



5 June, 2024

### NOTA

**Context:** In Indore, the NOTA option received the highest number of votes ever recorded in any constituency to date.

- NOTA (None Of The Above) is a ballot option enabling voters to express disapproval of all candidates in a voting system.
- Its implementation in India followed the 2013 Supreme Court ruling in the People's Union for Civil Liberties v. Union of India case.
- Despite its introduction, NOTA in India does not grant a 'right to reject.'
- In Indian elections, the candidate with the highest number of votes wins, regardless of the quantity of NOTA votes cast.

#### ➤ Background of NOTA:

- **History of NOTA:** The Law Commission's 170th Report in 1999 explored negative voting and a 50%+1 voting system but didn't finalize recommendations due to practical challenges.
- **Role of Election Commission of India (ECI):** ECI supported NOTA in 2001 and 2004 to address concerns about voter secrecy with EVMs, proposing to add "NOTA" as an option.

#### ➤ Landmark Cases Related to NOTA:

- **Lily Thomas v. Speaker, Lok Sabha (1993):** The Supreme Court highlighted voting as a formal expression of will, allowing voters to remain neutral.
- **People's Union for Civil Liberties & Anr v. Union of India & Anr (2013):** The Supreme Court mandated adding a NOTA button on EVMs, empowering voters and promoting fair elections.
- **Shailesh Manubhai Parmar v. Election Commission of India Through the Chief Election Commissioner & Ors. (2018):** The Supreme Court eliminated NOTA from Rajya Sabha elections, expressing concerns about its impact on democracy and potential corruption.

#### ➤ Legal Provisions related to NOTA:

- Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ensures secrecy in voting, stressing periodic and genuine elections by universal suffrage and secret vote.
- Section 25(b) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees the right to vote and be elected at genuine periodic elections by universal suffrage and secret ballot.
- Section 79(d) in The Representation of the People Act, 1951 defines "electoral right" as the right to stand as a candidate, withdraw candidacy, vote, or refrain from voting at an election.

#### ➤ Casting a NOTA Vote:

- The NOTA option is positioned at the bottom of the candidates' list on Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).
- Previously, to cast a negative ballot, a voter had to inform the presiding officer at the polling booth.
- Now, voters simply press the NOTA option on the EVM.

#### ➤ Impact on Election Results:

- NOTA holds no electoral significance in the Indian system.
- Regardless of the number of votes cast in favor of NOTA, the candidate with the highest number of votes, even if it's just one, will still be declared the winner.

### Financing gap for universal social protection

**Context:** According to an ILO, achieving universal social protection in low- and middle-income countries would necessitate an extra \$1.4 trillion annually.

#### ➤ Challenges in Achieving Universal Social Protection:

- Africa faces the most significant challenge in achieving universal social protection coverage among regions.
- The financing gap for low-income countries amounts to over half (52.3%) of their annual GDP.
- International solidarity is essential to bridge this financing gap.

#### ➤ Breakdown of Financing Needs:

- Majority of funds (60.1%) required for essential health care.
- Remaining portion allocated to social protection cash benefits:
  - 17.8% for child benefits.
  - 8.3% for old-age pensions.
  - 7.1% for disability benefits.
  - 5.2% for unemployment benefits.
  - 1.5% for maternity benefits.

#### ➤ Estimations and Methodology:

- Estimations cover 133 low- and middle-income countries.
- Financing gap measured in absolute terms (billions of dollars) and relative terms (percentage of GDP).
- Gap compared to actual government expenditure and social protection expenditure.

#### ➤ Regional Analysis:

- Africa faces the most significant challenge with a financing gap of 17.6% of the region's annual GDP.
- Arab States follow with 11.4%, then Latin America and the Caribbean (2.7%), Asia and the Pacific (2%), and Europe and Central Asia (1.9%).

### Face to Face Centres





5 June, 2024

**Country-Specific Challenges:** Sudan has the largest financing gap among low- and middle-income countries due to various crises.

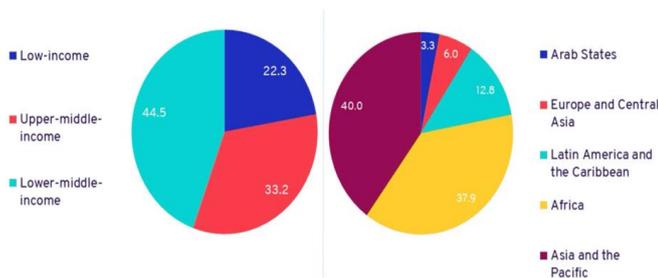
➤ **Strategies for Achieving Universal Coverage:**

- Low- and middle-income countries need to increase government spending by 10.6% of total annual spending.
- This can be achieved through domestic resources such as taxation and better sovereign debt management.

➤ **Addressing Climate Change Impacts:**

- Universal social protection is crucial in mitigating climate shocks and reducing vulnerabilities.
- Progressive taxation, including carbon taxes, and eliminating regressive fossil fuel subsidies are essential steps.
- International climate financing could strengthen social protection systems in low- and middle-income countries.

▶ Figure 3. Distribution of the annual financing gap for achieving universal social protection coverage, by national income group, and by region, 2024



## UN Global Supply Chain Forum

**Context:** The inaugural United Nations Global Supply Chain Forum, co-hosted by UNCTAD and the Government of Barbados, concluded successfully recently.

➤ **Event Overview**

- The inaugural edition of the forum occurred from May 21 to 24, 2024, in Barbados.
- Hosted by UNCTAD in collaboration with the Government of Barbados.
- Over 1,000 participants worldwide convened to address pressing global challenges affecting trade.
- Notable attendees included trade and transport Ministers from small island developing states (SIDS).
- Representatives from UN agencies, major ports like the Port of Seattle, and industry leaders in shipping and logistics were also present.
- The next forum is scheduled to take place in Saudi Arabia in 2026.

➤ **Themes and Discussions:**

- Discussions focused on global disruptions, geopolitical tensions, climate change, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global trade.
- Highlighted the complexities and opportunities in decarbonizing global shipping, particularly in developing countries with abundant renewable energy resources.

➤ **Outcomes:**

- Launch of the “Manifesto for Intermodal, Low-Carbon, Efficient and Resilient Freight Transport and Logistics,” advocating for sustainable freight transport and logistics transformation.
- Emphasized the importance of efforts to incentivize low- or zero-carbon fuels, establish safety frameworks for new fuels, and enhance port readiness for handling various fuels.

➤ **Advocacy and Initiatives:**

- SIDS Ministers advocated for international financial support and investment in green and sustainable technologies.
- Significant achievement with the launch of the UN Trade and Development Trade-and-Transport Dataset, offering comprehensive global data on trade and transport costs.

➤ **Other initiatives to improve the Supply Chain**

- The Global Supply Chain Resilience Initiative aims to bolster supply chain resilience on a global scale.
- The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity seeks to enhance economic cooperation and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, with India as a signatory.
- The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan focuses on improving infrastructure and connectivity across India.
- The National Logistics Policy aims to streamline logistics and transportation networks to boost efficiency and reduce costs.
- Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative aims to promote self-reliance and indigenous manufacturing in India.
- Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes are designed to incentivize domestic manufacturing and boost production in key sectors.
- India's liberalized FDI policy aims to attract foreign investment and promote growth in the manufacturing sector.

## Face to Face Centres





## NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

### World Environment Day



The World Environment Day is being celebrated across the globe on June 5 every year.

#### About the World Environment Day:

- World Environment Day (WED) was established by the **United Nations General Assembly** in **1972**.
- It has been **celebrated since 1973** as part of the **United Nations Environment Programme** to build awareness to save life on planet Earth.
- It serves as a platform to raise awareness about environmental issues such as **climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution** and **deforestation**.
- The **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** will host the **2024 Environment Day** celebration this year.
- World Environment Day 2024's theme, "**Our Land. Our Future. We are #Generation Restoration**", underscores the global urgency for **land restoration, desertification mitigation** and **drought resilience**.
- Finland was the first country to establish a carbon tax in **1990** and decided to ban coal in **2019**.
- India has the **4th largest wind power** capacity in the world after China, the United States and Germany.

### Greedflation



Recently, experts have noted that "greedflation" is contributing to high rates of inflation in Western countries.

#### About Greedflation:

- Greedflation is a term used to describe a situation where inflation is driven not by genuine economic factors but by **speculative greed** and **excessive risk-taking** in financial markets.
- It occurs when **investors and financial institutions engage in excessive speculation**, seeking quick profits without regard for the underlying economic fundamentals.
- It can be fueled by the formation of **asset bubbles**, such as in **real estate** or **stock markets**, where prices are driven higher by speculative demand rather than intrinsic value.
- It contributes to **inflationary pressures in the economy**, as **excessive speculation** drives up prices of goods, services, and assets.
- It can lead to **financial instability**, as **asset bubbles eventually burst**, causing market corrections, **economic downturns** and financial crises.
- Governments may implement regulations to control speculative activities, enhance market transparency, and prevent the formation of asset bubbles.
- The **dot-com bubble of the late 1990s and early 2000s** is an example of **greedflation**, where speculative frenzy drove up the prices of internet-related stocks to unsustainable levels.
- The housing **bubble of the mid-2000s, particularly in the United States**, was another instance of greedflation, with speculative demand leading to inflated home prices and eventual market collapse.

### SU-30MKI



Recently, an SU-30MKI fighter jet of the Indian Air Force (IAF) crashed in Nashik, Maharashtra.

#### About SU-30MKI:

- The Su-30MKI, a variant of the **Sukhoi Su-30** is a **twinjet multirole air superiority fighter** developed by **Russia's Sukhoi**.
- It is built under license by **India's Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** for the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- It is a **heavy, all-weather, long-range fighter** with multirole capabilities.
- The IAF plans to enhance the **Su-30MKIs with new weapons, avionics, sensors** and engines to maintain their relevance for the next few decades.
- India had procured **272 Su-30s** from Russia.
- The IAF currently has **12 Su-30 squadrons in service**, indicating the significant role of these fighters in India's air defense.
- Approximately **40-50 Su-30MKIs** are under HAL's care for overhaul and repairs, highlighting the importance of maintaining the existing fleet.

### Personality in News Ahilya Bai Holkar



Recently, the 300th birth anniversary of Ahilya Bai Holkar was celebrated.

#### Ahilya Bai Holkar (31 May 1725-13 August 1795)

Ahilya Bai Holkar, the Maratha queen and a prominent ruler of the Holkar dynasty was born in the Chaundi village (present-time Ahmednagar district) of Maharashtra.

#### Contributions:

- Ahilya Bai Holkar was renowned for her wisdom, courage and administrative abilities.
- She established the Maheshwari saree industry in Maheshwar, contributing to economic development.
- She implemented policies focused on **justice** and **administration**, ensuring fair treatment for all citizens.

## Face to Face Centres





5 June, 2024

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She initiated various infrastructure projects including <b>building and repairing roads, wells, and rest-houses across her kingdom.</b></li> <li>She <b>maintained a strong military presence</b> to protect her kingdom from external threats and ensure internal stability.</li> <li>She formed <b>strategic alliances</b> with neighboring states to strengthen her position and protect her territories.</li> <li>She sponsored the construction of numerous temples, including the famous <b>Maheshwar temple</b> on the banks of <b>the Narmada river.</b></li> <li>Revered as 'The Philosopher Queen' by British historian John Keay for her enlightened rule and governance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ethical Values:</b> Integrity, Justice, Compassion, etc.</p>
<p><b>Place in News</b></p> <p><b>Netherlands</b></p>	<p>Recently, the Commerce Ministry data revealed that Netherlands has emerged as India's third largest export destination after the U.S. and UAE during 2023-24, even as the country's merchandise shipments dipped by more than 3%.</p> <p><b>Netherlands (Capita: Amsterdam)</b></p> <p><b>Location:</b> Netherlands, also known as <b>Holland</b> is a country located in northwestern <b>Europe.</b></p> <p><b>Boundaries:</b> Netherlands shares its border with <b>Germany</b> (East), <b>Belgium</b> (South), <b>North Sea</b> (North and West).</p> <p><b>Physical Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The highest natural point in the Netherlands is the <b>Vaalserberg.</b></li> <li>The Netherlands is intersected by rivers such as the <b>Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt</b> which play vital roles in transportation, agriculture and shaping the country's landscape.</li> </ul> <p><b>India-Netherlands Relations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India and the Netherlands established diplomatic relations in <b>1947</b>, marking 75 years of diplomatic engagement in <b>2022.</b></li> <li>The Netherlands ranks as India's 4th largest trading partner in Europe and it is also the <b>4th largest investor in India.</b></li> <li>India exported a diverse range of commodities valued at <b>USD 3.29 billion to the Netherlands</b> during April-May <b>2023-24</b>, including <b>petroleum</b> products, telecom instruments, <b>aluminum</b>, electronic instruments, <b>iron</b> and <b>steel.</b></li> </ul> 

## POINTS TO PONDER

- With whom did ISRO recently collaborate for sustainable space exploration through additive manufacturing? – **Wipro 3D**
- Which country provided the highest FDI to India in 2023-24, according to recent government data? – **Singapore**
- Which research institute recently developed a method for generating non-infectious Nipah virus-like particles (VLPs) in the laboratory? – **Institute of Advanced Virology**
- What sport does Dinesh Karthik, who recently announced his retirement, belong to? – **Cricket**
- Who was recently elected as the first woman President of Mexico? – **Claudia Shienbaum**

## Face to Face Centres

