

UPSC Daily Current Affairs 27 Jul 2021

Tunisian President sacks government

(Topic- GS Paper II-IR, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, street clashes erupted outside Tunisia's Army-barricaded Parliament; a day after President Kais Saied ousted the Prime Minister and suspended the legislature, plunging the young democracy into a constitutional crisis.

More in the news

- The presidency announced the dismissals of Defence Minister Ibrahim Bartaji and Hasna Ben Slimane, the acting Justice Minister.

Background

- In 2011, the Tunisian Revolution, triggered by the lack of freedom and democracy under the 24-year rule of president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, overthrew his regime and catalyzed the broader Arab Spring across the region.
- Free multiparty parliamentary elections were held shortly after; the country again voted for parliament on 26 October 2014, and for president on 23 November 2014.
- Tunisia remains a unitary semi-presidential representative democratic republic; and is the only North African country classified as "Free" by Freedom House.
- It has been considered the only fully democratic state in the Arab World in the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index.**
- It is one of the few countries in Africa ranking high in the Human Development Index, with one of the highest per capita incomes in the continent.**

About Tunisia



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- It is officially called the Republic of Tunisia.

Location

- It is located in the northernmost country in Africa.
- It is a part of the Maghreb region of North Africa and is bordered by Algeria to the west and southwest, Libya to the southeast, and the Mediterranean Sea to the north and east.
- It contains the eastern end of the Atlas Mountains and the northern reaches of the Sahara desert, with much of its remaining territory arable land.
- Tunisia is home to Africa's northernmost point, Cape Angela.

Capital

- Its capital and largest city are Tunis, located on its northeastern coast.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

(Topic- GS Paper III-Economics, Source- Indian Express)

Why in the news?

- The government has recently released the latest annual report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS).
- The data was for the 12 months (or four quarters) between July 2019 and June 2020.

Key highlights

- The Report showed two surprising trends.
 - a. India's unemployment rate (UER) had declined over the period between July 2019 and June 2020.
 - b. The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) had increased.
- Over the last decade, two of the biggest worries for Indian policymakers have been the high levels of UER and the low levels of LFPR in the economy.

About Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

- It is the proportion of Indians who seek to participate in the economy.
- In the recent past, India's LFPR has been less than 40% — far below the global norm (around 60%) or even the norm in most Asian counterparts such as China (76%) and Indonesia (69%).
- **In other words, of every 100, only 40 come forward to seek work in India, while the comparable number elsewhere is around 60.**

About Unemployment rate

- It is the percentage of people in the labour force who do not get employment.

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- Again, in the last few years, India's UER has hovered around 6% (or higher) — far more than the global or regional norm. In other words, of those 40 who chose to participate in the economy, at least 6% did not get any job.

What do Low LFPR and High UER show?

A combination of low LFPR and high UER then implies two things.

- One, India is using a much smaller proportion of its population for productive purposes.
- Two, the state of the economy is such that it cannot provide jobs to this relatively smaller proportion of the labour force.

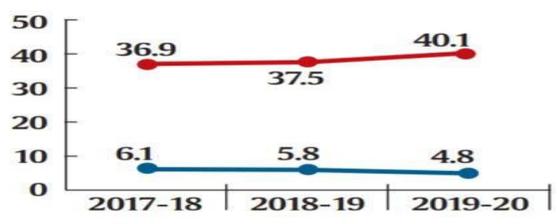
About the Periodic Labour Force Survey

- The PLFS is an annual survey conducted by **the National Statistical Office (NSO)**.
- It was started in 2017 and it essentially maps the state of employment.
- It collects data on variables such as the level of unemployment, the types of employment and their respective shares, the wages earned from different types of jobs, etc.
- **Earlier, this job was done by Employment-Unemployment Surveys, but these were conducted once every five years.**

Calculation of unemployment by PLFS

CHART-1

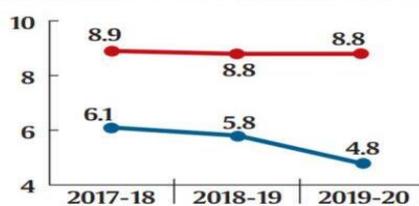
RISING LFPR, FALLING UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



■ LFPR* (%)
■ Unemployment rate** (%)
*Labour Force Participation Rate **Usual Status

CHART-2

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DIFFERS DRAMATICALLY BETWEEN METHODS



■ Unemployment rate (CWS)* (%)
■ Unemployment rate (US)** (%)
*Current Weekly Status **Usual Status

There are two ways to calculate unemployment data and they differ in terms of the reference period over which respondents have to recall whether they were working or not.

- The Usual Status (US)**
 - In this approach, the survey ascertains whether a person had been employed for enough **days in the 365 days preceding the survey.**
- Current Weekly Status (CWS).**

TABLE -1
CWS DATA SHOWS A DIFFERENT PICTURE

PLFS	LFPR (in %)	Unemployment rate (in %)	*Youth Unemployment rate (in %)
July - September 2019	36.8	8.4	20.6
October - December 2019	37.2	7.9	19.2
January - March 2020	37.5	9.1	21.1
April - June 2020	35.9	20.9	34.7

*(ages 15-29)

Source for all data: PLFS 2019-20

- In this, the survey tries to figure out whether a person was **adequately employed in the 7 days preceding the survey.**
- Typically, the NSO unemployment number most routinely quoted is the one based on Usual Status.
- But this approach is not comparable with either the global norm (say the one followed by International Labour Organization) or the private sector practice (such as the surveys done by **the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy or CMIE**).
- **The CWS is closer to the global norm.**

The Assam-Mizoram border dispute

(Topic- GS Paper II-Governance, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, at least five Assam Police personnel were killed after the old boundary dispute between Assam and Mizoram exploded in violent clashes at a contested border point.
- The violence spotlights the long-standing inter-state boundary issues in the Northeast, particularly between Assam and the states that were carved out of it.

Point of Conflict

- **The Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP's) Vanlaltana said the Assam government follows the 1933 demarcation, and that was the point of conflict.**
- On that occasion, the MZP had built a wooden rest house in a forest, ostensibly for use by farmers.
- The Assam Police and forest department officials had demolished it, saying this was in Assam territory.
- MZP members had then clashed with Assam personnel, who also thrashed a group of Mizoram journalists who had gone to cover the incident.

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The genesis of the boundary dispute



- In the Northeast's complex boundary equations, showdowns between Assam and Mizoram residents are less frequent than they are between, say, Assam and Nagaland residents.
- Nevertheless, the boundary between present-day Assam and Mizoram, 165 km long today, dates back to the colonial era, when Mizoram was known as Lushai Hills, a district of Assam.
- The dispute stems from a notification of 1875 that differentiated **the Lushai Hills from the plains of Cachar**, and another of 1933 that demarcates a boundary between the Lushai Hills and Manipur.
- Mizoram believes the boundary should be demarcated based on **the 1875 notification, which is derived from the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR) Act, 1873.**
- Mizo leaders have argued in the past against the demarcation notified in 1933 because Mizo society was not consulted.

[Nauka: Russia biggest Space laboratory](#)

(Topic- GS Paper III-Science and Technology, Source- Indian Express)

Why in the news?

- Recently, Russia's space agency Roscosmos will be attaching a significantly larger module called Nauka with the International Space station.
- It is a path-breaking collaborative effort between five participating space agencies: NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe) and CSA (Canada).

About Russia's new Nauka module

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- **The launch of Nauka, initially planned for 2007, was repeatedly delayed for various reasons.**
- It will serve as the country's main research facility on the space station.
- It is the biggest space laboratory Russia has launched to date.
- It is also bringing to the ISS another oxygen generator, a spare bed, another toilet, and a robotic cargo crane built by the European Space Agency (ESA).
- The new module was sent into orbit using a Proton rocket which is Russia's most powerful space inventory.
- It will take eight days to reach the ISS.

'Gatekeeper Model' to prevent suicides in prisons

(Topic- GS Paper II-Polity and Governance, Source- Indian Express)

Why in the news?

- The **National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS)** has **recently** recommended the "Gatekeeper Model" where selected inmates, trained to identify prisoners at risk of suicide, would refer them to treatment or supportive services.
- It will come after the Bangalore Prison Mental Health Study, the advisory pointed to the prevalence of mental illness and substance use disorder in about 80% of the prison population.

About Gatekeeper Model

- Gatekeepers are existing people who are in close contact with the prisoners and can provide help for the prisoners.

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- They could be other convicted prisoners, prison staff who will be able to identify and support prisoners needing psychological help.
- People having a psychological problem or at risk of suicide can access the gatekeeper, who can bridge the gap between them and the professional services.
- This is of particular benefit in at-risk suicidal prisoners.

The objective of the model

- In this model, selected inmates, trained to identify prisoners at risk of suicide, would refer them to treatment or supportive services.

Related Information

About Buddy system

- The concept of a ‘Buddy System’ — social support through trained prisoners called “buddies” or “listeners” — was found to have a good impact on the well-being of suicidal prisoners.
- Periodic telephone conversations with friends and family would also foster support.

e-Mulakat

- It was an online platform enabling relatives/friends/ advocates of prisoners to book prior appointments for interviewing prisoners through the National Prisons Information Portal.
- This was in addition to the video/voice call facility through mobile phones/telephone booths.

Puri becomes India’s first city to provide quality drinking tap water

(Topic- GS Paper III-Governance, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, Puri became the first city in India where people can avail high-quality drinking water directly from the tap on a 24-hour basis under the **‘Drink from Tap project’**.

About Drink from Tap project

- No metropolitan city in India has such a facility yet to get 24- hours’ basis high-quality drinking water.
- Similar facilities are available only in world-class cities like London, New York and Singapore.

Significance

- The project would benefit 2.5 lakh citizens of Puri and 2 crore tourists who visit the tourist place every year.
- They need not have to move around with water bottles which will help to reduce plastic waste.

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Related Information

About Jal Jeevan Mission

- Jal Jeevan Mission has been formed after the restructured and subsumed the ongoing National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) which will provide **Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to every rural household** i.e., Har Ghar Nal Se Jal (HGNSJ) by 2024.

Objective

- It will provide piped water supply (Har Ghar Jal) to all rural and urban households by 2024.
- It envisages a supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024.

Focused area

- The mission focuses on integrated demand and supply-side management of water at the local level.
- The creation of local infrastructure for source sustainability measures as mandatory elements, like rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and management of household wastewater for reuse, would be undertaken in convergence with other government programmes/schemes.
- The Jal-Jeevan Mission is set to be based on various water conservation efforts like point recharge, desilting of minor irrigation tanks, use of grey-water for agriculture and source sustainability.
- The Mission is based on a community approach to water and includes extensive Information, Education and Communication as a key component of the mission.
- **The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India has placed the subject of drinking water in the 11th Schedule.**

Funding Pattern:

- The fund sharing pattern between the
 - a. Centre and states are 50:50
 - b. for Himalayan and North-Eastern States, 90:10
 - c. for other states, and 100% for Union Territories.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission will converge with other Central and State Government Schemes to achieve its objectives of sustainable water supply management across the country.

Institutional Arrangement:

1. National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM) at the Central level
2. State Water and Sanitation Mission (SWSM) at the State level
3. District Water and Sanitation Mission (DWSM) at the District level
4. Village Water Sanitation Committee (VWSC) at Village level

About Jal Jeevan Mission for Urban areas (JJM-Urban)

- It aims at a universal water supply in all 4,378 Urban Local Bodies with 2.86 crore household tap connections, as well as liquid waste management in 500 AMRUT cities.
- It will be implemented over 5 years.

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Nodal Agency

- Ministry of Jal Shakti is the nodal agency of JJM-Urban.

Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary proposed as MMR's Ramsar site

(Topic- GS Paper III-Environment, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- The Mumbai Metropolitan Region is likely to get its first Ramsar site at the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary, with the Maharashtra Mangrove Cell submitting the proposal for approval to the State Wetland Authority.

More in the news

- The department would be setting up a task force to conduct a fresh exercise to identify, demarcate, and preserve wetlands left out of coastal zones and inland areas in the State.

About Ramsar Convention

- The Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty adopted on 2 February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea.
- Those wetlands which are of international importance are declared as Ramsar sites.
- The 2 February is celebrated as "**World Wetlands Day**" every year.
- The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world"

Secretariat

- The secretariat of the Ramsar convention is located in Gland, Switzerland

Ramsar site criteria

- A wetland can be considered internationally important if any of the following nine criteria apply:

Criterion 1

- It contains a representative, rare, or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type found within the appropriate biogeographic region."

Criterion 2

- It supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities."

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Criterion 3

- It supports populations of plant and/or animal species important for maintaining the biological diversity of a particular biogeographic region."

Criterion 4

- It supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.

Criterion 5

- It regularly supports 20,000 or more water birds.

Criterion 6

- It regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of water birds.

Criterion 7

- It supports a significant proportion of indigenous fish subspecies, species or families, life-history stages, species interactions and/or populations that are representative of wetland benefits and/or values and thereby contributes to global biological diversity.

Criterion 8

- It is an important source of food for fishes, spawning grounds, nursery and/or migration paths on which fish stocks, either within the wetland or elsewhere, depend.

Criterion 9

- It regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of wetland-dependent non-avian animal species.

Maguri-Motapung wetland

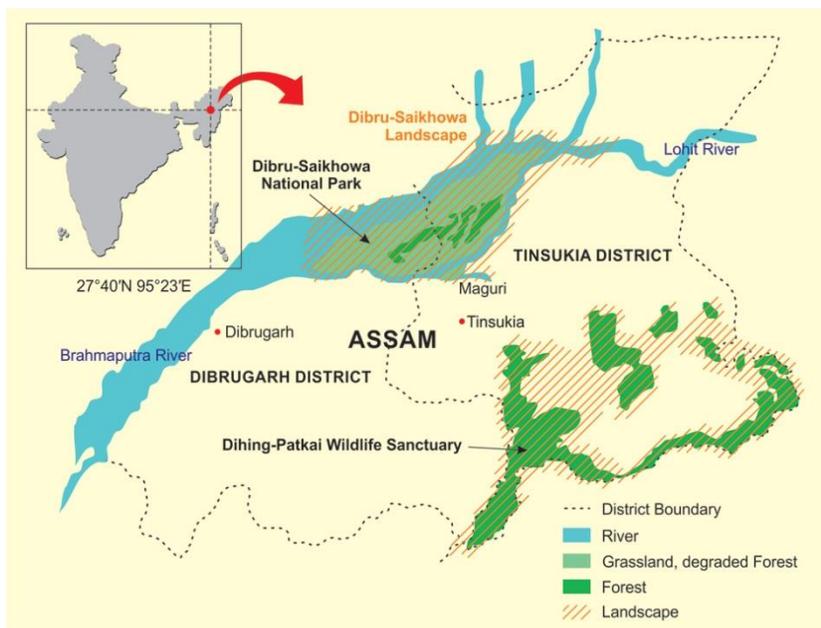
(Topic- GS Paper III-Environment, Source- The Hindu

Why in the news?

- Recently, at least six people were injured when scores of people from Baghjan village in eastern Assam's Tinsukia district clashed with the security forces demanding compensation for damages caused by a **natural gas well blowout more than a year ago.**
- In this Gas leak, three OIL employees and some birds and aquatic animals in **the adjoining Maguri-Motapung wetland had died.**

About Maguri-Motapung wetland

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- It derives its name from 'Magur', the local word for the catfish (*Clarius batrachus*) once found here in abundance.
- It is located close to the Dibru Saikhowa National Park in Upper Assam's Tinsukia district.
- The Dibru River flows from east to west through the wetland.
- To the northwest of the wetland is a river, which was once, called Dangori.
- It has been captured by the bigger river Lohit.

Significance

- The wetland regime is a critical part of the Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve, an ecological corridor to Namdapha National Park and sustains the ecological integrity of the Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot.
- It has grassland adjacent to it and the entire ecosystem (grassland and wetland) is very important as it is home to at least 304 bird species, including several endemic ones like Black-breasted parrotbill and Marsh babbler.
- It was declared an **Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA)** in 1996 by the **Bombay Natural History Society**.