

## Course correction – EVIDENCE OF FRAGILITY

### Underwhelming growth estimates come amid worrying data on agriculture

Five months after Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian **predicted** that economic growth was likely to be closer to 6.5% in the current **fiscal** year, the Central Statistics Office has **forecast** that the gross domestic product (GDP) would expand at **precisely** that pace in the 12 months ending in March. The **headwinds** that had been **flagged** by Mt. Subramanian at that time are providing to be the **crucial** factors dampening **momentum**. For one, **gross** value added, or GVA which excludes taxes that feature in the GDP number is projected to grow by 6.1%, slowing from a provisional 6.6% in 2016-17, as manufacturing and the agriculture, forestry and fishing components of GVA **decelerate**. Second, the key investment **metric** of gross fixed capital formation, though estimated to show faster growth, is expected to **shrink** in terms of **proportion** to GDP : to 29%, from 29.5% in the provisional estimates for 2016-17 and 30.9% in 2015-16. With the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data released in mid-December also reflecting a sharp slowdown over the seven month period from April to October, there are signs that the **rebound** seen in the second quarter may be far more **vulnerable** to **unravelling** than previously considered. With agriculture struggling for **traction**, **despite** a 'normal' monsoon, the prospect of private final consumption expenditure regaining **vigour** in a hurry seems remote, especially since rural households make a **sizeable** contribution to aggregate demand. The forecast for consumption spending **posit** both a slowdown in growth to 6.3% in 2017-18, from 8.7% a year earlier, and a marginal **contraction** in share of GDP.

That softer growth estimates have come at a time when the government's fiscal deficit has already crossed the budget estimate for the full year, and GST collections are underwhelming, is a particular cause for concern. With Brent crude hovering around \$67 a barrel, oil prices are now well above the \$60-65 range that the Economic Survey had flagged as having the potential to undermine both consumption and public and private investment. Data on kharif food grain production used by the CSO in computing GVA in agriculture, while provisional, project an almost 3% drop in output in 2017-18. This raises the possibility of stronger inflationary pressures on food prices in the coming months. With consumer price **inflation** having accelerated in November to 4.88%, the fastest pace in 15 months, monetary authorities at the Reserve Bank of India will have little to no **leeway** to **mull** interest rate reductions to support growth. On their part, policymakers must bank on building on the measures taken to **unclog** the credit pipelines, including the recent steps to recapitalise state owned lenders. Other initiatives must include moves to reenergise the export sector : there may be no better time to make the most of the 'fair winds' of a strong global economic rebound that are blowing.

### WORD LIST

1. **Predict** : (express an outcome in advance)  
 Synonym : anticipate, call, conclude, envision, forecast, foresee, think
2. **Fiscal** : (monetary)  
 Synonym : budgetary, economic, financial, commercial, pecuniary.

3. **Forecast** : (Prediction, often of weather or business)  
Synonym : budget, calculation, estimate, outlook, prognosis, projection, anticipation, augury, cast.
4. **Precisely** : (exactly, just)  
synonym : absolute, accurately, as well, correctly, literally, specifically, squarely, strictly
5. **Headwind** : (a wind blowing from directly in front, opposing forward motion)
6. **Flag** : (decline, fall off)  
synonym : abate, deteriorate, ebb, fade, languish, sag, taper off, wane.
7. **Crucial** : (critical, important)  
synonym : central, compelling, deciding, decisive, essential, imperative, momentous, necessary, pivotal, pressing, touchy, urgent, vital.
8. **Momentum** : (impetus, push)  
synonym : energy, power, strength, drive, force, impulse.
9. **Gross** : (large, fat)  
synonym : great, heavy, hulking, husky, overweight, thick, adipose, big, bulky, dense, fleshy
10. **Decelerate** : (slow down)  
synonym : brake, slow
11. **Metric** : (rhythmical) (as in condensed)  
synonym : cadent, measured, metrical, rhythmic
12. **Shrink** : (become smaller)  
synonym : decrease, diminish, drop off, dwindle, fall off, lessen, narrow, reduce, shorten, shrivel, wane, weaken, wither
13. **Proportion** : (relative amount, size of part to whole)  
synonym : bulk, capacity, dimension, distribution, fraction, magnitude, percentage, portion, rate, ratio, scale, scope, share, volume.
14. **Rebound** : (bounce back; ricochet)  
synonym : overcome, pickup, revive, backfire, boomerang.
15. **Vulnerable** : (open to attack)  
synonym : accessible, defenceless, exposed, liable, ready, sensitive, susceptible, unsafe  
weak
16. **Unravel** : (unfold, solve, untangle)  
synonym : decipher, resolve, solve, undo, untangle, extricate

17. **Traction** : (physical resistance, friction)  
synonym : suction, absorption, adherence, adhesion, constriction, contraction
18. **Despite** : (in spite of, regardless of)  
synonym : against, although, even though, even with, in contempt of in defiance of, in the face of
19. **Vigour** : (physical strength and good health)  
synonym : robustness, hardiness, strength, stamina, fitness, toughness, muscle, power.
20. **Sizeable** : (huge)(as in astronomical)  
synonym : colossal, considerable, enormous, gigantic, humongous, monumental, tremendous, vast, whopping, astronomic, epic.
21. **Posit** : (suppose)  
synonym : hypothesize, postulate
22. **Contraction** : (drawing in; shortening)  
synonym : decrease, deflation, recession, reduction, shrinkage, abbreviation, confinement, curtailment, elision, receding, reducing.
23. **Inflation** : (increase, swelling)  
Synonym : boom, expansion, hike, rise, boost, distension, enhancement, enlargement, escalation, extension, prosperity
24. **Leeway** : (room to move, grow)  
Synonym : extent, headway, latitude, margin, play, scope, space
25. **Mull** : (think about seriously)  
Synonym : contemplate, deliberate, examine, ponder, weight, chew, consider, delay, linger, wool-gather, revolve.
26. **Unclog** : (as in clear, as in unblock)  
Synonym : clean, clear away, clarify, eliminate, erase, free, open, ameliorate, brighten, cleanse, meliorate, purify, refine, rid.

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### Course correction – RE-EXAMINE THE BILL

#### Concerns about the triple talaq Bill must not be dismissed as an attempt to sabotage it

The winter session of Parliament saw more political positioning than appraisal of a legislation to make instant triple talaq a criminal offence. With the Muslim Women

(Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill pending in the Rajya Sabha, the best option would be to refer it to a select committee to help bring about a **consensus** on how to address the problem of talaq-e-biddat, as there is no serious opposition to the principle that it is morally **abhorrent** and legally impermissible. The **core** question is whether resorting to an illegal and **arbitrary** form of divorce should necessarily lead to a prison term for the offending husband. A three year prison term, besides a fine, also raises the issue of **proportionality**. The Opposition has raised three concerns: whether a civil wrong, mainly a breach of a marriage contract in an arbitrary manner, **ought** to be treated as a crime; whether it is not a contradiction of sorts for the law to jail a husband for pronouncing instant talaq and also **mandate** that he pay a **subsistence** allowance to the wife; and whether making it a **cognizable** and non-bailable offence would lead to it being misused against Muslim men. Further, some see an internal **contradiction** in the way the law is **sought** to be framed. On the one hand it says instant triple talaq in any form is **void**, thereby declaring that the marriage continues to **subsist**; but it also talks of issues such as the **custody** of children and maintenance, which would arise only after a divorce. These are valid concerns and cannot be dismissed by the BJP as arguments aimed to **sabotage** the Bill.

The Bill is now in the Rajya Sabha, where the BJP and its allies do not have a majority. Some of its key allies, such as the AIADMK, the Telugu Desam Party and the Biju Janata Dal, are against the penal provision. The through in the Lok Sabha, but has taken the position that referring it to a parliamentary committee may help remove some **lacunae**. **Initially** the party appeared to question the prescription of a jail term, but it has raised a new question. It wants to know whether the government would take care of the **sustenance** of the woman concerned if her husband is jailed for uttering triple talaq. The **dilemma** before the Congress is that it cannot be seen as reprising the role it had played over 30 years ago in the Shah Bano episode, when it brought in legislation to **scupper** a Supreme Court verdict in favour of a Muslim woman's claim for maintenance. However, **hasty** legislation passed in the commotion of a divided House may not help the cause. A sound legal frame work to deal with all issues arising from instant talaq ought to be **crafted** after deeper consideration.

### WORD LIST

1. **Consensus** : (general agreement)  
Synonym : accord, consent, harmony, unanimity, unity, concord
2. **Abhorrent**: (disgusting)  
Synonym : despicable, loathsome, repulsive, detestable, offensive.
3. **Core** : (centre, gist)  
Synonym : basis, body, bottom line, crux, essence, focus, foundation, importance, origin, root, substance, thrust.
4. **Arbitrary** : (whimsical, chance)  
Synonym : capricious, discretionary, erratic, frivolous, inconsistent, irrational, irresponsible, random, subjective, unreasonable, wilful.

5. **Proportionality** : (as in ratio, as in symmetry) (percentage, relation of part to whole)  
Synonym : proportion, quota, rate, scale, arrangement, correlation, equation, fraction
6. **Ought** : (burden)  
Synonym : concern, need, tax, care, commitment, committal, custody, duty, obligation, onus, responsibility, right, task, trust.
7. **Mandate** : (authority, order)  
Synonym : authorization, command, decree, directive, injunction, instruction, sanction.
8. **Subsistence** : (Provisions for survival)  
Synonym : livelihood, ration, sustenance, affluence, aliment, alimentation, capital, earnings.
9. **Cognizable** : (as in perceptible, as in perceivable)(noticeable, obvious)  
Synonym : appreciable, audible, detectable, discernible, distinct, distinguishable, observable, palpable
10. **Contradiction** : (variance to something)  
Synonym : conflict, difference, disagreement, discrepancy, dispute, inconsistency, confutation, defiance, denial
11. **Sought** : (wanted)  
Synonym : desired, hunted, needed, long for
12. **Void** : (empty)  
Synonym : abandoned, bare, barren, clear, deprived, drained, free, lacking, scant
13. **Subsist** : (keep going, living)  
Synonym : get along, get by, scrape by, be, breathe, continue, last, live, endure
14. **Custody** : (supervision, charge of something)  
Synonym : care, guardianship, protection, aegis, auspices, management, observation, preservation, salvation, safekeeping
15. **Sabotage** : (damage, incapacitate)  
Synonym : destruction, disruption, subversion, treachery, treason, vandalism
16. **Lacunae** (Lacuna): (pause)  
Synonym : break, cavity, depression, gap, hiatus, interim, interval, space
17. **Initially** : (at first)  
Synonym : originally, at the beginning first

- 18. **Sustenance** : (necessities for existence)  
 Synonym : livelihood, nourishment, nutrition, subsistence, aliment
- 19. **Dilemma** : (crisis)  
 Synonym : difficulty, embarrassment, impasse, mess, plight, predicament, problem, puzzle, quandary
- 20. **Scupper**: (a hole in a ship's side to carry water overboard from the deck)  
 (an outlet in the side of a building for draining water)
- 21. **Hasty** : (speedy; without much thought)  
 Synonym : abrupt, careless, expeditious, hurried, ill-advised, impulsive, quick, rapid, reckless, sudden swift, urgent.
- 22. **Crafted** : (conceive, dream up)  
 Synonym : arrange, come up with, concoct, construct, craft, create, design, discover, forge, formulate, hatch, invent, mastermind, prepare, workout

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**SOME IMPORTANT ONE WORD SUBSTITUTION**

<b><u>PHRASE</u></b>	<b><u>ONE WORD</u></b>
1. One who is not sure about God's existence	Agnostic
2. A person who deliberately sets fire to a building	Arsonist
3. One who does a thing for pleasure and not as a profession	Amateur
4. One who can use either hand with ease	Ambidextrous
5. One who makes an official examination of accounts	Auditor
6. A person who believes in or tries to bring about a state of lawlessness	Anarchist
7. A person who has changed his faith	Apostate
8. One who does not believe in the existence of God	Atheist
9. A person appointed by two parties to solve a dispute	Arbitrator
10. One who leads an austere life	Ascetic
11. One who does a thing for pleasure and not as a profession	Amateur
12. One who can either hand with ease	Ambidextrous
13. An unconventional style of living	Bohemian
14. One who is bad in spellings	Cacographer

15. One who feeds on human flesh	Cannibal
16. A person who is blindly devoted to an idea/ A person displaying aggressive or exaggerated patriotism	Chauvinist
17. A critical judge of any art and craft	Connoisseur
18. Persons living at the same time	Contemporaries
19. One who is recovering health after illness	Convalescent
20. A girl/woman who flirts with man	Coquette
21. A person who regards the whole world as his country	Cosmopolitan
22. One who is a centre of attraction	Cynosure
23. One who sneers at the beliefs of others	Cynic
24. A leader or orator who espoused the cause of the common people	Demagogue
25. A person having a sophisticated charm	Debonair
26. A leader who sways his followers by his oratory	Demagogue
27. A dabbler (not serious) in art, science and literature	Dilettante
28. One who is for pleasure of eating and drinking	Epicure
29. One who often talks of his achievements	Egotist
30. Someone who leaves one country to settle in another	Emigrant
31. A man who is womanish in his habits	Effeminate
32. One hard to please (very selective in his habits)	Fastidious
33. One who runs away from justice	Fugitive
34. One who is filled with excessive enthusiasm in religious matters	Fanatic
35. One who believes in fate	Fatalist
36. A lover of good food	Gourmand
37. Conferred as an honour	Honorary
38. A person who acts against religion	Heretic
39. A person of intellectual or erudite tastes	Highbrow
40. A patient with imaginary symptoms and ailments	Hypochondriac
41. A person who is controlled by wife	Henpeck
42. One who shows sustained enthusiastic action with unflagging vitality	Indefatigable
43. Someone who attacks cherished ideas or traditional institutions	Iconoclast
44. One who does not express himself freely	Introvert
45. Who behaves without moral principles	Immoral

46. A person who is incapable of being tampered with	Impregnable
47. One who is unable to pay his debts	Insolvent
48. A person who is mentally ill	Lunatic
49. A person who dislikes humankind and avoids human society	Misanthrope
50. A person who primarily concerned with making money at the expense of ethics	Mercenary
51. Someone in love with himself	Narcissist
52. One who collect coins as hobby	Numismatist
53. A person who likes or admires women	Philogynist
54. A lover of mankind	Philanthropist
55. A person who speaks more than one language	Polyglot
56. One who lives in solitude	Recluse
57. Someone who walks in sleep	Somnambulist
58. A person who is indifferent to the pains and pleasures of life	Stoic
59. A scolding nagging bad-tempered woman	Termagant
60. A person who shows a great or excessive fondness for one's wife	Uxorious
61. One who possesses outstanding technical ability in a particular art or field	Virtuoso
62. A group of guns or missile launchers operated together at one place	Battery
63. A large bundle bound for storage or transport	Bale
64. A large gathering of people of a particular type	Bevy
65. An arrangement of flowers that is usually given as a present	Bouquet
66. A family of young animals	Brood
67. A group of things that have been hidden in a secret place	Cache
68. A group of people, typically with vehicles or animals travelling together	Caravan
69. A closed political meeting	Caucus
70. An exclusive circle of people with a common purpose	Clique

*The ideal student would be one  
who was not working for grades  
but was working because he was interested in the work  
and not trying to compete with fellow students.*