

# Weekly Livelihoods Update

31 July 2018

- ✚ **Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** The Gross Value Added (GVA) numbers for 2017/18 grew by 6.47 per cent, the slowest in four years since the Narendra Modi government took over. Even as the numbers for the first quarter of 2018/19 are awaited, all trends show that even this jump would not have been possible without the government spending more. While Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a measure of the value of goods and services produced in an economy in a given period, GVA is what accrues to the producer before the product/service is sold. The GDP equals GVA plus indirect taxes minus subsidies. One of the constituents of GVA is public administration, defence and other services. It is a good representation of the government in the economy. Take a look at the top graph that plots the growth in public administration, defence and other services since FY2012/2013. [For further reading visit: <https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/the-buzz/government-domestic-product-the-new-gdp/story/280069.html>]
- ✚ **Agriculture:** Drops of water bead up or roll right off the leaves of the lotus, making for that metaphysical metaphor – live like a lotus in the water. But the leaves of plants such as wheat, onion and cabbage are also water-repelling, or hydrophobic, and this can be a problem for farmers because pesticides sprayed on the leaves bounce off, leaving only a minuscule portion behind. Professor Kripa Varanasi's team at Massachusetts Institute of Technology has developed a new technology that has the potential to reduce the amount of pesticide that rebounds off the leaves of crops. Results in the lab indicate that this system could allow farmers to use only a tenth of the usual amount of pesticide to get the same effect they do now. This summer, the system, which promises to benefit both the environment and the farmer, is being tested on the ground. [For further reading visit: <https://scroll.in/magazine/884074/an-indian-whose-tech-made-ketchup-glide-out-of-a-bottle-is-now-making-pesticides-stick-to-crops>]
- ✚ **Migration:** Lakhs of people mig-rated from north India to the south in pursuit of employment opportunities. The trend of southward migration picked up somewhere around the 1980s, str-engthening impressively in the subsequent decades. [For further reading visit: <https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/drawn-by-development-north-indians-continue-to-migrate-to-south/300407>]
- ✚ **Local Health Traditions (LHTs):** The Indian government's attention to the mainstreaming of traditional systems of medicine and the revitalisation of

community-based local health traditions (LHTs) needs to be viewed as a part of its overall mandate of strengthening traditional systems of medicine. An analysis of existing policy documents and reviews reveals that LHTs have an eclectic policy history in India, marked by several decades of neglect by the state, with sporadic attention to the LHT practitioners as community health workers, to an upsurge of seemingly explicit, and yet somehow obtuse interest in revitalisation. Tracing the evolution (and dissolution) of these trajectories chronologically reveals that there is ambiguity and inconsistency around the rationales for the revitalisation of LHTs, potentially leading to fragmented medical pluralism. [For further reading visit: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/30/special-articles/making-local-health-traditions-india.html>]

✚ **Cash Transfer:** In an era increasingly dominated by the digital, technology-enabled solutions have come to be viewed as a one-stop solution to the age-old administrative woes of corruption and inefficiency. Evidence from a detailed case study of payments under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in a region of Telangana shows that technological solutions in the domain of government-to-citizen cash transfers are far from perfect. The mechanisms of techno-utopianism suffer from many of the same flaws as the ones they replaced and, in some cases, they have introduced new flaws. [For further reading visit: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/30/special-articles/are-technology-enabled-cash-transfers.html>]

✚ **White Revolution:** India is the world's largest producer and consumer of dairy products. According to market research company IMARC, the milk and dairy products industry reached Rs7.9 lakh crore in 2017. In 2016, the milk sector alone was valued at Rs3 lakh crore and is projected to scale Rs7.3 lakh crore by 2021. "Currently, the organic dairy industry accounts for less than 1 per cent of the total dairy market in India. The segment is expected to grow steadily in the next three to five years," says Aarthi Janakiraman, Industry Manager, TechVision, Frost & Sullivan. [For further reading visit: <https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/the-hub/white-revolution-2-0/story/280063.html>]

✚ **Waterways:** On a recent misty morning, a long line of freighters carrying automobiles and heavy machinery slowly snaked their way along a bend of the Yangtze River in south-western China. Out of the fog, a towering 185 metre concrete edifice the world's largest dam at the Three Gorges, appeared to block their path. Then, the magic happened: a gush of water followed by a slow, cranking sound, as the freighters slowly defied gravity and rose out of the water on a massive ship lift. Within an hour, the ships from Shanghai scaled the heights

of the Three Gorges Dam, and continued onward up the Yangtze to a sprawling port in Chongqing, the biggest port in China's heartland. From Chongqing, the goods are offloaded onto trains that run to Germany and to trucks that travel a highway south to Kunming. Plans are underfoot to link Kunming by expressway and rail to Singapore in the south and to the Bay of Bengal port of Kyaukpyu in Myanmar in the west, with the hope of transforming landlocked interior China into an unlikely centre for regional trade. [For further reading visit: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/neighbours/story/20180806-waterways-of-the-future-1296561-2018-07-28>]

✚ **Darjeeling Tea is losing its aroma:** They call it 'the Champagne of Teas', an epithet commensurate with its awesome prestige across the world. But shelves stocking premium Darjeeling at the gourmet tea house Mariage Freres in Paris lie forlornly empty of their aromatic cargo. Their famed Darjeeling sells at euro 76 for 100 grams, or Rs 57,200 a kilo, but supplies have shrunk lately because of events convulsing the rolling hills of north Bengal 7,500 km away. Haute Parisian palate, it seems, will have to wait. The 105-day shutdown last year in the hills of Darjeeling has plunged tea estate owners and plantation workers into an unprecedented crisis. Planters who lost at least 70 per cent of their premium first and second flush crop—almost wholly exported—estimate the combined value of the loss at Rs 500 crore. [For further reading visit: <https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/why-darjeeling-tea-is-losing-its-aroma/300400>]

✚ **GST:** The Goods and Services Tax (GST) has just completed a year, and it has been an eventful journey. It is showing signs of settling down, but it will be probably a year or more before all the glitches and annoyances that have come to the fore after the rollout are actually sorted out. [For further reading visit: <https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/editors-note/gsts-tumultuous-journey/story/280056.html>]