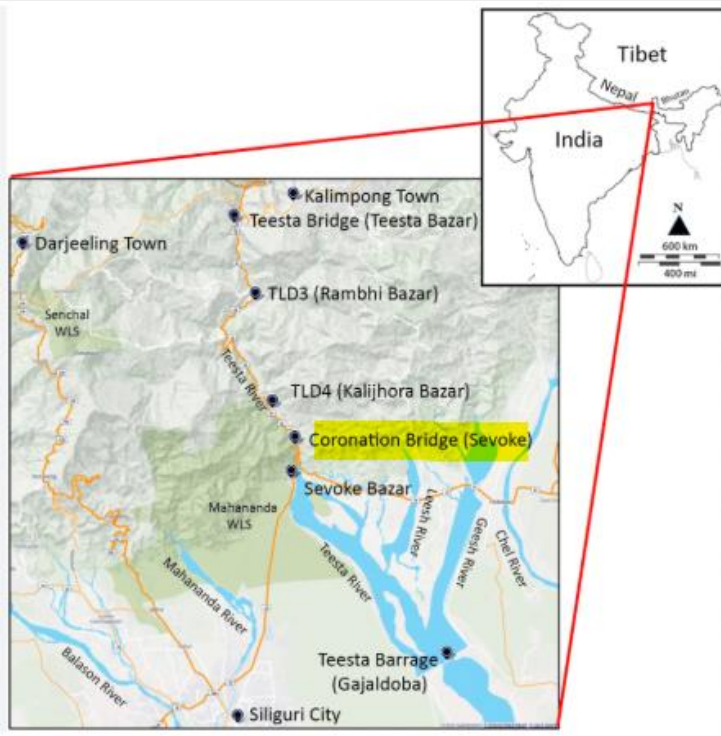


1. After a decade, Teesta bridge gets Bengal nod: The project, its security significance**Introduction**

After more than 10 years, the West Bengal government this week gave its nod to the Teesta bridge project, which will connect Sikkim and West Bengal. The new bridge will not only help boost tourism, but is also important for strategic purposes.

At present, there is only one British-era bridge on the Teesta linking West Bengal and Sikkim.

What is the existing bridge over the Teesta?

The Coronation Bridge was built in the memory of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth from 1937 to 1941. Even after more than 80 years, it remains the only link

between West Bengal and Sikkim. The bridge was damaged in the 2011 earthquake, after which the Centre started planning an alternative bridge to increase connectivity between the two states on this strategically important route.

The Doklam standoff between India and China in 2017 made the construction of a new bridge more urgent, as the Coronation bridge is the only lifeline for the armed forces to transport necessary equipment to the China and Bhutan border and military bases.

Why has it taken 12 years?

According to officials, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was unhappy with the land acquisition needed for the project. There were some land acquiring problems that stopped Mamata Banerjee from giving her go-ahead to this project. Banerjee wanted that the land should be acquired only with the full consent of people.

However, with the fall of the Hasina government in Bangladesh and China's increasing presence at the Sikkim border, the need of Teesta bridge has become apparent. Thus, she has given her nod.

Sikkim is also one of the main tourist destinations for tourists from West Bengal. A new bridge will also facilitate tourist flow.

What happens now?

After the state government gave its nod, the Centre has approved Rs 1,100 crore for the project. After this, the state government will move to acquire land. Once the Detailed Project Report is approved by the central government, tenders will be called for the construction.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Internal Security

Source: Indian Express

2. Why Yamuna in Delhi has high ammonia levels

What is ammonia?

**HIGH LEVELS
OF AMMONIA
IN YAMUNA
CAUSE AND EFFECTS**

Easily dissolvable in water, ammonia is a colourless, gaseous chemical with a sharp odour, which is widely used in industrial processes. For instance, it is used as fertiliser, coolant, cleansing agents, food additives, and in animal feed production, plastic and paper manufacturing.

Sources of Ammonia

Major sources of ammonia pollution include runoff from farmlands, a direct discharge of effluents from industries where ammonia is used and untreated sewage. The chemical is also naturally released in water with the degradation of organic matter such as blue-green algae.

Impact

The long-term impact of ammonia in human bodies can cause damage to internal organs due to its corrosive properties.

Why is ammonia in Yamuna an issue in Delhi?

Notably, dye units, distilleries and other factories concentrated in the Panipat and Sonipat districts as well as sewage from colonies are believed to pollute the stretch of the Yamuna before it enters Delhi. The situation worsens in the dry, winter months due to the absence of freshwater from melting of glaciers and lack of rainfall.

Moreover, water treatment plants cannot treat water with ammonia content beyond certain level. As a result, water supply disruptions take place in the capital when the ammonia levels spike in the river.

How is ammonia-laden water treated?

The Delhi Jal Board's water treatment plants use chlorine to treat excessive ammonia. Some amount of chlorine should remain in the treated water after the treatment process so that pathogens can be neutralised.

What have governments done to tackle the issue?

For years now, the Delhi and Haryana governments have failed to come up with a long-term viable solution to resolve the issue of excessive ammonia in water. Delhi government has proposed setting up an in-situ ammonia treatment plant at the entry point of Yamuna in Delhi.

However, it remains under development. The Haryana government is also yet to complete laying down a pipeline to prevent the inter-mixing of pollutants.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: Indian Express

3. What the Economic Survey says: key Economy Related Figures

Economic Survey

The Economic Survey for 2024-25 was tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament. The Survey is a report of the state of the Indian economy in the financial year that is coming to a close. It is prepared by the Department of Economic Affairs in the Union Finance Ministry, under the guidance of the Chief Economic Advisor (CEA).

Key Economy related figures given in ECONOMIC SURVEY 2024-25

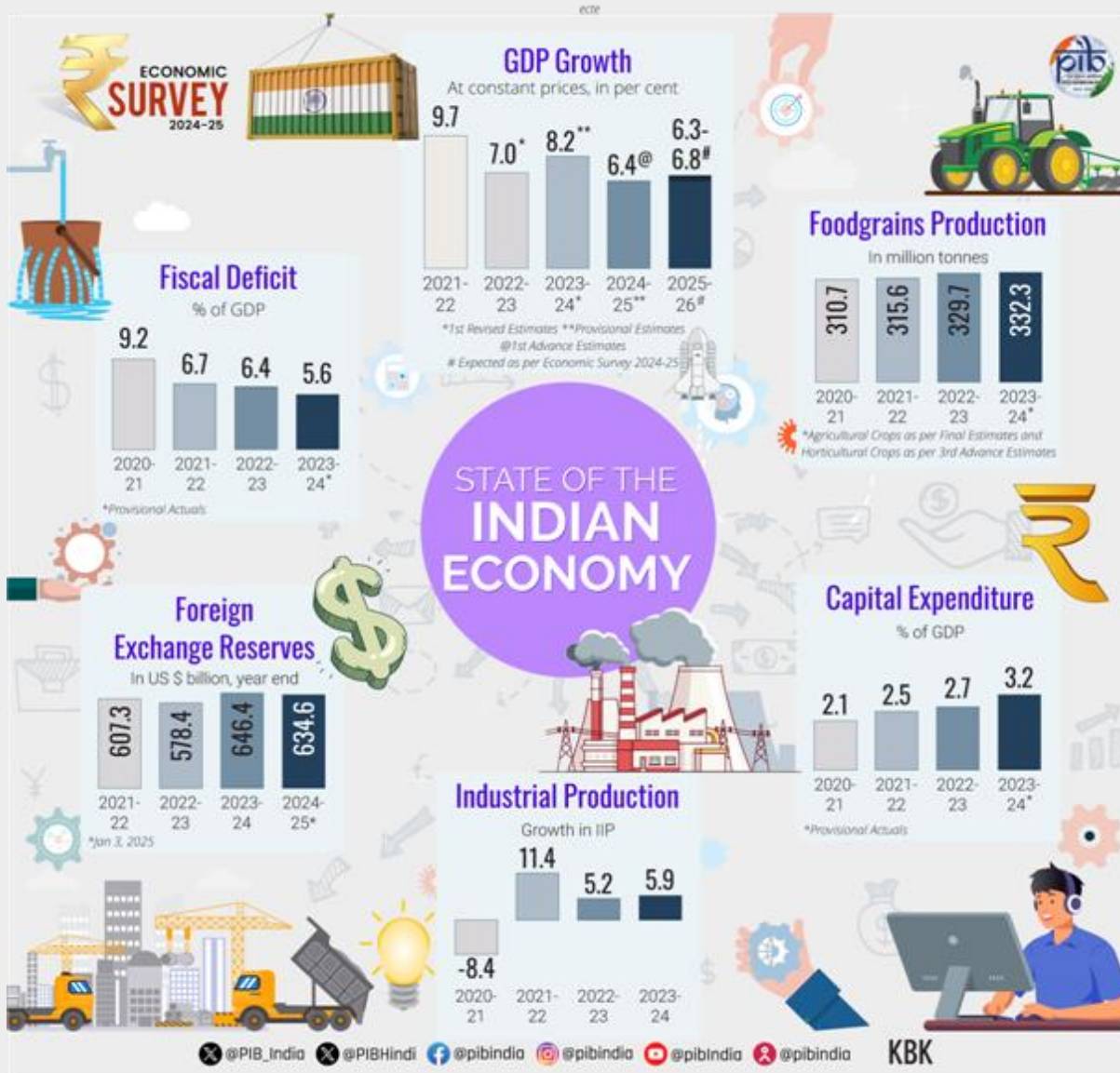
The global economy grew by 3.3 per cent in 2023. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects global growth to average around 3.2 per cent over the next five years. As per the Survey, the global economy exhibited steady yet uneven growth across regions in 2024.

The Survey highlights that, despite global uncertainty, India has displayed steady economic growth. India's real GDP growth of 6.4 per cent in FY25 remains close to the decadal average.

The agriculture sector is expected to rebound to a growth of 3.8 per cent in FY25. The industrial sector is estimated to grow by 6.2 per cent in FY25. Strong growth rates in construction activities and electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services are expected to support industrial expansion. Growth in the services sector is expected to remain robust at 7.2 per cent, driven by healthy activity in financial, real estate, professional services, public administration, defence, and other services.

Coverage of irrigation area increased

The government has prioritised irrigation development and water conservation practices to enhance access to irrigation facilities. The coverage of irrigation area has increased between FY16 and FY21 from 49.3 per cent to 55 per cent of the gross cropped area (GCA).



Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics
Source: PIB

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