate investments in ports, shipbuilding, and shipping services.

"This has been a landmark session with these new legislations set to transform India's maritime sector, and bring in a wave of new investments," said Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal.

Atmanirbhar seas

The centrepiece of the reforms - the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 - provides a robust legal framework to realise India's Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047. It replaces colonial-era provisions and updates India's



Smooth sail: Expanded ownership categories will enable registration of chartered vessels in India. PTI

maritime regulation in line with International Maritime Organization (IMO) conventions and global best practices.

The law aims to increase tonnage under the Indian flag; reduce dependence on foreign vessels, and boost India's image as a reliable shipping jurisdiction.

Expanded ownership categories will enable registration of chartered vessels in India - a segment it intends to tap, while quality training and skill development of seafarers will create new employment opportunities.

Crucially, it mandates a stronger salvage ecosystem, safety standards in navigation, and preventive measures for marine pollution. Stringent environment protection laws covering oil-spill have also been included.

"This is about making India not just self-reliant in



This has been a landmark session with these new legislations set to transform India's maritime sector, and bring in a wave of new investments

SARBANANDA SONOWAL, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways

shipping but also a responsible stakeholder in global seas," said a senior ministry official.

Indian Ports Bill

Ports are the gateways to India's maritime economy, handling over 90 per cent of trade by volume.

The new Indian Ports Act, 2025, establishes a forward-looking framework for port development, data-driven planning, and integration with India's global commitments on

competitiveness," said a second Ministry official.

The expected outcome include accelerated port capacity growth at local, State, and national levels; improved trade connectivity; lower logistics costs, and job creation.

The Coastal Shipping Act, 2025, focuses on reducing logistics cost, promoting sustainable transport, and boosting India's domestic shipping industry. It exempts Indian vessels from licensing requirements. This allows more cargo movement through India-flagged vessels. By promoting Indian ownership of coastal fleets, the law seeks to cut dependence on foreign ships for domestic cargo movement. A National Coastal and Inland Shipping Strategic Plan and a publicly accessible National Database of Coastal Shipping will guide investment and policy priorities. Promotion and development of integrated coastal and inland waterways is part of upscaling measures.

The government projects India's coastal cargo movement to rise nearly eight-fold - from 165 million tonnes today to 1,300 million tonnes by 2047.

This Act replaces archaic carriage laws with simplified provisions, adopting the globally-recognised Hague-Visby Rules that govern liabilities and rights of carriers and shippers. It will facilitate smoother implementation of trade pacts like the Comprehensive Economic and

"Single-window system for maintenance and accessibility of port-related data; improved trade data, and lower logistics cost are seen as logical impact. It will enhance India's EXIM

Trade Agreement (CETA) between India and the UK, particularly for sea-borne exports.

Officials said the law enhances transparency, commercial efficiency, and strengthens India's credentials as a maritime trading nation on a par with global standards.

Bills of Lading and documents crucial to maritime trade, now have a clear, modern legal framework.

The Act provides for the transfer of rights of suit and liabilities to the consignee, or lawful endorsee, reducing ambiguity that often lead to litigation.

By simplifying language and aligning with best practices, the Act promotes ease of doing business and ensures smoother transactions between carriers, shippers, and lawful holders of Bills of Lading.

According to Rajiv Jaita, former Chairman, Mumbai Port Authority, the legislations are more than statutory updates. They are strategic enablers supporting India's vision under Maritime India Vision 2047. They create a more competitive environment for Indian shipping and port services.

Taken together, these legislations mark the most comprehensive reforms in India's maritime history.

As India positions itself for the next phase of growth, the seas here, once regulated by outdated colonial laws, are now charted for Amrit Kaal.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

Bills to steer voyage to 'Amrit Kaal'

Source: The Hindu, Page 13

GS Paper: GS3

Context of the Article

- 5 legislations to overhaul maritime laws, replace colonial-era framework.
- Goals: ease of doing business, global alignment, lower logistics cost, boost ports/shipbuilding/shipping.

Legislations

1. Merchant Shipping Act, 2025

- Replaces 1958 law.
- Aligns with IMO conventions.
- Wider ownership; Indian-flag chartered vessels.
- Focus: safety, salvage, pilotage, pollution control.



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2. Indian Ports Bill, 2025

- Replaces 1908 law.
- Ports = ~90% of trade; upgrades safety, security, governance.
- Boards for 12 major & 200+ non-major ports.
- Push for eco-friendly, competitive services.
- State Maritime Boards; dispute resolution.
- National maritime single-window + grievance redressal.

3. Coastal Shipping Act, 2025

- Cuts logistics cost; promotes sustainable transport.
- Boosts domestic/coastal shipping; Indian-flag use.
- Linked to National Coastal Shipping Plan & inland waterways.

4. Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, 2025

- Modern framework.
- Clear transfer of rights/liabilities.
- Less ambiguity → fewer disputes.

5. Bills of Lading Act, 2025

- Clear rules on Bills of Lading.
- Simplifies transactions; improves transparency and credibility.

Important Data from the Article

- 90% → Share of India's trade volume handled by ports.
- 12 major ports and 200+ non-major (minor) ports under governance framework.

The new Constitution Bill, the need for a balancing act

Moral integrity in the political class is a paradox that India has continually struggled with. While, on the one hand, the electorate demands moral rectitude in the political class, there has, on the other, been a pervading spectre of criminality prevailing in the political class. The proposed Constitution (One Hundred and Thirtieth Amendment) Bill, 2025, that was introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 20, 2025, is aimed at filling this vacuum by providing a condition. Under this, Ministers, Chief Ministers and even the Prime Minister must either resign or automatically be subject to removal if they continue to be in custody even after a consecutive period of 30 days in crimes that carry a maximum punishment of five years or more of imprisonment.

On the surface, the action appears to be a decisive initiative toward enabling cleaner politics. It touches upon the disturbing fact of corrupt leaders in custody holding on to power, a situation that has made people lose trust in governance. But there are political pitfalls and constitutional quandaries that lurk beneath its promise.

The foundation for this Bill rests on Articles 75, 164 and 239AA of the Constitution, which deal with the appointment and tenure of Ministers in the Union, States and Delhi, respectively. While Articles 75(1), 164(1) and 239AA(5) mandate that Ministers shall hold office at the pleasure of the President of India (or Governor), this "pleasure" has been judicially interpreted within the bounds of constitutional morality and legal propriety, as in cases such as *Shamsher Singh and Anr. vs State Of Punjab* and *Nabam Rebia And Etc. Etc. vs Deputy Speaker And Ors*.

Judicial pronouncements

The Supreme Court of India, in *S.R. Bommai vs Union of India*, underscored the role of constitutional morality as a guiding principle, thus pronouncing that democratic institutions must be nurtured through integrity and accountability. Later, in *Manoj Narula vs Union of India*, the Court directly addressed the ethical dimension of ministerial appointments, warning that individuals with serious criminal charges should not be entrusted with executive power. Although the Court stopped short of mandating automatic removal, it clearly signalled that morality is intrinsic to the constitutional framework. The Bill, therefore, draws strength from these pronouncements, seeking to give legislative form to what has long been a judicially recognised moral imperative.

① But this Bill's very ambition may be its Achilles' heel. The most glaring issue concerns the principle of presumption of innocence, which forms part of the right to life and liberty under Article 21. To equate arrest and detention with



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is an advocate, a former Legislative Assistants to Members of Parliament (LAMP) Fellow (2024-25), and, currently, a Parliamentary, Legislative and Policy Researcher

grounds for removal, without conviction or even the framing of charges, risks undermining this foundational constitutional value. Section 8(3) of the Representation of The People Act concerns the disqualification of members on the conviction of certain offences. In the case of *Lily Thomas vs Union of India*, the Supreme Court held that a lawmaker, only upon conviction, immediately stands immediately disqualified. The three-month window to file an appeal and continue as a legislator was also struck down, thus providing jurisprudential support for stringent accountability even before the existence of the Bill. Here, it is important to note that disqualification begins only when someone is convicted, and not when someone is arrested or detained.

② The problem is compounded by the Bill's reliance on executive discretion through the insertion of Clause 5A after Clause 5 of Article 75, Clause 4A after Clause 4 of Article 164 and Clause 5A after Clause 5 of Article 239AA of the Constitution. Ministers can be removed on the advice of the Prime Minister or Chief Minister, but automatic removal kicks in if such advice is withheld. This dual mechanism politicises the process: a Prime Minister may shield allies for 30 days, while a hostile Chief Minister may allow rivals to fall by the automatic rule. Instead of insulating governance from partisanship, the Bill risks embedding accountability in the shifting sands of political calculation.

③ **Inconsistency in treatment**
The inconsistency in treatment between legislators and Ministers further complicates matters. Members of Parliament and Members of State legislatures face disqualification only upon conviction under the Representation of the People Act. By contrast, Ministers under this Bill would be forced to resign on mere detention. This creates a paradoxical situation wherein a legislator convicted of corruption may technically continue as a Minister until disqualified under the Act, while a Minister only under arrest would be forced out. The asymmetry may appear to elevate the standards for executive office, but it also undermines consistency in the constitutional treatment of public officials. It risks deterring capable individuals from accepting ministerial responsibility, knowing that they face harsher consequences than their legislative peers on the basis of unproven allegations.

④ There is also the problem of the "revolving door". Because the Bill allows reappointment once a Minister is released from custody, there could be cycles of resignation and reinstatement depending on the pace of legal proceedings. Imagine a Chief Minister who is arrested and detained for 31 days, who is forced to resign, but later released on bail and promptly reinstated by the Governor. The State would have endured

weeks of political uncertainty with little to gain in ethical accountability. Such instability may not only weaken governance but also incentivise tactical legal manoeuvres, where political actors use the law as a tool to manipulate executive offices.

Need for a more nuanced model

None of this is to deny the urgency of reform. The rise of criminalisation in politics is a stark reality. According to a comprehensive analysis by the Association for Democratic Reforms and National Election Watch of all 543 winning candidates in the 2024 general election, 251 Members of Parliament (46%) had declared criminal cases against themselves, up from 43% in 2019, 34% in 2014, and 30% in 2009, representing a 55% increase over 15 years. Yet, the bluntness of its approach risks undermining both the principle of fairness and the stability of governance. A more nuanced model would better serve the constitutional goal of clean politics without eroding democratic safeguards.

① One pathway could be to link removal not to arrest but, instead, to judicial milestones such as the framing of charges by a competent court. This would ensure that only cases that pass initial judicial scrutiny trigger resignation, filtering out frivolous or politically motivated arrests. ② Another safeguard could be the establishment of an independent review mechanism, such as a tribunal or a judicial panel, to examine whether the conditions for removal have been met. This would prevent executive overreach and ensure impartial application. Similarly, instead of outright removal, the law could provide for interim suspension of ministerial functions during ongoing trials, allowing governance to continue without compromising accountability. Most importantly, the Bill should refine its scope to apply only to offences involving moral turpitude and corruption, rather than casting a wide net over any offence punishable with five years' imprisonment, which could include relatively minor criminal conduct.

In sum, the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirtieth Amendment) Bill, 2025, stakes out a significant normative position that citizens might welcome as a forceful stand against corruption and criminality. But its formulation elides the inherent tension between safeguarding democratic deliverance of justice and urgent demands for ethical governance. Unless the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) carefully recalibrates to incorporate due process and institutional checks – the Bill is with the JPC – it could transmute constitutional safeguards into instruments of political exclusion, testing the delicate balance of India's democratic experiment. For, in the long run, power without integrity corrodes democracy, and integrity without fairness endangers it.

The new Constitution Bill, the need for a balancing act

Source: The Hindu, Editorial, Page 8

Subject: GS 2 Polity

Context

Moral integrity among politicians has been a continuing paradox with the public demanding accountability. The Constitution (One Hundred and Thirtieth Amendment) Bill, 2025, introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 20, seeks to bolster accountability by mandating removal of Ministers; CMs and the Prime Minister detained for serious crimes for 30 consecutive days.

Summary

- The Bill amends Articles 75, 164, and 239AA to require removal or resignation of officeholders detained for offences punishable by five or more years' imprisonment continuously for 30 days.
- It aims to modernize colonial-era provisions, addressing the moral decay in politics and enhancing political accountability.
- Removal is executed by the President or Governor based on advice from the Prime Minister or Chief Minister, introducing executive discretion without prior judicial oversight.



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- **Critics highlight numerous concerns:**

- Violation of the presumption of innocence—removal can occur without conviction, solely based on detention.
- Risk of political misuse—Central agencies may target opposition-ruled states, destabilizing governments.
- Lack of safeguards against arbitrary or vindictive use, as investigating agencies control arrests.
- Conflict with existing laws like the Representation of the People Act, which disqualifies only upon conviction, creating inconsistent standards.
- The arbitrary 30-day detention threshold raises questions about its legal and logical basis.
- Executive discretion may lead to inconsistency and unfairness in enforcement, possibly allowing some ministers to avoid removal if advice is withheld.
- The “revolving door” problem permits reappointment after release, weakening long-term accountability.

- Data shows rising criminal cases among elected representatives, underscoring reform urgency but also the need for balanced safeguards.
- The article calls for a more nuanced reform that upholds constitutional morality, fairness, and prevents misuse while ensuring good governance.

Critically examine the key features of the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025 on removal of Ministers detained for serious crimes. Discuss the major concerns related to executive discretion and constitutional safeguards.



EXPLAINED ECONOMICS

India and the world in dairy

As the US pushes India to open up to its dairy products, an analysis of prices shows India is a relatively low-cost milk producer. However, global price competitiveness, based on cheap labour, may not be sustainable



HARISH DAMODARAN

HOW COMPETITIVE and efficient is India's dairy sector?

That's a question being asked as the Donald Trump administration in the United States pressures India to open up its market to American dairy products.

One way to assess competitiveness is through prices.

Take corn (maize), where the farmgate price in the US is currently about \$4.5 for a bushel (25.4 kg). At Rs 87-to-the-dollar, this translates to a price of Rs 15.4 per kg received by the average American corn farmer. This is as against the Rs 22-23/kg rate at which maize is wholesaling in Indian *mandis* and the government's minimum support price of Rs 24/kg for the cereal grain.

American corn farmers, in other words, are far more price competitive than their Indian counterparts. Not surprising, given that average yields in the US, at over 11 tonnes per hectare, are more than three times the 3.5 tonnes of India.

But this isn't the case with milk.

Price competitiveness in milk

The US has a Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) system. Under it, processors have to pay a minimum price for the raw milk they procure from dairy farmers. The price is fixed every month for four uniform "classes" of milk:

- Class I (for sale as fluid/beverage milk);
- Class II (for making ice-cream, yogurt, sour cream and other soft dairy products);
- Class III (for cheese); and
- Class IV (for butter and milk powder).

The FMMO prices in July 2025 were \$18.82, \$19.31, \$17.32 and \$18.89 per hundredweight (45.36 kg) respectively for the above classes of milk containing 3.5% fat, which amounts to Rs 36.7 per litre (one litre of cow milk weighs 1.03 kg).

That's close to the Rs 34/litre price that Maharashtra dairies are paying farmers for cow milk with 3.5% fat and 8.5% solids-not-fat (SNF) content. This makes the farmgate price of milk in India as, if not more, competitive as that in the US.

The competitiveness is more vis-à-vis



Bhavna Chaudhary, a dairy farmer, with her son and her Kankrej breed cows in Banaskantha, Gujarat. She sells around 150 litres of milk every day. Harish Damodaran

Europe. The average price for raw milk paid to farmers in the European Union was 53.17 euros per 100 kg in July, which, at Rs 101.5-to-the-euro, comes to about Rs 55.6 per litre.

Farmgate prices in New Zealand are now around 76 NZ dollars per 100 kg or Rs 39.9 per litre at Rs 51-to-the-NZD. But this is for milk with 4.2% fat and 9% SNF content. For milk with lower 3.5% fat and 8.5% SNF, the price would be just under Rs 35 per litre. (Dairies are selling milk fat at roughly Rs 550/kg and SNF at Rs 250/kg; the realisations from the extra 0.7% fat and 0.5% SNF must be deducted to arrive at the equivalent price for 3.5% fat and 8.5% SNF milk).

Simply put, the milk prices received by Indian farmers are marginally below that in the US and New Zealand, and substantially lower than what European producers get.

Milk yields in India are poor by western standards. The average Indian milch cow, according to US Department of Agriculture data, produced 1.64 tonnes of milk in 2024. The corresponding numbers were 4.60 tonnes for New Zealand, 7.33 tonnes for the EU and 10.97 tonnes for the US.

The low yields notwithstanding, the production cost of milk in India isn't that high because dairying is labour-intensive. Cows have

to be fed and milked multiple times daily, besides being bathed regularly along with removal of dung and cleaning of their sheds. In addition, labour is required for planting, harvesting and storing fodder and feed.

Although dairy farms in the West have automated these operations — through milking machines, forage harvesters and balers, feeding robots, sensor-based cattle health monitoring, hot water high-pressure cleaners and bulk coolers — the low cost of labour makes it still cheaper to produce milk in India. Milk has a higher labour cost component relative to corn, soyabean or wheat.

Processing efficiency

The retail price of whole milk (containing 3.25% fat and 8.25% SNF) averaged \$4.37 per gallon or Rs 100.4 per litre (one gallon=3.785 litres) last month in the US.

On the other hand, the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation's (GCMMF) toned 'Amul Taaza' milk (with 3% fat and 8.5% SNF) is retailing at Rs 55 per litre in Gujarat and Rs 57 in the national capital region.

Taking a farmgate price of Rs 31.5/litre for toned milk in India and Rs 35/litre for whole milk in the US, after adjusting for the lower fat percentages, the Indian farmer would be

receiving 55-57% of the price paid by the consumer here. That's more than the 35% share of the consumer dollar for the US farmer.

If efficiency is measured by price spreads from the farm to consumer, the Indian dairy sector scores pretty high. GCMMF, in fact, claims its farmers in Gujarat are getting Rs 44-45 per litre for cow milk (3.5% fat and 8.5% SNF) and Rs 65-66 for buffalo milk (6.5% fat and 9% SNF) — much more than the Rs 34-35 and Rs 58-59/litre that private dairies are paying. Thus, it is sharing over three-fourths of the consumer rupee with the Gujarat farmer.

This is due to efficiency in procurement, processing, transport and marketing, enabling a compression of the value chain. A cooperative's aim is to maximise the ratio of the farm value of milk to the retail sale value of products.

The challenge

India's price competitiveness in milk derives primarily from the low cost of labour. That includes unpaid family labour having few employment avenues outside of agriculture.

The dairy farmer basically seeks to recover only paid-out costs (on feed, hired labour, veterinary care and other purchased inputs), while not imputing any value on family labour or owned land. Any money earned over and above pocket-paid expenses constitutes "return".

But this model may not be viable in the long run, with farm labour becoming increasingly scarce and expensive. As the reluctance to work on the farm goes up with rising education, even family labour has an "opportunity cost".

India, unlike New Zealand, has no abundant land to grow alfalfa fodder for cattle to graze on and sustain a low-cost pasture-based dairy farming system. Capital and energy costs are also too high to afford heavy investments in farm automation like in the US.

The US, incidentally, had a mere 24,470 dairy farms producing milk from 9.3 million cows in 2022. India has upwards of 50 million farmers engaged in dairying with some 110 million milch cows and buffaloes.

The future of Indian dairying may lie in a different model of selective mechanisation, boosting milk yields through genetic improvement and new breeding technologies, and on-farm cultivation of high-tonnage protein-rich green fodder grasses.

The focus has to be on reducing the cost of milk production so as to maintain the global competitiveness of India's dairy sector, which cannot be based on cheap labour alone.

India and the world in dairy

Source: The Indian Express, Page 14

Context

The article examines India's dairy sector competitiveness, especially as the US pressures India to open its dairy market. It compares India's milk price structure, farmgate procurement, and cost dynamics against major global producers like the US, New Zealand, and the EU, emphasizing the sustainability challenges of India's reliance on low labour costs.

Why India's Prices Are Lower

Cheaper inputs due to:

- Low-cost family labour.
- Lower feed costs.
- Minimal mechanisation.

Retail vs Farmgate Share

- Gujarat model (Amul): Farmers get 55–57 % of the consumer price.
- US farmers: Receive only 35% of the consumer dollar.



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Global Competitiveness

- India is globally competitive on price, not efficiency.
- Main risk: Model depends heavily on unpaid or cheap family labour, which isn't sustainable long-term.

Challenges

- Rising costs for labour, feed, and mechanisation.
- Low employment alternatives outside farming.
- Need to modernise to remain competitive without relying on cheap labour.



T.N. school introduces uniforms with QR code to enhance students' safety

Ancy Donal Madonna
TIRUCHI

In a pioneering initiative to enhance student safety, the Corporation Elementary School in Edamalai-pattipudur in Tiruchi has introduced school uniforms embedded with Quick Response (QR) codes that contain essential student information.

This move marks a first among Corporation schools in the city.

Every Wednesday, students from Classes I to V wear colour-coded shirts – Yellow for Class I, Blue for Class II, Green for Class III, Red for Class IV, and White for Class V – each printed with a QR code. When scanned, the code pro-



Students wearing school uniforms with QR codes as part of the pioneering initiative at Edamalaipattipudur in Tiruchi.

vides key details such as the student's class and the school address.

Speaking about the initiative, headmistress H. Pushpalatha said: "This step is intended to ensure the safety of our children, both inside and outside the

school premises. In case of emergencies or if a child is lost, authorities can quickly identify them and contact the school."

The school plans to expand the scope of the QR system to include more detailed information such as

the student's name, roll number, house address, and parents' contact details, in the near future.

Rise in enrolment

With 650 students from Classes I to V and 18 teachers, the school has witnessed a steady rise in enrolment.

"We've admitted around 135 students in Class I this academic year alone, and we expect enrolments to cross 200 next year," said the headmistress.

The school boasts 19 smart classrooms, all equipped with smart TVs and air-conditioners in the common areas. It also features a well-stocked library and a play area.





2021 SURVEY FOUND 25% OF DENMARK'S FOURTH-GRADERS WERE 'WEAK READERS' STRUGGLING TO READ CRITICALLY

Making books more accessible: Denmark tries to solve 'reading crisis' with tax cuts

ISABELLA KWAI
AUGUST 22

OFFICIALS IN Denmark, as in many other places, are worried about whether people are still turning to a good book in a world of screens and scrolling.

They are hoping that a new proposal intended to make books cheaper will help. Books will soon be exempt from the 25 percent value-added tax, or VAT, that Denmark applies to most goods and services, the government said this week. "We would like people to read more," Jakob Engel-Schmidt, Denmark's cul-

ture minister, said Thursday.

The exemption, he said, was intended to combat what he called a growing "reading crisis" in the country, particularly among younger people. "Making books more accessible, lowering the prices in the bookstore, will definitely do something about that."

Concerns over a decline in reading are not limited to Denmark. The share of Americans who read for fun has declined sharply in the last 20 years, according to a recent study. Researchers have theorized that the increased use of cellphones and social media, along with economic pressures, could be driving the trend.

In Denmark, books are among the goods subject to a value-added tax of 25 percent, among the highest in Europe. Other Nordic countries, including Finland, Sweden and Norway, have lowered or entirely lifted the consumption tax for books.

The Danish government said Wednesday that it would remove the tax on books as part of its new national budget, which is set for a vote in November. The country's expected surplus would cover the cost, estimated to be about 330 million Danish krone, or about \$51 million, it said.

A 2021 survey found that reading proficiency among fourth-



The country's expected surplus would cover the cost, estimated to be about \$51 million, the Danish government said. NYT

grade students in Denmark had declined, with almost 25% considered "weak" readers struggling to read critically.

"The gift of reading and being able to concentrate on a book is something we should give to the younger generations," Engel-Schmidt said. It would promote literacy as well as the development of Danish culture, he said. "Online and physical books are losing in competition to streaming services," he said.

It remains to be seen whether tax removal will actually draw new readers. Danish publishers, authors and booksellers welcomed the new initiative.

Book prices are expected to drop by 16 to 20 percent, said Christine Bodtcher-Hansen, the director of Danske Forlag, a group representing publishers. The move, she said, reflected a "political recognition of the book's value and of the importance of a strong reading culture — something more crucial than ever in an age where reflection and critical thinking are essential."

Engel-Schmidt said if it is approved, the removal of the value-added tax on books would be evaluated after four years, he said, and revised if book prices did not drop.

"It is difficult to estimate the

exact effect of this," said Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, a professor of comparative literature at Aarhus University, and the vice chairman of a task force that proposed the move to the government. Removing the tax, he said, was the "right thing to do," adding that it could help make schoolbooks and children's books more accessible. Reading includes a wide range of benefits, Professor Thomsen said, including the promotion of well-being and empathy for different perspectives. "It's a problem if people don't read books," he said, "because that's where people are confronted with complex ideas." NYT



T.N. school introduces uniforms with QR code to enhance students' safety

Source: The Hindu, Page 2

Where this article can be used

- As an example of technology integration for safety and welfare in schools (Education, Social Issues).
- In essays or answers on innovation in public services or e-Governance for children's safety (GS2/GS4).
- To illustrate best practices for urban local bodies and grassroots-level initiatives.
- In discussions around smart classrooms, student enrollment, and modern infrastructure in schools.
- As a case study for the UPSC on leveraging digital tools in improving social infrastructure and inclusive education.

Context

Denmark is tackling declining reading among children by exempting books from the 25% value-added tax, hoping to address a "reading crisis" where 25% of fourth graders were found to be weak readers in a 2021 survey. The move aims to promote reading habits and critical thinking by lowering book prices and countering distractions from screens and digital media.

Usage in UPSC Mains

- Example of policy intervention for improving educational outcomes and literacy (GS2/Education).
- Usage in essay or ethics answers highlighting government's role in addressing youth reading habits and long-term societal impacts.
- Case study for reforms focusing on accessibility, equity, and learning skills in developed countries.

DAILY MCQs FOR PRACTICE

Q1. Which of the following is the main reason Himachal Pradesh Fisheries Department sought inclusion of trout farmers in the disaster relief manual?

- a) To promote trout farming as an export sector
- b) To provide financial relief to farmers affected by flash floods
- c) To increase trout population in rivers
- d) To regulate fishing licenses

Q2. The “Amrit Kaal” bills passed in the Monsoon Session aim primarily to:

- a) Expand agriculture subsidies and reforms
- b) Boost maritime infrastructure, port capacity, and shipbuilding
- c) Promote digital education platforms
- d) Strengthen energy sector reforms

Q3. Under the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, a Minister can be removed on which basis?

- a) Conviction for criminal offense only
- b) Detention for 30 consecutive days for offenses punishable by five years or more
- c) Losing the confidence of the legislative assembly
- d) Mismanagement of public funds

DAILY MCQs FOR PRACTICE

Q4. Select the correct combination regarding India's dairy sector competitiveness:

1. Lower labour costs including unpaid family labour aid cost advantage
2. Indian farmers receive a higher share of consumer price than US farmers
3. India has higher average milk yield per cow than EU
4. Mechanization is the key driver of India's dairy competitiveness

Options:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 3 and 4 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 2 and 4 only

Q5. The initiative of embedding QR codes in Tamil Nadu school uniforms is primarily to:

- a) Digitize attendance records
- b) Enhance student safety by quick identification and emergency contact
- c) Monitor academic progress
- d) Manage school transport system

Answers

- b) To provide financial relief to farmers affected by flash floods
2. b) Boost maritime infrastructure, port capacity, and shipbuilding
3. b) Detention for 30 consecutive days for offenses punishable by five years or more
4. b) Low-cost and largely unpaid family labor
5. b) Instant identification of students and emergency contact data