

Crony connectivity, and Internet for us(The Hindu , Net neutrality debate)

If the objective is to connect the whole world to the Internet, then Free Basics by Facebook (previously known as internet.org) is a controversial method to achieve it. The company wants to provide a subset of the Internet free of charge to consumers, with mobile telecom operators bearing the costs of the traffic. Facebook acts as the unpaid gatekeeper of the platform.

This kind of arrangement has come to be called “zero rating” and attracted criticism from Internet civil society groups like the Electronic Frontier Foundation. It argues that the Free Basics scheme has “one unavoidable, inherent flaw: Facebook’s central role, which puts it in a privileged position to monitor its users’ traffic, and allows it to act as gatekeeper (or, depending on the situation, censor)... there is no technical restriction that prevents the company from monitoring and recording the traffic of Free Basics users. Unfortunately, this means there is no guarantee that the good faith promise Facebook has made today to protect Free Basics users’ privacy will be permanent.”

Monopolists vs free market

In India, Internet civil society activists are opposing Facebook’s scheme for additional reasons. While the attempt to introduce new users to the Internet is a good thing, they argue, the scheme risks breaking the network into many smaller ones and skewing the playing field in favour of apps and services that enjoy privileged pricing.

Zero rating in general and Free Basics by Facebook in particular has many defenders among advocates of free markets and capitalism. They argue that if the mobile operator wishes to lose money or cross-subsidise some users at the cost of others, then it should be allowed to do so. Government intervention in pricing usually has bad unintended consequences, and it should be no different in the case of Internet traffic.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has re-engaged in a public consultation seeking submissions on which path it should take: the conservative path of insisting on net neutrality, a laissez-faire approach of non-intervention in the decisions of private firms, or other options in between these two.

What seems to be taken for granted but should really surprise us is that companies and policymakers accept that getting the developing world online requires methods that are different from how the developed countries got there. So, how did the hundreds of millions of people around the world become Internet subscribers? Not because of government schemes, but because they could afford it. They could afford it because market forces – competition – drove prices down

to levels that made an Internet connection affordable. Unless government policies get in the way, there is no reason why the same forces will not reduce prices further to make the service affordable to ever more people, with lower disposable incomes.

There is empirical evidence for this: the 980 million mobile phone subscribers in India are able to make phone calls because they can afford the charges. Even after some price capping by TRAI, most mobile telecom operators are doing well. Despite persistent call drops and atrocious customer service, consumers enjoy reasonably good service and the industry as a whole is fairly healthy.

All this happened without a mobile phone operator providing free calls to a limited set of numbers in order to demonstrate the value of mobile phones and to encourage more people to take up subscriptions. Operators did, however, innovate in retailing, launching prepaid packages and recharging these connections. On the flip side, they also cut costs by skimping on customer service, overloading spectrum and sharing tower infrastructure.

Competition is the key

TRAI should reflect on its own success in transforming India from a low teledensity country to a moderately high teledensity one. This happened not due to “no-frills services for poor and developing country users” but by ensuring that market competition is allowed to take its course. There is no reason why mobile Internet services will not become as popular as mobile phone services as long as there is adequate competition.

Therefore, the debate on whether or not to permit zero rating is beside the point. What TRAI ought to be asking is whether there is sufficient competition in its current policy framework. Should it be licensing more telecom operators? Has the government made enough spectrum available so that mobile operators can lower prices and ensure adequate service quality? Are there bottlenecks in the hands of monopolists that raise the costs of service?

The path to achieving the dream of Digital India lies not in foreign companies deciding on what basic services India’s poor ought to access free of charge, but by encouraging ever greater competition and a level playing field. This calls for the regulator to have a hawkish approach towards anti-competitive behaviour by existing market players.

Now, let’s say that the government really wishes to make the Internet affordable to citizens whose incomes are too low to pay for it. There is a good case for this based on positive externalities: that some benefits of an individual’s connection to the Internet accrue to society as a whole. Much like primary education, an Internet connection allows a citizen to participate in the modern economy. Just as society as a whole benefits if all citizens are educated, it benefits if all citizens are connected. To be clear, this is not an argument for the government to run telecom businesses. Rather, it is to say that it is in the public interest for nearly everyone to be connected to the Internet.

Growth as a force multiplier

While it is tempting to provide free or subsidised services – like we do in India for many such things – the best method to achieve this outcome is to raise people’s incomes. If the Indian economy grows at 8 per cent over several years, the income effect will make Internet connections more affordable even if prices do not fall.

In other words, the best scheme to bring the Internet to all involves boosting competition to bring down prices and pursuing economic growth to raise people’s incomes. This is the formula that has worked elsewhere in the world, has worked in India and will continue to work. Schemes like Free Basics by Facebook and Airtel Zero are unnecessary from the perspective of connecting the unconnected.

Now, Facebook is not a charity. So, it probably must have a good explanation to its shareholders why it is spending so much of its time and resources in promoting a good cause. That explanation is likely to go: “more Internet users in the world means more users for Facebook, which we monetise in our usual ways”. It might also hint that being the gatekeeper, however open, of Internet content for hundreds of millions of people will give it a lot more market power. This is important, for as Chamath Palihapitiya, venture capitalist and an early Facebook executive says, the company worries that it will lose out if it does not capture most of the world’s Internet content on its own platform.

TRAI must take a call on whether such business strategies are anti-competitive. But in dealing with the question, the regulator must not allow itself to be persuaded that such schemes are necessary for bringing the Internet to the masses.

(Nitin Pai is director of the Takshashila Institution, an independent think tank and school of public policy.)

Source: xaam.in

Report of Deepak Mohanty Committee on Medium-term Path on Financial Inclusion (GS 3)

Who: Report of Deepak Mohanty Committee on Medium-term Path on

Financial Inclusion

What: Released by the RBI

When: 28 December 2015



भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक
Reserve Bank of India
India's Central Bank

The Reserve Bank of India on 28 December 2015 released the Report of the Committee on Medium-term Path on Financial Inclusion. The committee was constituted on 15 July 2015 by the RBI with the objective of working out a medium-term (five year) measurable action plan for financial inclusion.

The 14-member committee was headed by RBI Executive Director Deepak Mohanty.

Salient recommendations of the committee

- Banks have to make special efforts to step up account opening for females, and the Government may consider a deposit scheme for the girl child –Sukanya Shiksha – as a welfare measure.
- Given the predominance of individual account holdings (94 per cent of total credit accounts), a unique biometric identifier such as Aadhaar should be linked to each individual credit account.
- Account lined Aadhaar and the credit information should be shared with companies to enhance the stability of the credit system and improve access.
- To improve 'last mile' service delivery and to translate financial access into enhanced convenience and usage, a low-cost solution should be developed by utilisation of the mobile banking facility for maximum possible G2P payments.
- In order to increase formal credit supply to all agrarian segments, digitisation of land records is the way forward.

This should be backed by an Aadhaar-linked mechanism for Credit Eligibility Certificates to facilitate credit flow to actual cultivators.

- A scheme of 'Gold KCC' (kisan credit card) with higher flexibility for borrowers with prompt repayment records, which could be dovetailed with a government-sponsored personal insurance, and digitisation of KCC to track expenditure pattern.
- Encourage multiple guarantee agencies to provide credit guarantees in niche areas for micro and small enterprises (MSEs), and explore possibilities for counter guarantee and re-insurance.
- Introduction of a system of online registration of BCs, their training and monitoring their activity including delinquency, and entrusting more complex financial products such as credit to trained BCs with good track record.
- Corporates should be encouraged to nurture SHGs as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.
- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is advised to develop a multi-lingual mobile application for customers who use non-smart phones, especially for users of national unified USSD platform (NUUP).

- State Level Bankers Committees (SLBCs) are advised to focus more on inter-institutional issues, livelihood models, social cash transfer, gender inclusion, Aadhaar seeding, universal account opening, and less on credit deposit ratio which is a by-product.

- As a part of second generation reforms, the government can replace the current agricultural input subsidies on fertilisers, power and irrigation by a direct income transfer scheme.

The Committee also made several other recommendations to improve the governance system, strengthen the credit infrastructure and augment the government social cash transfer so as to increase the personal disposable income of the poor

to put the economy on a medium-term sustainable inclusion path.

Source: xaam.in

Everything you need to know about Kelkar Committee Report on Revisiting & Revitalizing PPP Model (GS 3)

Who: Report of Vijay Kelkar Committee on Revisiting & Revitalizing PPP Model

What: Released by the Union Ministry of Finance

When: 28 December 2015



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nistry of Finance on 28 December 2015 released the report of the Committee on Revisiting and Revitalising Public Private Partnership (PPP) Model. The 9-member committee was headed by former Finance Secretary Vijay Kelkar and submitted its report on 19 November 2015.

The committee was **constituted on 26 May 2015** to review the experience of PPP Policy and suggest measures to improve capacity building in Government for their effective implementation.

More importantly, the committee recognized the PPP Model in infrastructure as a valuable instrument to speed up infrastructure development in India.

Hence, it called for PPP contracts need to focus more on service delivery instead of fiscal benefits alone.

The recommendations of the committee are of relevance to the overall growth of the economy as PPP projects have become the preferred mode to develop large scale infrastructure projects.

At present, over **12007 PPP projects** are under implementation across the country, involving about **7.2 lakh crore rupees worth of investment**.

Key recommendations of the committee

- **Significance:** Speeding up of the PPP model is urgently required for India to grow rapidly and generate a demographic dividend for itself and also to tap into the large pool of pension and institutional funds from aging populations in the developed countries.
- India's success in deploying PPPs as an important instrument for creating infrastructure will depend on a change in attitude of all authorities dealing with PPPs-public agencies, government departments supervising and auditing and legislative institutions.
- The Government may take early action

to **amend the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988** which does not distinguish between genuine errors in decision-making and acts. This is necessary to make only malafide action by public servants punishable and not errors.

- Experience has also underlined the need to further strengthen the **three key pillars of PPP frameworks** namely Governance, Institutions and Capacity, to build on the established foundation for the next wave of implementation.

- The Committee strongly endorsed **setting up of the “3PI”** which can, in addition to functioning as a centre of excellence in PPPs, enable research, review and roll out activities to build capacity, etc.

- **Independent regulators** should be set up with a unified mandate that encompasses activities in different infrastructure sub sectors to ensure harmonized performance by the regulators.

- **Model concession agreements** be issued only when 80 per cent of the land for a project has been acquired.

- The committee advised **against adopting PPP structures for very small projects**, since the benefits of delivering small PPP projects may not be commensurate with the resulting costs and the complexity of managing such partnerships over a long period.

- **Unsolicited Proposals (“Swiss Challenge”)** may be actively **discouraged** as they bring information asymmetries into the procurement process and result in lack of transparency and fair and equal

treatment of potential bidders in the procurement process.

- Since state owned entities **SoEs/PSUs** are essentially Government entities and work within the government framework, they **should not be allowed** to bid for PPP projects.
- The Committee recommended the government to notify **comprehensive guidelines** on the applicability and scope of **access to, under RTI and Art 12 of the Constitution, and auditing** of financial related matters in order to avoid any delays in public asset provision.
- Banks and financial institution should be encouraged to issue **Deep Discount Bonds or Zero Coupon Bonds (ZCB)** to mobilise long term capital at low cost.
- Ministry of Finance may develop and publish a **national PPP Policy document** and it should be **endorsed by the Parliament** to impart an authoritative framework to implementing executive agencies as well as to legislative and regulatory agencies charged with oversight responsibilities.

Source: xaam.in

Fear of Facebook colonising

digital space looms over IT capital

ISSUES WITH FREE BASICS

Startups apprehend that Facebook's approach could compromise net neutrality

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is named such that people confuse it for the Internet. Reliance Communications markets it as FreeNet (Free Internet) 	<p>Does it give an entity a competitive edge? Yes. Since other services would be more expensive than on Free Basics. For eg, if Flipkart is available on Free Basics and Snapdeal is not, then Flipkart would have an advantage.</p>		<p>Does it keep users secure using HTTPS? — No</p>	<p>Is secure content supported? — No</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developers can't innovate on tech without the permission of Facebook 	<p>Can you do VoIP, video, file transfer or photos larger than 200 KB? — No. Who decides these rules: Facebook does.</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook knows what users are doing with all the services 	<p>HERE IS THE SUGGESTED APPROACH GIVEN BY ENTREPRENEURS AND STARTUPS</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook and telecom operators need to approve services 		<p>1 It is perfectly okay for companies to sponsor free access to the Internet in general</p>	<p>2 But, consumers should have choice of using any telecom provider and still get the benefit</p>	<p>3 Telecom companies should not have special deal (latest Reliance-FB deal for example). This violates the fundamental net neutrality principle</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet.org is permanent; a user can stay on it forever and not use rest of the Web 		<p>4 Companies should pay (money, data time, anything else) the consumer directly by using tools like Gigato (http://www.gigato.co) or any similar methods</p>		

TOPICS

internet

world wide web

Net neutrality requires Internet be maintained as an open platform on which network providers treat all content, applications and services equally.

Bengaluru, the information technology capital of India, is vehemently opposing social network Facebook's controversial Internet service as it fears a 'digital colonisation by the West.'

The people opposing Facebook Internet service, called Free Basics, include startup entrepreneurs, students, activists and tech employees. Most of them are based in Bengaluru, which is home to approximately 3,100 to 4,900 active tech startups and is ranked 15th-best startup ecosystem in the world.

They said India has just woken up to the advantages of mobile Internet and any such splitting will create a 'have versus have not's list' in the

country.

“At the start of startup India revolution, we cannot have some Indian developers and entrepreneurs blocked by large corporates to access consumer,” said Vijay Shekhar Sharma, founder of mobile Internet company One97 and mobile payments firm Paytm. “If telecom operators are allowed to split Internet, it will be a near death experience for Indian startup eco system.”

Mr. Sharma is among many tech entrepreneurs and employees, who are venting off their resentment on platforms like Twitter and Medium, a blog-publishing platform.

SaveTheInternet.in, an Indian web petition portal to support the principle of net neutrality in India, is also very actively opposing Free Basics.

Free Basics allows customers to access selected social networks, and services like healthcare, education and job listings from their phones without a data plan. However startup entrepreneurs are opposing the service. They said that it violates net neutrality, a concept that all Internet traffic should be treated equally.

Net neutrality requires that the Internet be maintained as an open platform, on which network providers treat all content, applications and services equally, without discrimination. This is emphasised by over 60 groups and experts across the world on www.thisisnetneutrality.org.

“The practice of zero rating (toll-free data or sponsored data) is not compatible with this (net neutrality), since it allows companies to act as ‘stronger gatekeepers’ and discriminate against the open Internet,” said Raman Jit Singh Chima, global policy director at Access Now, an international non-profit, human rights, public policy, and advocacy group dedicated to an open and free Internet.

Free Basics developers can’t innovate on technology without the permission of Facebook, experts said. Telecom operators and Facebook also need to approve services. Entrepreneurs say there is a need for unbiased, equal Internet that treats all developers same.

“No developer should need to take a license or apply to someone to bring new idea to Indians or any one in the world,” said Mr. Sharma of Paytm. He said any segregation of the Internet into fast and slow, free or paid, app or web will undermine Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s digital India program.

VoIP

A key aspect of the Internet is that a user can choose to visit any website and access any service. In Free Basics, Facebook has decided voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) and video are not good for users, so they will not have them.

Since Google hasn’t signed up as a partner with Facebook, users cannot

access it. This also includes any of the billions of websites that haven't partnered with Facebook.

"In sociology, this locus of decision-making ability is called 'agency'," said Kiran Jonnalagadda, founder of Bengaluru-based tech community HasGeek and one of the key members of the SaveTheInternet.in campaign.

He said Free Basics shifts 'agency' (who has decision making rights) from the end user to Facebook. But India's constitution guarantees 'agency' to each citizen, which is why they have fundamental rights and universal franchise. "Free Basics wants to take it away," said Mr. Jonnalagadda.

Experts say even more worrying is the fact that Facebook wants this right to take away agency enshrined in law. This is why they're lobbying Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) so heavily. While Facebook may claim to be benign, once it is legally approved, others will abuse it for private gain, according to the experts.

"This is why we're calling it 'Digital Colonialism, the exploitation of resources while denying rights,'" said Mr. Jonnalagadda.

He is also of view that Free Basics, like all forms of zero rating, comes from the same school of thought that considers a 'benevolent dictatorship' better than democracy for progress.

"In India we've seen this taken to the extreme once with the emergency. We don't want any further evidence of the harm possible," said Mr. Jonnalagadda.

Sharad Sharma, co-founder of Bengaluru-based software product think tank iSPIRT said that it is fine for companies to sponsor free access to their Internet in general. "But, consumers should have choice of using any telco provider and still get the benefit," said Mr. Sharma.

Facebook had earlier collaborated with telecommunications company Reliance Communications to provide its proposed 'Free Basics' plan. However, TRAI has told Reliance Communications to delay the launch of Free Basics.

Special deal

Mr. Sharma of iSPIRT said telcos should not have special deal like the partnership between Reliance Communications and Facebook to provide free Internet. "This violates the fundamental net neutrality principle," he said.

He said companies should pay money, data time or anything else to the consumer directly by using tools like Gigato, a data-sponsoring app. These tools reimburse users for data without violating the net neutrality.

Meanwhile, India also witnessed street-level protests in Gachibowli, a major IT suburb of Hyderabad. The protestors were sitting under a tent and were trying to discredit Facebook's Free Basics initiative.

The Free Software Movement of India (FSMI) organised protests in several towns across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh with a demand to scrap it.

The members are trying to convince people about their stand through various social media initiatives. They said people who have signed up to support the online campaign of 'Free Basics' can reverse their decision by visiting their website 'saynotofreebasics.fsmi.in'

This week, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg made renewed pitch for its Free Basics Internet service saying it protects net neutrality. Mr.Zuckerberg whose Facebook is spending billions of dollars on projects to deliver Internet to under-served areas using satellites, drones and lasers, appeared on a video to personally promote Free Basics. He also wrote a personal appeal in one of the newspapers.

Keywords: [Facebook](#), [net neutrality](#)

Source: [xaam.in](#)

30 December The Hindu E paper

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Indian Express 29 December

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Reusable launch vehicle trial in 2016, says ISRO chairman [Space , Hindu , SciTech]

'The demonstration vehicle will have a range of 100 km'

ISRO chairman Kiran Kumar delivering a special lecture in Mysuru on Monday.



India's reusable launch vehicle being developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is slated for trials in 2016 and will help reduce the cost of access to space in the long run, said ISRO Chairman A.S. Kiran Kumar. He said here on Monday that the project was still in the experimental stage and the demonstration vehicle will have a range of 100 km, though eventually it will be like a space shuttle. The ISRO uses multi-stage rockets for satellite launch, but the reusable vehicle will be a single-stage rocket to start with. The single-stage rocket will have a solid propellant stored in casing. For a reusable vehicle, the casings have to be re-used or rebuilt and its evolution will hinge on cost benefits, said the ISRO chairman.

"We still have a long way to go and have taken baby steps in this direction," said Mr. Kumar.

He was delivering the golden jubilee endowment lecture of the JSS Mahavidyapeetha on 'Space technology and societal applications'.

Elaborating on the use of space technology for civilian applications, Mr. Kumar said that ISRO, with civil aviation authorities, had developed a Geo Augmented Navigation System under the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), which will help civilian aircraft to make en-route planning and enhance safety.

The IRNSS will comprise a constellation of seven satellites for providing positioning, navigation and timing services over India region, with coverage

of 1,500 km beyond Indian territory. Other countries too have embarked on such a mission and at present, four satellites are in orbit and the full constellation will be in place in 2016, said Mr. Kumar. The geo-tagging of 1.5 lakh post offices in the country will be completed by 2016 under the post office inventory project. Under the project, data of the post offices will be available on a mobile app showing the nearest facility and distance to it.

Source: xaam.in

European scientists press alarm bell on ill effects of diesel cars (pollution, Health, GS 2, DTE)

A group of 24 scientists from 12 research and scientific organisations across Europe and the US have issued an open letter to sensitise the policy makers and people about the harmful nature of pollution from diesel cars

In a dramatic development on December 11, 2015 a group of 24 scientists from leading scientific institutions in Europe and supported by scientists from the US have issued an open letter to the European policy makers and public expressing strong concern over impact of diesel cars on air quality of Europe. They have appealed to say, "With the help of weaker standards, diesel cars have been granted pollution privileges by EU (European Union) law for over two years. As a result, poor air quality continues to have grave consequences for public health and European policy makers must act to correct this as a matter of urgency."

Scientists who have signed on to this letter are from

institutions across Europe that include Norwegian Institute of Air Research, University of West of England, Bristol, Umea University of Sweden, Trier University of Applied Sciences, Germany, Leuphana University, Germany, Hermholtz Centre, Munich, Spanish Council for Scientific Research, Barcelona, Institute of Experimental Medicine, Prague, International Society of Doctors for the Environment, Austria, and Ca Foscari University of Venice, Italy. They have been supported by leading scientists from University of California, Berkeley and Stanford University, USA.

Diesel has worsened air quality in Europe

This letter has dispelled all myths that the industry has been spawning about merits of diesel cars. The scientists have stated it categorically that “the EU limit values for nitrogen oxides and air borne fine particles remain difficult to achieve in many cities and promotion of diesel cars has made achievements of these limits more challenging. Most of these emissions in our towns and cities typically come from diesel vehicles”. They have added that the EU emissions limits for diesel cars are less stringent than those for petrol cars.

It is worrying that Europe has continued to face the problem even after graduating to Euro VI emissions standards. The scientists are in agreement that the “so called ‘clean diesel’ are unlikely to be clean over lifetime.” European legislation requires emissions compliance only for the first 150,000 km, while in the USA it is required for 240,000 km. “For diesel cars to have similar emissions to petrol cars requires a complex five-step chemical process and the engine not to malfunction”. This, they think, is unrealistic expectation in in-use diesel cars. In fact, three-quarters of randomly chosen cars in France were found to be malfunctioning.

The gathering evidences point towards serious concerns around NOx emissions from diesel cars in Europe. The concerned scientists have noted that testing of real world emissions

from diesel cars in the United Kingdom in 2011 had shown virtually no improvement in NO_x emissions over two decades despite the introduction of increasingly more stringent limit values. Even more dramatic data has come from the studies of the US based International Council on Clean Transportation in 2014 that had also done the expose on high emissions from Volkswagen cars fitted with defeat devices. They found that the average on-road emissions level of NO_x from several diesel cars were seven times more than the certified emissions limit for Euro VI vehicles.

This group of scientists has informed that the European regulators are now working to tighten the real world testing of cars and its procedures to address this problem. But the European car industry is lobbying hard to delay its implementation.

Diesel cars – also a climate rogue

The scientists have also taken note of the pressure from the European motor and oil industry to ride on climate mitigation programme. This industry that has launched a pro-diesel car campaign and issued an open letter claimed that “political measures restricting the roll out of the new generation of diesel technology would undermine existing efforts to cut CO₂ emissions”.

But the European scientists have challenged this claim stating that “the environment, climate, and health of the people would benefit from stepping away from the diesel cars.” The scientists have mentioned that Europe has used climate policy and tax measures to promote diesel cars and since 1990 added more than 45 million diesel cars hoping to reduce heat trapping CO₂ for climate mitigation. On the contrary, they have ended up worsening the urban air quality in Europe. Moreover, black carbon emissions from diesel cars especially malfunctioning cars and also those without particulate filters trap more heat than CO₂ and exacerbate global warming.

The scientists are unanimous that European car industry could have taken other approaches to control CO₂ emissions from car fleet. For instance, Japan Motor Industry has heavily invested in hybrid technologies and succeeded in “reducing CO₂ emissions from new cars faster and more efficiently than European Union.”

Industry lobby has remained strong in Europe. The European oil industry in fact has launched a campaign to promote diesel cars claiming that diesel cars have helped to reduce CO₂ emissions per kilometer. But the scientists do not agree with this and have challenged this claim stating that the industry has invested in diesel cars at the cost of petrol cars over the last 20 years. Their open letter states “Despite this CO₂ emissions of cars with a downsized, charged petrol engine can be comparable with an equivalent diesel car.” The open letter explains that one of the reasons why the European oil industry has pushed diesel cars is the slow-down in sale of diesel fuel due to promotion of natural gas in other sectors.

Stop dieselisation

These are the compelling reasons that have led to the community of scientists to come out against diesel cars. They believe – as they state – “the public should be made aware of the true nature of the pollution from diesel cars.” This alarm bell from the European scientists foreshadows the crisis in India that is battling serious air quality and public health impact of dieselization. India should learn from Europe’s mistake and not repeat the mistake.

Source: xaam.in

December 2015 Current Affair quiz Part 3 [21 to 31 December]

Q1- Which of the following chemicals caused Bhopal gas tragedy?

- A) Methyl cyanate
- B) Ethyl cyanate
- C) Methyl Isocyanate
- D) Ethyl Isocyanate

Q2- Which of the following is correct regarding corporate social responsibility?

- a) It is applicable for every company
 - b) Company have to invest 2 percent of their profits in corporate social activities.
- A) a only
 - B) b only
 - C) Both
 - D) None

Q3- Consider the following crops

1. Cotton
2. Groundnut
3. Rice
4. Wheat

Which of these are Kharif crops?

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

- c) 1, 2 and 3
- d) 2, 3 and 4

Q4- Which team won the second season of ISL?

- A) Delhi Dynamos
- B) Chennaiyin FC
- C) North-east United
- D) FC Goa

1 C

2 B

3 C

4 B

Q.1- Which among the following is not part of JAM trinity?

- A) Bank account
- B) Aadhar Card
- C) Monetary support
- D) Mobile Number

Q.2- Which of the following is not between India and Nepal?

- A) Raxual
- B) Birgunj
- C) Lipu lekh
- D) Nathu la

Q.3- Which of the following is part of proposed Insolvency and

bankruptcy bill?

- a) decision to liquidate a company will have to be reached within 180 days.
- b) setting up of an Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India to regulate insolvency professionals and agencies.

- A) a only
- B) b only
- C) Both
- D) None

1 C

2 D

3 C

Q.1-

- a) The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill, 2015, allows for juveniles 16 years or older to be tried as adults for heinous offenses like rape and murder.
- b) India is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which mandates that all children under the age of 18 years be treated equal.

Which of the above statements correct?

- A. a only
- B. b only
- C. Both a and b
- D. Neither a nor b

Q.2- The balance of payments of a country is a systematic record of

- a. All import and transactions during a given period normally a year
- b. Goods exported from a country during a year
- c. Economic transaction between the government of one country to another
- d. None of the above

Q.3- Which of the following

constitute Capital Account?

1. Foreign loans
2. Foreign direct investment
3. Private remittances
4. Portfolio investment

- a. 1,2,3
- b. 1,2,4
- c. 2,3,4
- d. 1,3,4

1 C

2 A

3 B

Q.1- Which of the following is correct regarding special leave petition?

- a) Under Special Leave the Supreme Court and High courts may, in its discretion, grant special leave to appeal from any judgment.
- b) It will not apply to any judgment, determination, sentence or order passed or made by any court or tribunal constituted by or under any law relating to the Armed Forces.

- A) a only
- B) b only
- C) Both
- D) None

Q.2- Amnesty International is

- a) an agency of the United Nations to help refugees of civil wars
- b) a non-governmental voluntary organization to help very poor people
- c) a global Human Rights Movement
- d) an inter-governmental agency to cater to medical emergencies in war-ravaged regions

Q.3- Which among the following is correct regarding financial stability report?

- a) It is published by finance ministry
- b) It is published twice in a year
- c) Dec 2015 report titled as “ Indian economy resilient but no room for complacency”

- A) a, b
- B) b only
- C) b, c
- D) All

1 B

2 C

3 B

Q.1- Which of the following statements are correct regarding Mines and minerals amendment act, 2015?

- a) The Bill creates a new category of mining license i.e. the prospecting license-cum-mining lease, which is a two stage-concession for the purpose of undertaking prospecting operations, followed by mining operations.
- b) For all minerals other than coal, lignite and atomic minerals, mining leases shall be granted for a period of 50 years.

- A) a only
- B) b only
- C) Both
- D) None

Q.2- Which of the following is not

correctly matched?

- A) Tarapur : Maharashtra
- B) Kaiga : Karnataka
- C) Kundankulam : Andhra Pradesh
- D) All are correctly matched

1 C

2 D

Q1- The “dharma” and “Rita” depict a central Idea of ancient vedic civilization of India. In this context, consider the following statements :

1. Dharma was a conception of obligations and of the discharge of one’s duties to oneself and to others.
2. Rita was the fundamental moral law governing the functioning of the universe and all it contained.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

- (a) 1 only.
- (b) 2 only.
- (c) Both 1 and 2.
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q2- Which of the following is correctly matched?

- a. Chahabar : Iran
- b. Gwadar : Pakistan
- c. Hambantota : Srilanka

- (a) a, b
- (b) b, c
- (c) c, a
- (d) All

Q3- Which of the following is correct regarding AIIB?

- a. It has 57 members till now
- b. It has authorised capital of \$50 billion
- c. US and Japan are members of AIIB

- (a) a, b
- (b) b, c
- (c) c, a
- (d) All

1 C

2 D

3 A

Q.1- Consider the following statements and mark the correct option?

- a) IRNSS is designed to provide accurate position information service to users in India as well as the region extending up to 1500 km from its boundary.
- b) It has seven satellites out of which three are geostationary and four are geosynchronous satellites.

- A) a only
- B) b only
- C) Both
- D) None

Q.2- Which of the following is/are impact of falling oil prices in International market?

- a) Reduction in current account deficit
- b) Reduction in trade deficit
- c) Reduction in export

A) a, b

- B) b, c
- C) b only
- D) All

1 C

2 D

Q.1- Which one of the following is NOT a Central Paramilitary Force under the Ministry of Home Affairs ?

- A. Central Industrial Security Force
- B. Central Reserve Police Force
- C. Ladakh Scouts
- D. Border Security Force

Q.2- Which among the following statements are correct regarding Nuclear security summit?

- a) The Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) is a world summit, aimed at preventing nuclear terrorism around the globe.
 - b) It is an yearly summit
 - c) Next summit is in washington D.C.
- A) a, b
 - B) b, c
 - C) c only
 - D) a, c

Q.3- Which among the following is largest part of union govt revenue?

- A. Income tax
- B. custom
- C. Excise duty

D. Non tax revenue

1 C

2 D

3 A

Source: xaam.in

[APFC] Hindi Handwritten Notes on minimum wages, ESIC, Labour laws, Industrial relations & other topics

Here is the collection of notes prepared by one of my associate Mr.Chandra Deo for upcoming Assistant provident fund commissioner (APFC/EPFO) exam

Following Topics are covered, for the syllabus topics- *Industrial Relations, Labour Laws*

- History of Labour laws in India- before independence and after independence.
- Provisions in Indian Constitution related labour welfare and protection
- Major recommendations of National commission on Labour 2002
- Workmen's compensation act 1923: salient features, criticism
- Employees State insurance act, corporation and fund
- Maternity benefit act 1961- salient features, criticism
- Payment of wages act 1936- salient provisions, scope, claims and

appeals

- Minimum wages act 1948- origin, scope, revision of minimum wages, types of wages, reforms suggested by first and second national commission on labour
- Industrial disputes act 1947- salient features related to lockout, hartal, conciliation, layoff, retrenchment, closure
- Factories act 1948: provisions related to safety, women, welfare, working hours etc.
- Trade unions- definition, types, classification.
- EPFO and related current affairs

Labour Court -

सरकार द्वारा गठन।
क्षम न्यायालय में केवल एक ही व्यक्ति हो सकता है। क्षम न्यायालय का presiding officer -

- उच्च न्यायालय का न्यायाधीश होना या रह चुका हो। या
- कम से कम 3 वर्षों के लिए जिला जज या अतिरिक्त जिला जज रह चुका हो। या
- भारत में कम से कम सात वर्षों की अवधि के लिये किसी न्यायिक पद पर रह चुका हो। या
- किसी प्रान्तीय अधिनियम के अधीन गठित क्षम न्यायालय के पीठासीन अधिकारी के

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