

The Hindu News Analysis 3rd Oct 2022

Pg 8 . GS 1 (Social Issues)

Choose 'safe surrender' over infant abandonment

Last month in Tamil Nadu, a two-year-old girl was found alone in a government bus. The crying toddler was handed over to the Dharmapuri police station which traced her mother with the help of CCTV footage. The mother said that after a quarrel with her husband she had tried to abandon her child in the bus.

In another incident in July, a two-week-old boy was found abandoned in a closed tea stall in very inclement weather in New Town, 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. He was rescued by the Technocity police station after a person alerted the police. The boy was given immediate medical aid. However, his parents could not be located.

Reports of newborn children being found abandoned in garbage piles, dustbins, in bushes by the roadside or places of religious worship are not uncommon in India. Data by the National Crime Records Bureau show that no less than 709 criminal cases of 'exposure and abandonment of child under twelve years' under Section 317 of the Indian Penal Code were registered in the year 2021. It is pertinent to note that no case is registered when a child is surrendered to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) constituted under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (or the JJ Act).

Abandonment versus surrender of a child

The moot question is this: If the child's biological parents or the guardian do not want to or are unfit to raise the child, why do they abandon the child especially when there are so many people in India willing to adopt children? Especially when



R.K. Vij
Is a former Special Director General of Police of Chhattisgarh

A key reason for the abandonment of children is a lack of awareness across India about the law on the surrender of unwanted children

this number is more than the number of children available legally free for adoption? According to the portal of the Central Adoption Resource Authority, there were 2,991 in-country adoptions and 414 inter-country adoptions in 2021-22. Similarly, according to the 118th report on Review of Guardianship and Adoption Laws, presented to the Rajya Sabha on August 8, 2022, as on December 16, 2021, there were 2,430 children declared legally free for adoption for 26,734 adoptive parents-in-waiting.

An abandoned child means a child who is deserted by his biological or adoptive parents or guardians, while a surrendered child is relinquished on account of physical, emotional and social factors beyond their control. The JJ Act, which has an overriding effect on other laws in force, provides that no first information report shall be registered against any biological parent in the process of inquiry relating to an abandoned and surrendered child. The purpose of this provision is to ensure that all efforts are made to trace the parents or guardians of the child without initiating any criminal action.

It is always advisable to surrender a child rather than abandon him if the conditions to retain the child are beyond the control of parents or guardian. Abandonment endangers the child's life. Surrender before the CWC is a guarantee that the child will be taken care of till he or she attains majority or is adopted by a fit and willing parent.

As most of the reasons for child abandonment are an unwanted pregnancy, breakdown of a relationship, lower socio-economic status, either or both parents being drug addicts or alcoholics, a child can be considered eligible for surrender and declared so after the prescribed process of inquiry and counselling. Further, the disclosure of the identity of such children is prohibited and all reports related to the child are to be treated confidentially by the CWC. Hence, there is nothing the parents need to fear about. Also, the surrender of a child does not entail any criminal action.

A liberal interpretation

The Supreme Court of India has just given a liberal interpretation to the law on termination of pregnancy when it comes to single and unmarried women. Section 3(2)(b) Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971 was amended in 2021 and the words "married woman" replaced with "any woman" and "husband" with "partner". However, the corresponding rule (Rule 3B of the MTP Rules,

2003), was not amended, leaving scope for different interpretations by the lower courts. In view of this, the Supreme Court, in *X vs The Principal Secretary Health and Family Welfare Department and Another* (2022), held, while hearing an appeal, that the parliamentary intent was clearly not to confine the beneficial provisions only to a situation involving a matrimonial relationship. The Court passed an interim order to allow an unmarried woman petitioner to abort her pregnancy of 24 weeks arising out of a failed live-in relationship, subject to the Medical Board's recommendations. The Court said that there was no basis to deny unmarried women the right to medically terminate her pregnancy, when the same right was available to other categories of women (divorcees, widows, minors, disabled and mentally-ill women and survivors of sexual assault or rape). With the top court's clarification and the amended law, it is anticipated that unmarried women will be free of mental trauma.

Awareness is the key

One of the major reasons for the abandonment of children is a lack of awareness about the law on the surrender of unwanted children. Since it is believed that most cases of unwanted pregnancies are known to Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), *daats* and *anganwadi* workers, who have a strong network in villages, educating and sensitising them may reduce incidents of abandonment. The staff of nursing homes should also be included in such a programme.

Although, the surrender deed is to be executed before the CWC, a parent or guardian may approach any police officer, public servant, childline services, recognised non-governmental organisations, voluntary organisation, child welfare officer or probation officer, social worker or public-spirited person, nurse or doctor or management of a nursing home, hospital or maternity home when wanting to surrender a child. It shall be the duty of such an authority or officer to produce the child before the CWC within 24 hours. Non-reporting of abandonment within the prescribed time is a criminal offence. Therefore, wide publicity needs to be given to these provisions of the JJ Act so that no child is deserted, and parents, guardians and functionaries who are mandated to report any abandonment do not face a risk.

The views expressed are personal



FILE PHOTO: ANANDRAN

- Article 7 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) clearly states that every child has "the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents".
- Open abandonment is defined as a child being knowingly left behind by his or her parent, who can be identified, and whose intention is not to return but to willingly relinquish parental responsibility.

- Secret abandonment is defined as a child being secretly left behind by his or her parent, who cannot be identified, and whose intention is not to return but to willingly relinquish parental responsibility anonymously.
- Data by the National Crime Records Bureau show that no less than 709 criminal cases of 'exposure and abandonment of child under twelve years' under Section 317 of the Indian Penal Code were registered in the year 2021.
- It is pertinent to note that no case is registered when a child is surrendered to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) constituted under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (or the JJ Act).

- "Abandoned child" means a child deserted by his biological or adoptive parents or guardians, who has been declared as abandoned by the Committee after due inquiry;
- "Surrendered child" means a child, who is relinquished by the parent or guardian to the Committee, on account of physical, emotional and social factors beyond their control, and declared as such by the Committee;

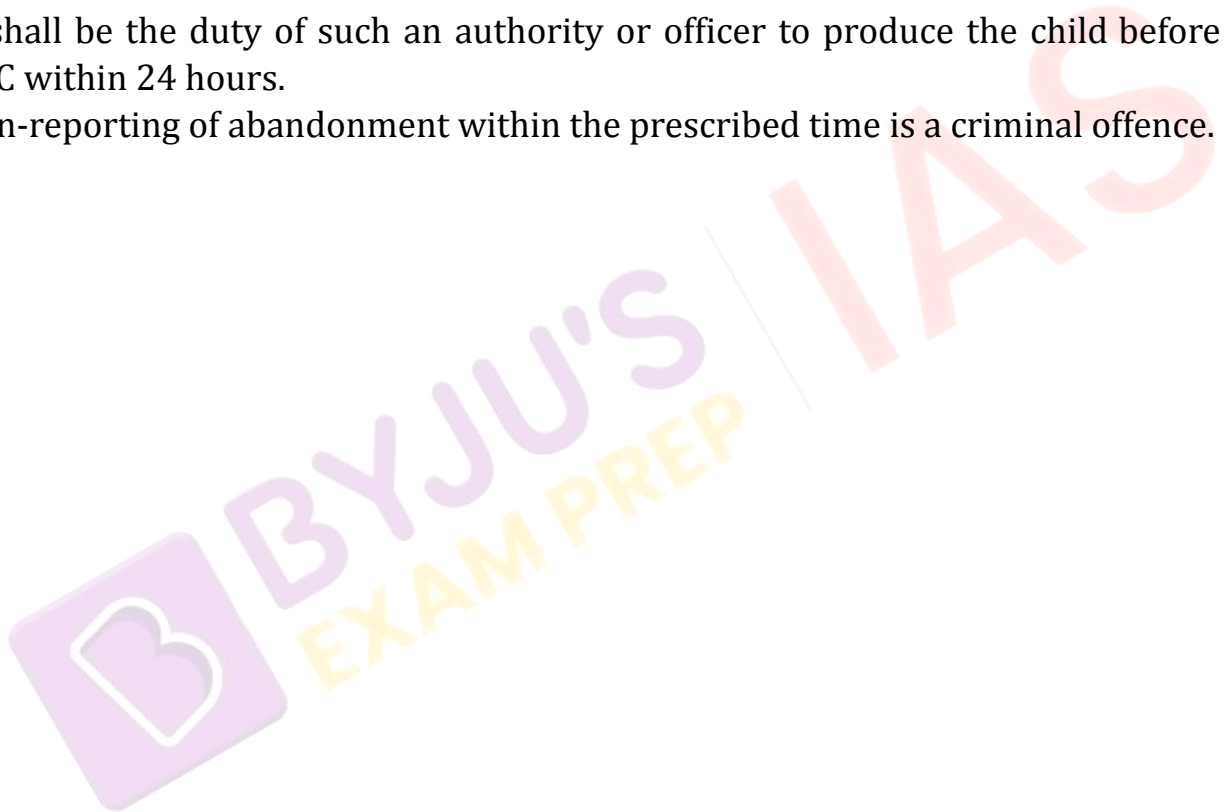
- out-of-wedlock birth;
- lack of housing, employment, education, income generation;
- lack of support on behalf of the child's father, parents or other loved ones;
- fear of publicity and public condemnation;
- birth of a child with developmental disabilities (Down syndrome, other forms of diseases or malformations)
- Mother's vulnerability (drug addiction, alcoholism, etc.).
- Anxiety Disorders or symptoms
- Attachment Disorders
- Chaotic Lifestyle
- Clingy/needy behaviour
- Compulsive behaviours may develop
- Depression
- Desperate relationships/relationships that happen too fast
- Disturbances of mood, cannot self-regulate and experiences emotions in extreme
- Extreme jealousy and possessiveness
- Lack of confidence, self-esteem issue
- People-pleasing behaviours to the detriment of self.
- Poor coping strategies

- Promiscuity
- Relationship problems
- Trust issues

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·It shall be the duty of such an authority or officer to produce the child before the CWC within 24 hours.

·Non-reporting of abandonment within the prescribed time is a criminal offence.



Pg 8 . GS 2 and 3 (IR and Economy)

The U.K. is staring into an economic abyss

It took the new British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kwasi Kwarteng, just 25 minutes to unleash havoc when he unveiled his mini-Budget on September 23. His speech was meant to announce help for the ongoing energy crisis in Britain and provide a plan for higher economic growth. It led to an unprecedented week in which the pound plummeted, the cost of borrowing soared and ongoing conversations about a cost-of-living crisis are now being replaced with tentative fears of a financial crisis.

Unprecedented criticism

Mr. Kwarteng announced a slew of ideologically-driven tax cuts that disproportionately favour high earners. In place of policies to boost the United Kingdom's economy to achieve a promised 2.5% growth, the Chancellor offered promises of sunlit uplands simply as a result of reversing recent tax rises (meant to fund extra investment in the National Health Service and social care), abolishing the top rate of income tax and reversing a promised rise in corporation tax.

He failed to explain how the announced support on winter fuel bills to households and small businesses (estimated at £60 billion for this winter) would be funded, and how the shortfall generated by the tax cuts (of £45 billion) would be made up. Markets were spooked and the cost of the U.K.'s borrowing rose sharply, indicating a lack of confidence in the long-term prospects of the economy. Though the sterling's precipitous fall grabbed headlines initially, it is the damage done to the U.K. treasury bonds that has the potential to cause turmoil globally. So much so, that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) issued a statement on the Chancellor's mini budget.

To be clear: the IMF is not in the habit of criticising G7 countries on their domestic economic policies. The Fund, officially the lender



Privanjali Malik
is a London-based commentator

Britain may well pay the price for Prime Minister Truss's move to take on the 'economic orthodoxy' of the Treasury and economists

of last resort and the organisation tasked with maintaining stability in the global economy, broke new ground on September 27 with its stinging rebuke which, moreover, was issued outside of a scheduled country review, global economic update, or a bailout. Noting that the tax cuts threatened to 'increase inequality', the Fund said that it was 'monitoring ... developments' and remained 'engaged with the authorities'. Observers could be forgiven for wondering if the Fund had accidentally issued a statement composed for a developing country facing a balance of payments crisis. There was more: cautioning against a fiscal policy that appeared to be 'at cross purposes to monetary policy' and which thereby risked stoking inflation further, it ended by urging the U.K. to 're-evaluate the tax measures... that benefit high income earners'.

Spotlight on pension funds

The IMF, however, has a duty to protect global financial markets, and to mitigate the risk of contagion. The Bank of England had to intervene the following day; warning of a 'material risk to U.K. financial stability', the Bank reversed its stance of bringing down its debt and instead pledged to buy back up to £65 billion in long-term Treasury bonds, or gilts, over the coming fortnight in order to stabilise the bond market. Despite the inflationary repercussions of this move, there was little choice in the matter as pension funds, which have invested heavily in gilts, suddenly found themselves facing a liquidity crisis brought about by the rising cost of borrowing, and compounded by the over-leveraged debt instruments that underwrite their future liabilities. However, the Bank has not solved the problem but only stabilised pension funds for now by buying them a little time.

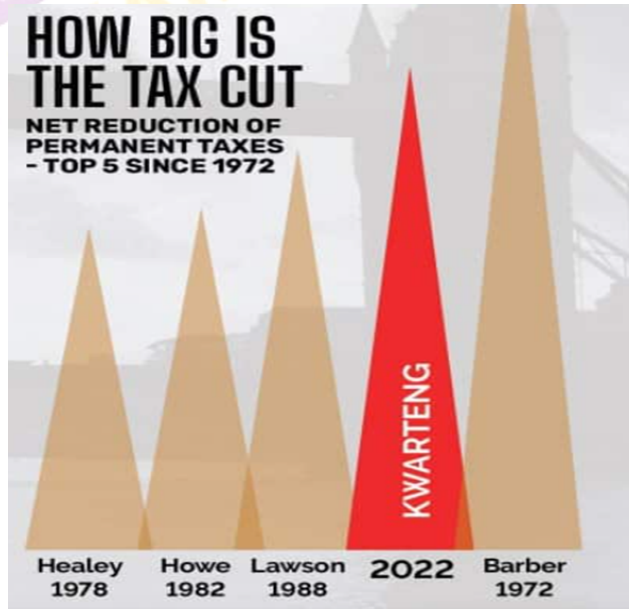
It is not just U.K. pension funds that have exposure to gilts. The sterling is one of the five major reserve currencies, and is (still) ranked

third, after the U.S. dollar and the euro, on a par with the yen and above the renminbi. Approximately 5% of global foreign currency reserves are held in sterling or sterling instruments, including gilts. The pound has already lost value. If gilts start looking like a bad investment, several economies around the world, including India, may reconsider their holdings.

Implications for household debt

A little ideology can be a dangerous thing. Prime Minister Liz Truss came to power promising to take on the 'economic orthodoxy' of the Treasury and economists. One of her first actions as Prime Minister was to dismiss the top civil servant in charge of the Treasury. Her Chancellor did not publish a forecast of his interim economic policies provided by the Office for Budget Responsibility, an independent body. When their ideology rubbed up against what they perceived to be orthodoxy, they belittled the experience, knowledge and institutional memory that go into providing independent, non-partisan advice. Britain could pay dearly for this. As the country stares into an economic abyss, the cost of domestic borrowing has risen, affecting household (and corporate) debt. Within days of the mini-budget, several mortgages were discontinued, and those paying a variable rate, or facing an imminent renewal of their fixed-rate loans, are anticipating calamitous increases in their monthly payments. Interest rates are expected to rise even further. Over the summer, discussion focused on whether people could afford to heat their homes over the winter. Now, people are asking whether they will be able to keep their homes after the winter.

Good debt may be turned into bad debt. And bad debt has a habit of infecting other economies, as was the case in 2008. Britain could be in for a rocky ride, and it may yet take others along with it.





WHAT DID HE DO?

On 23 September, the newly-appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered a mini-Budget that sent shockwaves through the UK's economy

AT A GLANCE

Kwasi scrapped the top rate of income tax and slashed stamp duty in a £45bn package of tax cuts; also abandoned a proposed rise in corporate taxation

Dozens of other policy measures came on top of a giant energy crisis-fighting package, roughly costed at £150bn, announced by the govt

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AFTER THE MINI-BUDGET

British stocks and bonds plummeted

The pound collapsed to historic lows against the dollar

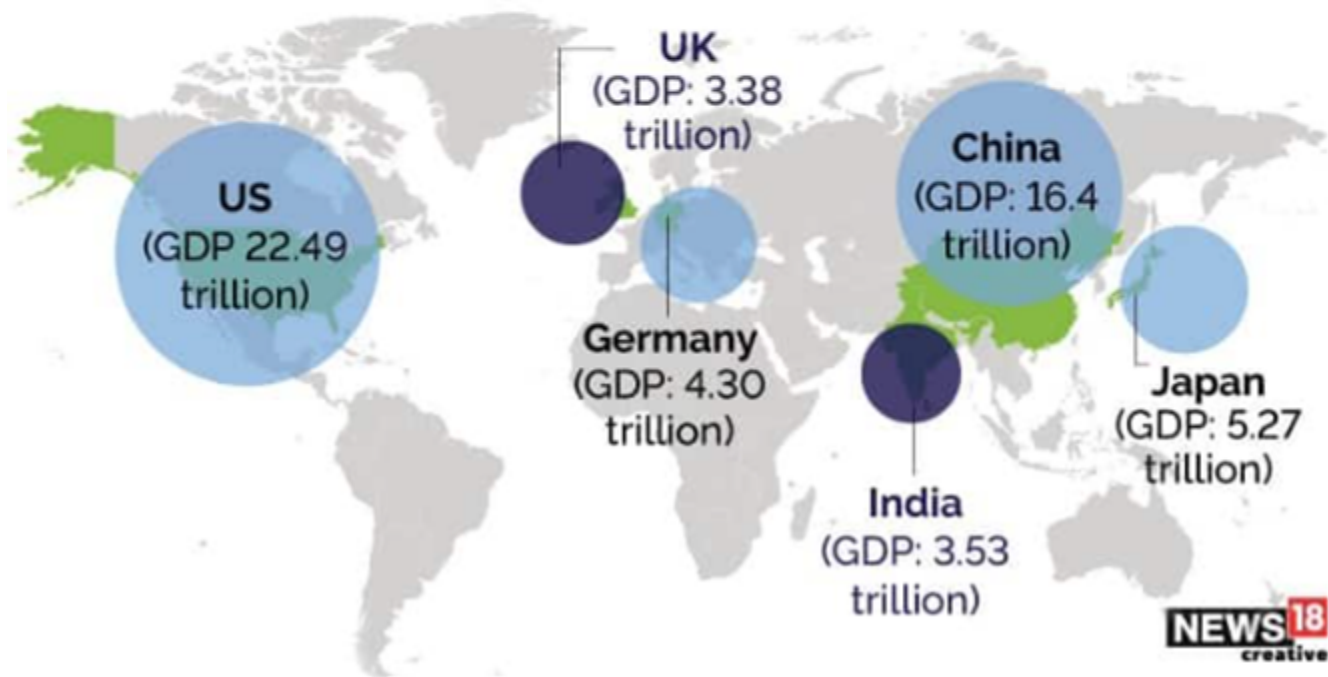
Economists suggested the slump in the pound could force the Bank of England into an emergency interest rate rise to support the currency

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HIGHEST RANKING COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD IN NOMINAL GDP (2022)



Recently, India — a former British colony— surpassed the UK to become world's 5th biggest economy



- A sharp fall in the pound's value vis-a-vis the US dollar will essentially make the UK's imports costlier
- A sharp rise in the yields of gilts implies that the cost of borrowing has shot up for the government
- As winter approaches, many parts of Britain are bracing for a crisis because millions of people are not in a position to pay for the spiralling energy prices.
- The other big problem facing the UK economy is that of stagnant growth.

The race to provide exhaustive satellite broadband services in India

While satellite communication companies can help in addressing the need of the market for fibre-like connectivity in the remotest parts of the country, one will also have to deal with slow Internet speeds and limited satellite bandwidths because of the distance the signals will have to travel

Abhishek Chatterjee

The race for providing satellite broadband connectivity in India is heating up as companies like Jio, OneWeb, Hughes and Tata-backed Nelco are preparing to provide these services.

Satellite communication has been gaining prominence globally and is seeing a lot of interest, investments, and innovations. The two biggest developments in the global satellite communication space are the emergence of LEO (low-earth orbit constellations) that promises to provide truly global coverage and lower latency service, and HTS (High Throughput Satellites Service) which offers unprecedented capacity and flexibility. India is quickly catching up with global trends and we are optimistic about India's prospects in the global satellite communication market, Shivaji Chatterjee, executive vice president, Hughes Communications India (HCI) said to *The Hindu*. Although the satellite broadband industry in India is still at a nascent stage, the growing demand for connectivity and Internet – the Digital India drive – calls to connect all unserved terrains and this is what satellite broadband players like Hughes can do, he added.

However, different reports indicate that although India is about to see the roll out of 5G services, infrastructure woes like inadequate tower fibrisation questions the success of 5G in connecting different parts of the country which do not have even 4G access till now.

Different satcom players

Different players offering satellite broadband services are preparing to start operations in the country.

Jio has received approval from the Department of Telecommunication (DoT), in the second week of this month, to provide satellite broadband services in India. Earlier, in February this year, Jio Platforms Ltd, the digital arm of Reliance Industries (RIL), and Luxembourg's SES, formed a joint venture, Jio Space Technology Ltd to provide satellite-based broadband services in India. The DoT has granted the Letter of Intent for global mobile personal communication by satellite (GMPCS) services to the company that the firm had applied for earlier this year. The licences are for a period of 20 years and include voice and data services



ISTOCKPHOTO

commercial arm of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and Elon Musk's SpaceX to resume its satellite launches. The pending release of the new Spacecom policy by the Department of Space brings a layer of uncertainty over the launch of commercial services in India. The policy is supposed to lay out the guidelines on which the newly liberalised space sector will operate.

Satcom companies reckon that satellite broadband services can connect the most remote parts of the country which are otherwise difficult to connect through fibres

Satellite service provider Hughes Communications India, (HCI) and Bharti Airtel announced a joint venture in January to provide satellite broadband services in India. The joint venture was created after the agreement, announced in May 2019 and received all statutory approvals, including those from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)

backhaul, mobile hotspots, telemedicine, village connectivity and more. P.J. Nath, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NELCO said in a press release. Telesat will also help accelerate 4G and 5G expansion, and set new levels of performance for enterprise, telecom, mobility and government broadband connectivity on land, air and sea, Glenn Katz, Telesat's Chief Commercial Officer said in a release.

Changing the Internet landscape

Satcom companies reckon that satellite broadband services can connect the most remote parts of the country which are otherwise difficult to connect through fibres. Satellite broadband services can, therefore, help in addressing the need of the market for fibre-like connectivity in the remotest parts of the country with high reliability and flexibility, Mr. Nath said. Mr. Chatterjee also echoed the sentiment by stating that the rollout of satellite broadband communication services can close the digital divide in India.

For example, Hughes India has

Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) service providers, all of them being able to provide connectivity and, they will all be able to service this whole ecosystem of mobility on land, on water and in the air," Mr. Chatterjee said.

Challenges ahead

Satellite data transfer provides very slow Internet speeds and limited satellite bandwidth because of the distances the signals have to travel and all the potential obstacles in between, according to Resilio, a technology company. Connection times can also be impacted by your surroundings, the length of your message, and the status and availability of the satellite network.

However, if the user is located under trees with light or medium foliage it might take over a minute to send a message, while the same message takes 15 seconds to be sent in ideal conditions with a direct view of the sky and the horizon. Users might not be able to connect to a satellite at all if they are located under heavy foliage or surrounded by other obstructions, Apple said in a blog earlier

•The two biggest developments in the global satellite communication space are the emergence of LEO (low-earth orbit constellations) that promises to provide truly global coverage and lower latency service, and HTS (High Throughput Satellites Service) which offers unprecedented capacity and flexibility.

Emergency SOS via satellite might not also work in places above 62° latitude like northern parts of Canada and Alaska

Pg 12 . GS 2 (IR)

U.K. firms ask India to unravel ‘frustrating’ red tape, take ‘broader’ view on lending norms

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

Legal and regulatory impediments in India continue to be a source of “frustration” for investors looking to set up or expand operations in India, even as land acquisition and “regular delays” in Customs clearances remain problematic, the U.K. India Business Council (UKIBC) has conveyed to the Government of India (GoI).

The Council has urged India to take a “broader view” of priority sector lending norms for foreign banks operating in India and sought equitable tax treatment, while flagging rising instances of counterfeit product sales through e-commerce platforms as a deterrent for intellectual property (IP) owners.

With India and the U.K. working to seal a free trade agreement (FTA) soon, the Council has said making it easier to do business is as



Trade ties: Piyush Goyal with the then U.K. Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan in January 2022. PTI

important as the trade pact to bolster trade and investment flows. Its recent submissions to the government, based on inputs from British firms operating in the country, include a laundry list of procedural, taxation and other areas that need intervention.

“Legal and regulatory impediments remain a frustration according to businesses. Duplication of regulation wherein two

sets of regulations are administered by two different arms of Government on the same issue was cited as a key issue,” the UKIBC has pointed out.

Such duplication leads to delays and costs, and are most common in areas on the Constitution’s concurrent list of legislations, such as labour, environment, food and personal care.

“Unnecessary, duplicated regulations are a disin-

centive to investment,” it said.

“In essence, our recommendations are about reducing bureaucracy, simplifying legal and regulatory complexities and taxation, developing world class IP and infrastructure environments, and enshrining investor protection,” said UKIBC executive chair Richard Heald, underlining that U.K. businesses want to scale up their India investments.

Noting that lack of enforcement of IP rights is problematic and can stifle innovation, U.K. firms have cited examples of counterfeit items in circulation, with more instances coming up in online commerce, which has assumed greater import post-pandemic.

This has heightened the problem of “breakdown of intellectual rights”, the Council said. The U.K. firms have sought improve-

ments in land acquisition processes, particularly from the public sector.

While the lower corporate tax rates, including a 15% levy for new manufacturing units incentivises investments, the UKIBC has said there is a “significant disparity” between the effective corporate tax rates for foreign firms using a “branch model”, taxed at 43.68%, compared to domestic peers who are taxed at 25.17%.

“This serves as a major disincentive for international businesses using this model, such as banks,” the Council said, attributing part of the problem to the abolition of the dividend distribution tax.

While any foreign bank with over 20 branches gets the same priority sector lending (PSL) targets as domestic banks, U.K. institutions have said this is ‘rather restrictive’ as they bring different expertise to the table, it said.



Pg 4 . GS 3 (Internal Security)

Drone from Pakistan drops heroin along border

More than 3 kg heroin was dropped near border area in Rajasthan’s Sriganganagar by a drone which came from Pakistan, police said. BSF troops also fired at the drone. Later, during a search in the area, four packets containing 3.5 kg suspected heroin was recovered, the police said. The incident occurred in the intervening night of Saturday-Sunday. The sources said the heroin will be handed over to Narcotics Control Bureau by the BSF for further investigation. PTI

Mains Practice Questions

Q.1 Discuss the common reasons for child abandonment and suggest measures to help prevent such an abandonment.

(10 Marks, 150 Words)

Q.2 A combination of politics, inflation and higher interest rates is posing a greater threat to the UK's financial system. Examine.

(10 Marks, 150 Words)

