

The Indian Express

Government and Politics

India fails Green Test, Finish at the bottom (Page no. 6)

(GS Paper 3, Environment)

The recently released Environment Performance Index-2022, an international ranking system that measures environmental health and sustainability of countries, has ranked India last among 180 countries that have been ranked. With a paltry score of 18.9, India's 180th ranking comes after Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Myanmar — the bottom five together make up the poorest performing countries for environmental health.

India has also scored low on rule of law, control of corruption and government effectiveness, according to EPI.

India was ranked 168th in EPI-2020, with a score of 27.6. In EPI-2020, Denmark has been ranked first in environmental health and sustainability.

The EPI, a biennial index, was started in 2002 as Environmental Sustainability Index by the World Economic Forum in collaboration with the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and the Columbia University Center for International Earth Science Information Network.

Editorial Page

The Education Emergency (Page no. 10)

(GS Paper 2, Social Justice)

In addition to several other damages, the coronavirus pandemic has caused a major educational breakdown. Students whose academic levels, particularly in the rural and semi-urban areas, were already far below the target feel completely lost.

Teachers who went through a traumatic spell in dealing with the Covid crisis in their families, while negotiating unfamiliar online classes, associated technical glitches and endless online meetings are also at a loss as they meet.

The student, in several cases, could be from a family of first-generation learners; she is not likely to have any smart device or connectivity to attend the sporadic online classes.

It's also likely that her parents may have lost their jobs.

Several post-pandemic studies have shown that students lag behind in all the school subjects. It has also been shown that online classes have not proved helpful and education cannot continue in this faceless inactive mode.

A recent survey conducted by VidyaBhawan Society Udaipur showed that in 2021, the proficiency levels of middle school students in Hindi and English were dismal.

This happened because of a comprehensive breakdown in studies during the pandemic, particularly in the case of underprivileged students who lacked digital devices, connectivity, books and a dedicated space to learn.

The nature and acuteness of the crisis will vary from place to place and no homogenous solution is likely to be pragmatic.

Deficits in reading comprehension and basic mathematical abilities inevitably impact learning in all other school subjects. All states have been trying to address this issue in their own way.

Economy

Govt. open to self-regulatory redressal by social media cos (Page no. 13)

(GS Paper 2, Social Justice)

While the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has proposed a government-appointed appeals' committee to look into complaints against social media companies' content moderation, it is "open" to an industry-wide "self-regulatory framework" if Big Tech platforms such as Facebook and Twitter were to handle users' grievances and appeals in a "satisfactory way".

In a fresh draft of amendments to the Information Technology (IT) Rules, 2021, on Monday, the MeitY proposed that "the central government shall constitute one or more grievance appellate committees, which shall consist of a chairperson and such other members as the central government may ... appoint", to be empowered to review, and possibly reverse, content moderation decisions taken by social media companies.

The draft, which is up for public consultation for 30 days, triggered concerns about the government overriding the decisions of social media platforms.

If the industry and these Big Tech platforms come up with their own self-regulatory mechanism to address grievances of users, we are open to it. If the platforms themselves form a framework of addressing grievances of users, and are accountable to them, we are open to that idea.