

**9pm**

# **Compilation**

**September, 2020**

**General Studies - 1**

---

1. Subhash Chandra Bose - A hero or a misplaced tyrant
2. Women and women leadership

**General Studies - 2**

---

1. Internationalism or Nationalism- India's Present choices in Foreign Policy
2. India's muddle over GST compensation
3. GST – Grand Bargain 2.0
4. Digital education challenges
5. Destroying the unity of purpose- Parliamentary Committee
6. Draft report on Non personal Data: Gopalakrishnan committee
7. COVID-19's impact on education
8. Non-Personal Data committee
9. Pandemic and food security
10. Gaps in the healthcare
11. Internationalisation of higher education
12. 'The deletion of Question Hour'- Politics of avoidance
13. India and QUAD
14. Censorship and freedom of speech
15. The working of Parliament during COVID- 19
16. Chinks in the armour of the Supreme Court
17. Judiciary and Executive
18. Demographic dividend - Youth and atma nirbhar
19. India's confusing signals on India- China stand off
20. Reduce state-level regulation
21. India's democracy
22. Issues with implementation of schemes – Farmer
23. NAM and India's present alignment
24. India-China Border Conflict
25. India-China border standoff in Ladakh
26. Idea of block chain based voting
27. Issues with Health data collection
28. Question Hour in Parliament
29. Regulation of Online games
30. India-China conflict
31. 'Judiciary': Encroaching the housing rights of urban poor
32. Effective foreign policy of India
33. Chinese strategy towards India
34. Cancelling of Question Hour in Parliament
35. India's Policy on Tibet
36. From peace to conflict Prevention
37. Cancer burden in India
38. Malnutrition in India
39. For a different yardstick: on 'Doing Business' report
40. India's geopolitical interest
41. NEP and socially and educationally backward
42. The cost of peace: on intra-Afghan talks
43. Disability issues
44. Parliament and its panels
45. The Independence of the Supreme Court

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

46. Growing crisis of Indian federalism
47. New strategy needed to Counter China
48. Disability issues
49. QUAD grouping - India, Japan, US and Australia.
50. Unilateral response of federal governance during Covid-19
51. Data insecurity
52. Gurushihya parampara and issues
53. US- Taliban Peace Pact
54. Hate speech
55. Peace in Afghanistan
56. Basic Structure Doctrine
57. Abraham Accords [peace for peace deal] and India
58. Dilution without adequate deliberation
59. India- China and Russia
60. UNSC reforms
61. E learning in India
62. Uniting to combat COVID-19
63. Vulnerable section – Homeless people and their mental health
64. Pandemic Helping to Recognize Real Education
65. Culture of Secrecy
66. COVID-19- A spotlight on democracy
67. The foreign hand: On FCRA amendments
68. Extent of media regulations
69. The new NEP 2020 and its flaws
70. Cess pool: On CAG report of Centre's accounts
71. Parliamentary committees

### General Studies - 3

---

1. Environmental challenge
2. COVID 19 – Policy window for overdue reforms
3. GST compensation Standoff
4. To Rebuild and Recover
5. COVID - 19 and India's road to economic revival
6. Regional Conversation series on Building Back Better
7. India's Tax Charter
8. Indian economic recovery - Unlock phases
9. Complex Naga conflict
10. Consolidation of land holdings
11. RBI-Government Tango
12. The twisted track of Bt cotton
13. Aatmanirbhar bharat in toy making
14. GST council meeting
15. Reducing the vulnerabilities of urban employment
16. Economic trilemma- Capital inflows, High inflation and Currency appreciation
17. Income support for households and firms
18. Climate change and India
19. GST Compensation disagreement between the Centre and the States
20. Market Failure
21. The genuine concerns of farmers
22. Aatma nirbhar action plan required

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

23. Future of Work - Industry 4.0
24. India's jobs conundrum
25. Farmer's protest on new farm bills
26. Agriculture sector and the benefits of the farms bills
27. Will the farm bills benefit farmers?
28. Environment and Development
29. Demand to Rework Inflation Targeting Regime
30. Farmers protesting on Farm bills

ForumIAS

# General Studies Paper - 1

## General Studies - 1

---

### 1. Subhash Chandra Bose - A hero or a misplaced tyrant

Source- [The Business Line](#)

Syllabus- GS 1 - Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities

Context- Legacy of Subhash Chandra Bose

#### Subhash Chandra Bose

- In 1942, he earned the title '**Netaji**', in Germany by the Indian soldiers of the **Azad Hind Fauj**.
- **Type of Government** - He promoted "government by a strong party held together by military discipline" for independent India.
- Bose is credited with the very famous slogan, "**Give me blood, and I shall give you freedom!**" as well as "**Jai Hind**".
- He is also credited to be the first man to call Mahatma Gandhi "**Father of the Nation**".
- Role model -Kemal Ataturk

#### Time line-

- **1919** - Headed to London to give the **Indian Civil Services (ICS) examination** and he was selected. Bose, however, resigned from Civil Services as he believed he could not side with the British.
- **1923** - He was elected the **President of the All India Youth Congress** and also the Secretary of Bengal State Congress.
- **1930** - Bose travelled in Europe. He researched and wrote the first part of his book, **The Indian Struggle**, which covered the country's independence movement in the years 1920-1934.
- **1939** - He was reelected as Congress President, but soon resigned from the presidency.
- **1943** - He was called as Father of Indian National Army.
- **1944** - He travelled to Japan and took leadership of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia. With Japanese aid and influence, he took the leadership of a trained army of about 40,000 troops in Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia known as the Indian National Army.

#### The other side Subhash Chandra Bose

- **1932** - Imprisonment in the Civil Disobedience movement followed by bad health took him to Europe where he observed European politics, particularly Fascism under **Mussolini** and **Communism in the Soviet Union**.
- He was impressed by both and believed that authoritarian rule was essential for achieving radical social goals.
- **1941** - He traveled to Germany to seek help for India's independence from **Adolf Hitler** and with German funds Bose started **Free India Center** and **Free India Radio** where he used broadcast nightly.
- **1943** - In a speech in Singapore, Bose spoke about India needing a ruthless dictator for 20 years after liberation.

### Contribution to modern India

- **Women Empowerment** – Raised an all-women unit in Azad fauj which was headed by the late Lakshmi Sehgal.
- **Principle of secularism** - His greatest contribution to India was his unwavering commitment to secularism, something that later became the cornerstone of the Indian republic.

### Way forward –

If Bose might had chosen a more moderate path like Azad and Nehru, and remained in India he would have played an important role, in the post-War period, opposing not only Partition but the emergence of the Gandhi-Nehru regime also.

## 2. Women and women leadership

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-1- Women

**Context:** It is necessary to get rid of inborn biases about the efficiency of women in roles of authority.

### How did countries with female leaders do during the pandemic?

- **Countries with women leaders:** Germany, Taiwan and New Zealand are the countries that have women heading their governments and have managed the pandemic much better than their neighbours.
- **Female leaders more effective:** A recent study by researchers in the United States reports that **States which have female governors had fewer COVID-19 related deaths**, possibly relatively because female governors acted more decisively by issuing earlier stay-at-home orders.

### What are the roles of women in India's gram panchayat?

- **Effectiveness of female leadership:** they perform significantly better than men in implementing policies that promote the interests of women. This was proven in another study conducted by Nobel Laureate Esther Duflo and co-author Raghavendra Chattopadhyay.
- **State's mandate:** Their study was made possible by the 1993 amendment of the Indian Constitution, which mandated that all States had to reserve **one-third of all positions of pradhan for women.**
- **Role of pradhans:** The study concluded that *pradhans* invested more in rural infrastructure that served better the needs of their own gender.
- For instance, women *pradhans* were more likely to invest in providing easy access to drinking water since the collection of drinking water is mainly the responsibility of women.

### When did women get voting rights globally?

- **Voting rights in India:** Women were allowed to vote from 1950 onwards and so could participate on an equal basis with men from the first general election of 1951-52.
  - This is in striking difference to the experience in the so-called “mature democracies” of Western Europe and the United States.
    - **Voting rights in the US:** 1920.
    - **Voting rights in Europe:** During the First World War.

**Are women in India underrepresented?**

- **Female representation in India:** The current government at the Centre is not very far from the typical gender composition in Indian central and State governments. Female members make up only about **10% of the total ministerial strength**.
- **The underrepresentation of female Ministers** in India is also reflected in the fact that Ms. Banerjee is currently the only female Chief Minister.
- **The underrepresentation of women in Indian legislatures:** The 2019 election sent the largest number of women to the Lok Sabha. Despite this, women constitute just over 14% of the total strength of the Lok Sabha.
- **India ranks 143 out of 192 countries** for which data are reported by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

**What is the status of women's bill in India?**

- **Establishment of quotas for women:** Since women running for elections face numerous challenges, it is essential to create a level-playing field through appropriate legal measures.
- Mandated reservation for women in gram panchayats was established in all major States since the mid-1990s.
- **Women's reservation bill:** The Bill was first presented to the Lok Sabha by the H.D. Deve Gowda government in 1996 and male members from several parties opposed the Bill on various grounds.
- Afterwards, various governments have reintroduced the Bill in successive Parliaments, but without any success.

**What are the steps needed to reduce prejudice?**

- **Third of party nominations for women:** The major party constituents of the NDA and UPA alliances can sidestep the logjam in Parliament. This will surely result in increasing numbers of women in legislatures and subsequently in cabinets.
- **Increasing female representation in policy making:** This will go a long way in improving perceptions about female effectiveness in leadership roles.
- **This decreases the bias among voters against women candidates**, and results in a subsequent increase in the percentage of female politicians contesting and winning elections. Such quotas have both a short-term and long-term impact.



# General Studies Paper - 2

## General Studies - 2

---

### 1. Internationalism or Nationalism- India's Present choices in Foreign Policy

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- GS 2- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Context - The first international conference “Congress of the peoples of the East” held in 1920, offers insights into the tensions between globalism and localism of 2020.

#### Recent instances of conflict between Internationalism and Nationalism

1. **Impeding Eurasian unity-** India's decision to pull out of this month's military exercise of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which was to announce a new era of Eurasian unity has been impeded by the tensions between India and China.
2. **Leadership of the Muslim world-** The Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's claim of leadership of the Muslim world has been resisted by a number of Arab rulers.
3. **Tension between 'Globalism' and 'America First' foreign policy of U.S.-** Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's promise to restore America's “global leadership” is struggling to overcome Donald Trump's “America First” argument that the US must rather take care of itself.

#### India's own dilemma

1. **During cold –war** - India turned its back on Asianism during cold war to claim the leadership of the broader Non-Aligned Movement that never acquired the needed strategic coherence.
2. **1990's** - After the Cold War, India re-embraced Asianism in the 1990s when it unveiled the Look East Policy and joined the Asian regional institutions led by the Association of South East Asian Nations.
3. **21<sup>st</sup> century** - Delhi didn't participate in ASEAN- (RCEP) summit that sought Asia-wide economic integration as it believed that it contradicts its domestic commercial interests and China will have more control over bilateral trade. Thus it went against internationalism or regionalism and promoted nationalism.

#### Issues with India's regionalism approach

1. **Chinese rise was underestimated** - India's pursuit of economic regionalism in East Asia and a multi-polar world in partnership with China and Russia had severely underestimated the economic and political consequences of China's rapid rise.
2. **Instances** - India took a benign view of Chinese power and has been shocked to discover otherwise in 1962 and as well as in 2020.

#### Way Forward

India today needs more internationalism, than less, in dealing with the Chinese power. But it must be an internationalism that is rooted in realism and tethered to India's economic and national security priorities.

### 2. India's muddle over GST compensation

Source: [LiveMint](#)

Syllabus: GS2: Powers, Functions and Responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

Context: Recently in GST council meeting the Finance Minister made a statement that the financial crisis facing the States is a result of an “act of God”.

#### Background:

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- **Compensation issue:** As per the estimates, the States' GST revenue gap in 2020-21 will amount to about ₹3 lakh crore, while cess collections are only projected to reach ₹65,000 crore, leaving a shortfall of ₹2.35 lakh crore.
- As per the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017, states are guaranteed compensation for revenue loss on account of implementation of GST for a transition period of five years (2017-2022).

### Issues associated:

- **Centre's responsibility:** States contend that the shortfall in revenue is not just due to GST implementation and pandemic, but it is due to an economic slowdown for which the Centre is responsible.
- **Slowdown of economy:** Economic growth slowed sharply in 2019-20. Nominal gross domestic product (GDP) growth dropped to 7.2% in the year ending 31 March 2020, and real GDP to 4.2%, from 11.0% and 6.1% respectively in 2018-19.
- **Global slowdown:** Brazil and Indonesia have suffered far worse export slowdowns than India in the last few years. Real GDP growth has slowed sharply in all of the emerging economies. So, blaming Union government for slowdown and fall in GST collection is not correct.
- **Stressed finances of states:** Growth slowdown has led to shortfall in the GST collections of states. GST accounts for almost 42% of states' own tax revenues, and tax revenues account for around 60% of states' total revenues.
- **Less taxation power with states:** Using cesses on agriculture such as Krishi Kalyan cess and Swachh Bharat cess, the Union is entering domains that are a part of the state list.
- **Role of agencies in slowdown:** Monetary policy was too tight in 2017 and 2018. However, the GDP estimation methodology showed higher growth than what actually obtained in 2016-17 and 2017-18. This played a role in dulling responses both from the Centre, in terms of structural reforms, and from the central bank by way of monetary policy.
- **Question of Moral obligation to compensate states from the Consolidated Fund of India:** All states agreed that the higher GST revenues would compensate for loss of revenue autonomy. For instance, Tamil Nadu's GST collections rose faster than its pre-GST sales tax revenues did. Therefore, putting the entire moral obligation on the centre is misguided.

### Analysis of the two options presented by Centre for borrowing by States to meet the shortfall:

- **Option 1:** In this case, states will be allowed to borrow for compensation requirement through a deal with the RBI, facilitated by the Centre.
  - **Implication:** If states opted for the first option given by the Centre, they would get ₹2.62 trillion, including the compensation cess. That is only 87% of the shortfall.
- **Option 2:** The second option is that the entire gap of ₹2.35 lakh crore can be met by the borrowing by the States by an RBI arrangement

Under both the options, whatever is not borrowed by states will still be paid to them even after 2022, through an extension of the cess. This means that taxpayers will have to bear the cost.

### Way forward:

- Facilitating borrowing by the states without affecting their debt ratios.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- Rescue the country's long-term fiscal health from political arbitrage.
- Make arrangements to clear any arrear of compensation through future compensation cess collections.

### 3. GST – Grand Bargain 2.0

**Source-** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

**Context-** A Grand Bargain 2.0 between the center and the states is needed in longer run to tackle the issues related to GST compensation to the States.

**Value added tax [VAT]** - An indirect value added tax which was introduced into Indian taxation system on April 1, 2005. VAT was introduced to make India a single integrated market. On June 2, 2014, VAT was implemented in all states and union territories of India, except Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands.

#### **Disadvantages of VAT**

1. **Cascading effect of taxes** - Cascading effect is when there is tax on tax levied on a product at every step of the sale. The tax is levied on a value which includes tax paid by the previous buyer, thus, making the end consumer pay “tax on already paid tax.”
2. It was not possible to claim Input Tax Credit (ITC) on service under VAT.
3. Different VAT rates and laws in different states.

The need for one country one tax was envisaged by GST which is a single comprehensive destination-based tax.

#### **GST [Compensation to States] Act, 2017**

- States are guaranteed the compensation for loss of revenue on account of implementation of GST for a transition period of five years (2017-22).
- The compensation is calculated based on the difference between the states' current GST revenue and the protected revenue after estimating an annualized 14% growth rate from the base year of 2015-16.

#### **Issues raised by States in current GST model**

1. **Limited option for States to raise money** -States does not have recourse to multiple options that the Centre has, such as issue of a sovereign bond in dollars or rupees.
2. **Rate of market borrowing** -Centre can anyway command much lower rates of borrowing from the markets as compared to the States.
3. **Rate of public sector borrowing**-In terms of aggregate public sector borrowing, it does not matter for the debt markets, or the rating agencies, whether it is the States or the Centre that is increasing their indebtedness.
4. **Fiscal Stimulus**- Fighting this recession through increased fiscal stimulus is basically the job of macroeconomic stabilization, which is the Centre's domain thus states can't overcome the impact of fall in revenue which is more or less lockdown induced.
5. **Trust issue** -Breaking this important promise, using the alibi of the COVID-19 pandemic causes a serious dent in the trust built up between the Centre and States.

### Possible solutions

- 1. Low GST rate** -A low moderate single rate of 12% encourages better compliance, reduces the need to do arbitrary classification and discretion, reduces litigation and will lead to buoyancy in collection.  
**Example- Australia**, for the past two decades their GST rate has been constant at 10%.
- 2. Importance of 3<sup>rd</sup> tier government** -Of the 12% GST, 2% must be earmarked exclusively for the urban and rural local bodies, which ensures some basic revenue autonomy to them. The actual distribution across panchayats, districts and cities would be given by respective State Finance Commissions.
- 3. Low transaction cost** – The current system is too complex and burdensome. An overhaul of the interstate GST and the administration of the e-way bill to reduce the transaction cost and also need to zero rate exports.

### Way forward

GST is a crucial and long-term structural reform which can address the fiscal needs of the future, strike the right and desired balance to achieve co-operative federalism and also lead to enhanced economic growth. The current design and implementation has failed to deliver on that promise. A new grand bargain is needed.

### 4. Digital education challenges

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Education

**Context:** Shift from teacher-class based teaching to digital-education will need multi-dimensional efforts over time as “digital” India is not prepared for digital education yet.

#### Education in India

- **Tackle poverty:** Education would facilitate in tackling poverty by providing new opportunities.
- **National Knowledge Commission (NKC) (2004-2009):** it has an emphasis on expansion, excellence, and equity and brings the idea of educational transformation for 21st-century needs into the mainstream thinking of the government.
- **Impact of the recommendations of the Commission:** it led to opening of almost 900 universities, many new IITs and IIMs, increased funding for education in the 11th Five-Year Plan and the Right to Education Bill.
- **The New Education Policy 2020:** It puts education at the forefront of the national agenda and is positive as a statement of intent.

#### Challenges

- **GDP on education:** In 2020-2021, the government spent only 3.2 per cent of GDP on education which is less from 4.14 per cent in 2014-2015, whereas allocating 6 per cent of GDP on education is proposed in NEP 2020.
- **Education crisis:** schools and colleges campuses will be closed through 2020 due to an increasing number of COVID cases and this could extend to 2021. Proper planning is required as merely hoping for best won't help.

#### Issues with online education

There are serious issues related to access, devices, content, curation, teachers, training, testing, exams, grades, funding, facilities, salaries, parents and fees.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- **Lack of access to internet:** It is estimated that only about 25 per cent of Indian households have an internet facility whereas the number is 15% in rural households. The marginalised, rural and poor populations would be worst affected.
- **Lack of resources:** appropriate platforms, technology, tools, interactivity, curation, content and a lot more is required for digital education, government schools and colleges are underprepared.
- **Lack of a proper policy on digital education:** parents are being asked to pay full fees to be able to pay their staff and maintain facilities and financial model is falling apart in the country because of lack of a proper infrastructure and multiple languages.

### Steps taken

Two bold initiatives were taken to help digital education in the future in the past:

- **NOFN — National Optical Fibre Network** (Now called Bharat Network) to connect all 2,50,000 panchayats at the cost of over Rs 40,000 crores and the Universal Service Obligation (USO) fund was used to build NOFN.
- NOFN was planned as a part of the **National Information Infrastructure** (NII) to enable the free flow of information to all. However, is still not completely operational, after almost eight years as many rural areas telecom operators did not want to serve due to **lack of profitability**.
- **The National Knowledge Network (NKN):** It was established as a high bandwidth, low latency network to connect all knowledge-creating organisations comprising IITs, IIMs, universities, research labs and other e-governance institutions up to the district level.
- **It was aimed at encouraging collaborative development and building a repository of knowledge in all fields.**
- Only a few institutions take full advantage of it because of a **lack of understanding, local facilities, funding and technical expertise.**
- The government's entire e-Gov programme works on the backbone of NKN.
- **IT-based teaching system:** Free 100 Mbps to 1Gbps bandwidth was planned at each panchayat under NOFN and NKN to build an IT-based teaching system, which could address the shortage of teachers.
- The present teacher-centric education and IT-based teaching were not in sync because of the old mind set and vested interests.

### Way forward

- A long time and substantial resources are required and parents should pay only when services are delivered to their satisfaction.
- NOFN and NKN should be used to connect all our schools and improve the digital education ecosystem.

## 5. Destroying the unity of purpose- Parliamentary Committee

**Source-** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies

**Context-** The open confrontation between the chairman of the IT Committee, Shashi Tharoor, and a senior member of the Committee has the potential to destroy the healthy convention and practices followed by parliamentary committees.



### Parliamentary committees

1. They are established to study and deal with various matters that cannot be directly handled by the legislature due to their volume.
2. Indian Constitution mentions two kinds of parliamentary committees under Article 118 (1) of the constitution-

- Standing Committees
- Ad Hoc Committees

Their appointment, terms of office, functions and procedure of conducting business are regulated as per rules made by the two houses under Article 118 (1) of the constitution.

### Role of Parliamentary Committees

#### 1. Function-

- They are created to scrutinise governmental activities. After finding out the facts about a particular matter, they make recommendations to the government. Although their recommendations are directory and not mandatory.
- They also monitor the functioning of the executive branch.

#### 2. Strength of the committees-

- They function in a non- party basis which makes them a unique experiment by the parliamentarians who are otherwise divided on party lines.
- They try to find the truth and expose the shortcomings of the governments before the House and public, so that government would work more responsibly towards the public cause.

#### 3. Rules and practices-

- They do not permit a minister to be a member of the committee. So, members do not have to take a political stand on issues before the committee as they do in the house.
- Ministers are not allowed to appear as witnesses to give evidence before the committees.
- They do not allow the presence of the media in the meetings of the committees.
- The proceedings are confidential and no one is permitted to make it public.

### Present controversy in IT Committee

- **Witness** - It centres on the right of the chairman to call an official from Facebook as a witness.
- **Rights of chairman** - There is no specific rule which defines the rights of the chairman. Rather it functions as per established conventions.
- If such practice is adopted then only those witnesses who are suggested by the majority can be called for examination and it may be deprived of the benefit of neutral witnesses.

**Rules of the House-** The speaker decision is final when it comes to relevance of the evidence submitted by the person. This makes two things clear-

- a. The question of whether a witness is relevant or not will be decided by the Speaker and not through a vote in the committee.
- b. The decision of the Speaker is confined to the question of relevance only. In other words, the selection of a witness can be challenged only on the ground of relevance to the subject.

Therefore, this being the position as per the House rules, the present controversy could have been avoided.

### Way Forward

Parliamentary committees need to follow sensible and healthy traditions and conventions, which is essential for the effective functioning of the parliamentary committees. It also strengthens the institution of Parliament as well as the democratic values.

### 6. Draft report on Non personal Data: Gopalakrishnan committee

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus: Gs2:** Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

**Context:** Recently, **the Gopalakrishnan Committee** on developing a governance framework for non-personal data has put out its draft report.

#### Few recommendations:

- The non-personal data generated in the country **can be allowed to be harnessed by various domestic companies and entities.**
- Set up a new authority which would be empowered to monitor the use and mining of such non-personal data.
- **Categories:** The committee has classified non-personal data into three main categories:
  - **Public Non-Personal Data:** All the data collected by government and its agencies such as census, data collected by municipal corporations on the total tax receipts in a particular period or any information collected during execution of all publicly funded works
  - **Community Non-Personal Data:** Any data about a set of people who have either the same geographic location, religion, job or other common social interests. For example, the data collected by ride-hailing apps, electricity distribution companies among others.
  - **Private non-personal data:** It can be defined as those which are produced by individuals which can be derived from application of proprietary software or knowledge.

#### Significance of the recommendations:

- **New technologies:** For example, aggregate data from land registries can tell us a lot about land use patterns. Data related to traffic flows can be used to guide traffic management.
- **Reducing digital dependence:** Data collected from various communities are considered to be 'owned' by the relevant community.
  - Such 'community ownership' means that the data should be shared back with all those who need it in society, whether to develop domestic digital businesses or for producing important digital public goods.

#### Issues existing:

- **Governance framework:** The Gopalakrishnan Committee report does **not adequately address governance frameworks** around government data sets.
- **State surveillance:** Report did not raise concerns about **state interference** in the private data ecosystem. The report largely focuses on the dangers posed by data collection by private sector entities.
  - **State's interventionist approach:** Even the Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee report of 2018 highlighted the need to restrict the growing power of the state to carry out surveillance.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- **Inability to enforce guidelines:** It means that data sets released by governments are often lack quality, thereby reducing re-usability.
- **Cybersecurity:** Issue of inadequate India's cybersecurity framework was also not addressed in report.

### Why the Data should be open to citizens?

- **Data are funded by public:** Most of non-personal data sets held by the government result from taxpayer funding.
- **To ensure accountability:** Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, mandates the disclosure of government data on a suo moto basis.
- **Transparency:** The state should be transparent about information that it has.
- **Avoid Duplication:** By permitting the reuse of government data sets, we **avoid the need for duplication.**
- **Ensure free flow of information:** One of the nine pillars of the Digital India Policy is "information for all".
- **In accordance with Government policies:** The **National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP), 2012** requires all non-sensitive information held by public authorities to be made publicly accessible in machine readable formats.
- The government has also set up an **Open Government Data Platform** to provide open access to data sets held by ministries and other agencies of the government.

### Way forward:

- Evaluate what is going wrong with existing policies and practice pertaining to government data, and deliberated on how these can be addressed.
- Reforming how the government itself deals with citizens' data.
- Develop state capacity to govern the data ecosystem.

## 7. COVID-19's impact on education

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- **GS 2** - Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

Context-Impact of COVID-19 on the education system.

### Impact of COVID-19 on private education system

1. **No e-learning access-** Low-income private and the government educational institutes have completely shut down due to no access to e-learning solutions.
2. **Endowment resources** -Survival of Private academic institutions for the most part is on the annual income that comes from tuition and the assortment of other fees collected, none of the institutions in this country possesses or gets big corpuses from alumni or industry.  
**Example- Harvard University**, to have an endowment of \$40 billion, which can be used as fiving out fellowship to subsidizing tuition fees.
3. **Burden on management-** Loss of jobs in departments, student's inability to pay the requisite fee and in many instances, the hostel fee, this entire chain place additional burden on the management.

### Challenges arising in dual mode of leaning

The scaling of operations that would include the dual modes of online and offline is going to be expensive due to a dual mode of educational delivery.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

**1. Increase in efforts and financing of projects** - The new social distancing norms would lead to the enforcement of smaller class sizes, thereby increasing the effective teaching load and multiplicity of efforts.

**For instance** - Online teaching means new hiring in the IT sector and increased costs due to engagements with Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs, and other online platforms

**2. High cost of digital infrastructure** - The online teaching mode brings with it increased **costs of IT infrastructure** such as network bandwidth, servers, cloud resources and software licensing fees.

### Possible key reforms-

**1. Soft loans**- Centre and State governments can provide soft loans to students to stay with the educational course, especially to vulnerable sections.

**2. New Corporate educational model**- Educational institutions could come to be treated like any other corporate body, with an allowable small margin of profit.

### Way forward-

The corporate model addresses not just financial sustainability but also a professional governance structure that would entail better accountability and holistic education. Acadonomics of the future will not only decide the fate of the academic sector in India but also its quality, ranking, research, innovation potential and its collective impact on our country's economy.

## 8. Non-Personal Data committee

**Source-**[The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2** - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

**Context** - The government committee headed by Infosys co-founder Kris Gopalakrishnan has suggested that non-personal data generated in India need to be allowed to be harnessed by various domestic companies and entities.

### Gopalakrishnan Committee -

1. The Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) on 13th September, 2019
- 2. Purpose-** Developing a governance framework for non-personal data and ensure wide sharing and availability of data in society.

**Non personal data** - Set of data which does not contain personally identifiable information. This means that no individual or living person can be identified by looking at such data. The committee has classified non-professional data in to three main categories-

- 1. Public non- professional data** - It involves all the data collected by the government and its agencies during execution of all publicly funded works.
- 2. Community non-personal data**- It involves any data identifiers about a set of people who have either the same geographic location, religion, job, or other common social interests.
- 3. Private non-personal data**- It can be defined as those which are produced by individuals which can be derived from application of proprietary software or knowledge.

**Issues involved-**

1. **Favoring big tech companies-** Only big tech companies possess the capital and infrastructure to create such large volumes of data.
2. **Data monopoly-** Some companies with the largest data pools have 'outsized, unbeatable techno-economic advantages' owing to first mover's advantage, network effects and enormous data volumes which have been collected over years. These act as entry barriers for startups and new companies.

**Gopalakrishnan Committee key recommendations-**

1. **Data availability-** Treat data as infrastructure, or 'commons', so that data are widely available for all businesses.
2. **Community Ownership-** Sharing of non-personal data, as it may be useful for Indian entrepreneurs to develop new and innovative services or products to benefit citizens.
3. **Reducing dependency-** With a robust domestic data/AI industry, dependence on U.S. and Chinese companies will reduce.
4. **Addressing monopoly-** Separating the infrastructural elements of digital service provision from the business of digital service delivery.
5. **Separate national legislation and a separate authority** to oversee non-personal data.

**Different roles in the NPD ecosystem-**

1. **Data Principal-** This is essentially the entity/individual to whom the collected data pertains.
2. **Data custodian-** The entity that undertakes collection, storage and processing of data, keeping in mind best interest of the data principal.
3. **Data trustee-** Data trusts are data infrastructures that will enable data sharing, sector-wise, or across sectors, and which can be run by various kinds of third-party bodies.

**Way forward-**

India is the first country to come up with a comprehensive framework in this area. It will set the stage for building a strong, and competitively diverse, domestic data/AI industry in India.

**9. Pandemic and food security**

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Health

**Context:** New ideas by working together, learning and contributing together are required to fight

Covid-19 and transform the agri-food system.

**Food insecurity in Asia**

- The on-going pandemic has led to a slowdown of regional economic growth and threatened Asia's food security.
- The number of **chronically-underfed people projected to rise by almost a third to 330 million by 2030 in southern Asia.**
- It is the only sub-region in the world where **more than half the children from the poorest fifth of society are underdeveloped** which affects their future.

### Challenges faced by the continent

- East Asia has the **world's highest absolute costs for a healthy diet** that offers balanced nutrition.
- Asia and the Pacific are regions **where obesity and being overweight, among children and adults, is growing faster than anywhere else.**
- Thus, the two challenges being faced right now: **COVID-19 and hunger**, a thorn in our side the international community had pledged to eradicate by the end of this decade as per the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2.

### Ways to increase resilience across our food systems

- **New channels:** There is a need to identify new marketing channels (like e-commerce) and increase efficiency to reduce losses.
- **Improving quality:** Improving the quality of products available and storage facilities, which are critical to flows of healthy foods and income to those who produce them.
- **Access to finance and innovations:** Inclusive access to finance to strengthen and expand rural supply chains is also crucial. Small land holders need access to financial resources, technology and innovation in order to ensure that the produced food reaches from farm to fork.
- **FAO's initiative:** The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations has recently launched a new comprehensive COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme to provide an active and coordinated global response.
- It is aimed at ensuring access to nutritious food for everyone by mobilising all forms of resources and partnerships at the country, regional and global level.

### Benefits from new technology and science

- **Inclusive:** Innovators from countries like Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific to China, India, Japan, South Korea, Singapore etc are proving that everyone can benefit from new technologies and science.
- Some ideas and innovations are as follows:
- Deploying of **drones to monitor flood and pest risks.**
- **Smartphone apps** that can identify plant diseases.
- **Advanced genetics** that build on crop and livestock breeding.
- **Precision agriculture and aquaculture systems** that conserve natural resources such as water.
- **Indoor farming and consumer tools** for nutrition monitoring and smart purchasing.

### Way forward

- Governments, academia, the private sector, UN agencies, civil society organisations, international financial institutions need to come together and work in unison to provide food to every mouths.
- The FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, which will be virtually hosted by Bhutan, is the perfect opportunity for the 46 members and other partners to forge ways to accelerate action and influence resources.
- By working together, learning and contributing together, we can overcome both pandemics and transform the agri-food system.

## 10. Gaps in the healthcare

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2- Health

**Context:** The prime minister announced the launching of **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)** amid the ongoing pandemic on the Independence Day 2020.

### Advancement on digital health

- **Digitising data:** capturing data relating to patients and its digitising could help patients, the doctors who attend to them and the health-care facilities where they seek treatment.
- **IT network and public health centres:** many States have already achieved some advances in these areas with **the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)** and afterwards, National Health Mission. For instance, IT network in most public health centres including tribal areas.
- **Format of data:** Personal health data are generated by name up to primary health centre level. The patients get hard copies of the reports or soft copies on their smartphones.

### The outlines of the mission

- An IT consulting firm has been engaged to build a National Health Stack and a **registry of over eight lakh doctors, 10 lakh pharmacists and over 60,000 hospitals** is under preparation.
- The Strategy Document has stated that the data would be safe, confidential and stored locally.
- Consent would be required every time before sharing the personal identifiable information.
- It would help patients to avail Telemedicine support from renowned specialists if required.
- It will be easier to get hospital bills settled with insurance cover under government schemes.
- The scheme also aims to replace existing data generation systems with a new homogenised software for all machines in the health sector in the country with a central processor that will extract the relevant data from individual records.

### Widespread costs and catches

- **Existing practices:** In the government sector there are many existing practices and systems for compilation of data as in the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme and the Health Management Information System (IDSP-HMIS). The staffs are also well versed in using those systems.
- **Already existing software systems:** Some larger hospitals have already gone for vigorous and refined software systems such as enterprise resource planning and would be in a dilemma as to whether they need to scrap them or run parallel software provided by the NDHM.
- **Costly affair:** Public health professionals estimate the high costs for all government and private HIPs to upgrade their hardware and connectivity systems, training of present staff, the entry of data afresh.
- **Rural areas:** In rural areas it is not a feasible option to enter data in computers on their own or engage data entry operators merely to comply with the digitisation protocols.
- **Poor defence against data leakage:** Lack of adequate cyber security architecture may expose the personal data of patients at risk.



### Way forward

Along with digitising health care data, the government should also focus on unreliable health-care facilities in both the government and private sectors, difficulties in getting timely care, availability of beds and hygienically maintained hospital premises, availability of doctors physically and community health initiatives.

### 11. Internationalisation of higher education

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus: GS2:** Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education, Human Resources.

**Context:** NEP's vision for drawing foreign universities to India requires fine-tuning.

#### Idea of internationalisation of higher education

- It is based on the mobility of students, faculty members, programmes, and institutions across countries.
- Before the NEP, two types of mobility took place: that of faculty members and students. This movement of students and faculty has informed the NEP's section on internationalisation.
- **Need:**
  - India has entered into the **stage of massification of higher education** with a gross enrolment ratio of 26.3 per cent, which is fast increasing.
  - **Increase in the gross enrolment ratio:** It calls for more such institutions.
  - With more than 1.5 million schools, over 40,000 colleges and close to 720 universities, India has the **second-largest education system** in the world after China.
  - The foreign universities would bring in programme and institution mobility.

#### Earlier efforts to internationalise:

- **Global Initiative of Academic Network (GIAN):** to enable the country's higher education institutions to invite world-class scholars, scientists and researchers.
- **Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration:** It was launched to promote joint research and collaboration with top 500 QS (Quadrelli Symonds) ranking institutions.
- **Study in India programme:** It identified 30 Asian and African countries (now 42) from where meritorious students would be drawn to study in top 100 NIRF ranked institutions.

National Education Policy vision to internationalise	
The NEP aims to attract top 100 QS World Ranking universities to open offshore campuses in India.	
For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reduce the migration</b> of Indian students and give those who cannot afford to go abroad an opportunity to study in foreign universities at home.</li> <li>• Bring <b>knowledge, technology and innovative</b> pedagogy to the country.</li> <li>• Enhance <b>India's exposure to global intellectual resources.</b></li> <li>• Ensure the entry of quality institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the cost of education and widen the already <b>existing disparities</b> in matters of accessing quality and affordable higher education.</li> <li>• <b>Accentuate the existing hierarchies</b> in the country, and have a bearing on the diversity on campuses. There could be a scramble for meritorious students with the lion's share going to foreign campuses.</li> </ul>

**Challenges associated with internationalisation:**

- **Widening the scope of internationalisation:** Several world-class institutions such as the Max Planck Institute could fall through the policy's cracks because they do not participate in any world rankings, let alone the QS World Ranking.
- Growing body of literature critiquing the world rankings.
- **STEM and professional courses have greater market value** compared to social sciences and humanities. There is thus a possibility of foreign campuses turning their back on disciplines in these streams.
- **Vocational and skill education** cannot be internationalised in the same manner as academic education.
- No clarity on whether the foreign varsities actually agree with the overall vision of NEP.

Since India is an open economy, a policy to attract foreign universities in the country is now inevitable.

**12. 'The deletion of Question Hour'- Politics of avoidance**

**Source-** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

**Context-** The deletion of 'Question Hour' from the announced agenda of the day.

**Question Hour**

- It is the **first hour of a sitting session** of India's Lok Sabha.
  - Members of Parliament raise questions to the concerned minister about matters of public interest and administrative activity whether domestic or foreign.
  - The concerned Minister is **obliged to answer** to the Parliament, either orally or in writing.
  - It is one of the ways Parliament can hold the Executive accountable.
  - Copies of answers given are available to members at the Notice office before the start of the day's proceedings and on the websites.
  - There are four types of question-
- 1. Starred Questions-**
    - a. It requires an oral answer.(Supplementary questions can follow by the permission of speaker)
    - b. These questions are printed in green colour and are marked with asterisk sign '\*', in order to distinguish from other questions.
  - 2. Non- starred-**
    - a. It requires a written reply.(No supplementary questions allowed)
    - b. These questions are printed in white colour and not more than 230 questions can be listed for a day in Lok Sabha.
  - 3. Short notice questions**
    - a. Those which are asked on matters of urgent public importance and thus, can be asked on a shorter notice i.e. less than 10 days.
    - b. These questions can be answered orally and supplementary questions can be asked.
    - c. These questions are printed in yellow-pink colour.
  - 4. Questions to private members-** Those which are asked to members who are not ministers. These questions are related to private member bill, parliamentary committees and private member resolutions.
  - 5. Supplementary questions-** If a Member seeks to ask a question urgently and cannot wait for the duration of the notice period, then the member can do so provided it is accepted by the Speaker.

### Effect of COVID- 19 on Parliamentary Sessions

1. **Working of legislature-** Legislative bodies have continued to function with new sets of 'dos and don'ts'.
2. **Question Hour-** Due to the situation created by the COVID- 19 pandemic, there will be no 'Question Hour' in the forthcoming session of Parliament.
  - a. **Starred Questions-** They will be the only questions to delete.
  - b. **Unstarred Questions-** They will continue to be received and answered.
  - c. **Supplementary questions-** They will be required to be answered orally.

### Way Forward

The test of a functioning democracy is its ability to face crises — social, economic, political — and seek correctives premised on institutions of democracy. A resort to what has been called 'the politics of avoidance' does not help the process. Executive accountability upfront cannot be allowed to become a thing of the past.

### 13. India and QUAD

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus: GS2:** Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**Context:** Recently, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) stated that India believes the Quad would be a "good mechanism" to "ensure Freedom of Navigation Operations" (FONOPs) in the Indian Ocean and surrounding oceans including the Indo-Pacific.

#### Significance of Quad in present scenario:

- **Upholds that high seas are Common heritage:** It prevent any other nation singularly trying to dominate the oceans.
- **The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue is an informal strategic forum** between the United States, Japan, Australia and India that is maintained by semi-regular summits, information exchanges and military drills between member countries.
- The idea of Quad was first mooted by **Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007**. However, the idea couldn't move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure.
- **To counter aggression of China:** LAC tensions and PLA's refusal to implement border agreements, have convinced India that new strategies will be required to deal with Beijing.

#### Changing scenario:

- The tensions between India and China are strengthening India's ties with global powers such as the U.S., as well as formations like the Quad.
- Chinese aggressiveness is further strengthening the motivation for Australia, India, Japan, and the United States to keep the Quad together.
- India is now prepared to join Quad military patrols, which marks a departure from its earlier restraint in joining Quad.
- Government is planning to host a ministerial-level meeting of the Quad, possibly when the India-US "2+2" meet of Foreign and Defence Ministers is held.
- The Indian navy very recently it held its first joint patrol outside the Indian Ocean with France.



### India's earlier position on "Militarisation of the Quad"

- India sees the Indo-Pacific as a **"geographical concept"**, not a "strategy or a club of limited members".
- India is the only Quad member which is not tied in a treaty alliance with the other Quad members.
- India is the **only country in the Quad that shares a land boundary** with China, and it is not clear how the militarisation of the Quad in Indo-Pacific would alleviate the territorial threat it faces.

India needs to clarify whether it has changed its stance on militarisation of QUAD and also try to engage diplomatically with other nations to prevent any kind of aggression in Indo-Pacific.

### 14. Censorship and freedom of speech

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Polity

**Context:** Censorship, whether public or private, always invites charges of one-sidedness and creates a problem for freedom and civility.

#### The role of facebook

- According to the story covered by the wall street journal, the complaints against Facebook are:
- **Political bias** and not being attentive enough to **hate speech and fake news.**
- **Impervious algorithms** that direct users to particular kinds of content and **insufficient privacy controls.**
- Excessive and unaccountable **power to shape public dialogue.**
- **Going through a revolution:** similar transformation happened in previous centuries, such as :
- **Empowered masses of people**, enabled new forms of knowledge and transformed the Self.
- They allowed the creation of new **community identities like nationalism** but they also enabled new forms of hate to emerge and combine as political forces.
- Facebook is considered to be in trouble is because the political views of its key officials were clearly obvious. It had further **taken the role of a free speech regulator, a role which should ideally be carried out by the government.**

#### Issues with social media

- **Fusion of social media with private and public roles:** Many serving IAS officers now don't just propagate government schemes, but openly violate norms of civil service neutrality, without consequences.
- **Censorship:** Freedom of expression is easy to institutionalise when speech is safe. However, where it leads to incitement and violence people's convictions about defending free speech fade.
- Social media makes distinction between speech and action difficult to maintain.
- **De-contextualises and re-contextualises speech:** Content that seems within the bounds of safety in a particular context, can have hateful effects in another. Such speech going viral can have unpredictable effects.
- **Hate pays:** The business models are driven by the logic of 'hate pays', i.e, Companies are trying to cash in on the hate and polarisation in public discourse.

### Way forward

Resisting Facebook's power will require a more fundamental pulling out from a logic of profit that blurs the boundary between public and private, without which no freedom and civility is possible.

### 15. The working of Parliament during COVID- 19

Source- [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these

**Context-** The upcoming monsoon session of Parliament, is symbolic of the issues faced by legislatures during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

#### Sessions of Parliament

- **Definition** - The period during which the House meets to conduct its business.
- **Power of President** - The Constitution empowers the President to summon each House at such intervals that there should not be more than a six-month gap between the two sessions.
- Hence, the Parliament must meet at least twice a year.
- In India, the Parliament conducts three sessions each year-
  - a. **Budget session:** January/ February to May
  - b. **Monsoon session:** July to August/ September
  - c. **Winter session:** November to December

#### Steps that legislature has taken to combat COVID in sessions

1. **Parliament-**
  - a. It will maintain physical distancing.
  - b. It has reduced the Zero Hour.
  - c. It has cancelled Question Hour.
2. **State legislature-** Some states just met for a day in which they ratified a number of ordinances.

#### Contrast between the actions taken during COVID - British Parliament and Indian Parliament

##### The case of contact tracing:

1. **British Parliament-**
  - a. Committee on Human Rights and the Government's Response to Covid-19 Digital Contact Tracing, laid down following recommendations:
    - An app could be used only if there was a specific primary legislation to enable it.
    - Such legislation should ensure that data is collected only for the limited purpose of preventing the spread of COVID-19.
    - Prohibit sharing the data with third-parties, upload the data to a central database only if the person is tested or suspected to be positive.
    - Limit the time for which any data was stored.
    - The Minister would have to report every 21 days on the efficacy of contact tracing as well as data security and privacy.
2. **Indian Parliament-**
  - a. **Use of executive's power** - It rolled out Aarogya Setu through executive decision.
  - b. **Non-availability of information** - It has created a grey zone on whether Aarogya Setu is mandatory.  
For example- while flying or on metro rail when operations resume next week.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

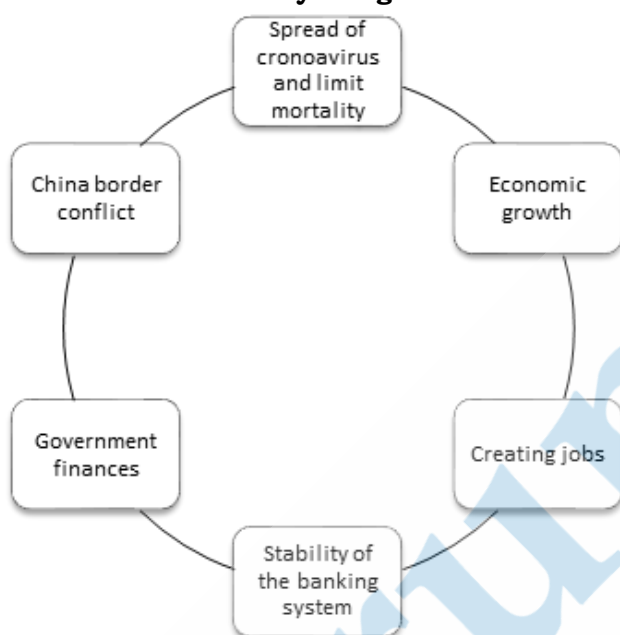
- All this has been done without a specific legislation or any parliamentary oversight.
- Thus it shows that there has been no check or guidance on government action in contrast with a well-functioning committee system as the British.

**Judicial Intervention-** Due to lack of parliamentary oversight, judiciary has to intervene in many policy issues. For example:

- a. Hardships caused to migrants due to lockdown.
- b. Issues of the telecom companies in which they have to pay their dues to the government.

Those issues are best judged by the government with oversight by parliament and if there is any illegality then the matter should be judged by court.

### Issues to be tackled by the government



### Way Forward

Members of Parliament must use other available interventions to ensure that new laws and expenditure proposals are passed only after detailed discussion. Parliamentarians have a duty towards Indian citizens to fulfil their role in scrutinising the work of the government and guiding policy. Despite the curtailed session and the constraints due to the coronavirus, they should make the best of the limited time to do so. They need to wrest back their rightful role in our democracy.

### 16. Chinks in the armour of the Supreme Court

**Source-** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus-** GS 2- Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

**Context-** There were two significant developments in connection with the Indian judiciary: Prashant Bhushan's contempt case and the retirement of Justice Arun Mishra.

#### The Prashant Bhushan's case

- **Basis of contempt-** One of his tweets was about the role of the last four Chief Justices of India, and the other about the current CJI riding an expensive motorcycle while the court was in "lockdown".

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- **Supreme court held him guilty of contempt of court-**
- In the display of generosity, it let off Mr. Bhushan with a fine of one rupee.
- In the alternative, it ordered for a three-month imprisonment term and three years debarment from practice.
- **Supreme Court's strange behaviour-** It appeared strange and also embarrassing on the part of the court, for it came across as a petulant bargaining.
- **Mr. Bhushan's reply-** With appropriate decorum and honesty, he admitted any apology in this circumstance would be insincere.

### Justice Arun Mishra's issue

- **Master of roster system-** Justice Mishra's steps as a 'master of roster' has been questioned as most of the politically sensitive cases were assigned to the benches involving him.
- **Politically sensitive cases-** Many commentators have conducted detailed analyses and found that these were predictably in favour of the executive. Thus, his role clearly indicates his immoral decisions, notably with reference to the Justice Loya case.
- **Executive court-** It has been speculated on the marked drift of the Supreme Court away from rights- based court to an executive court.

### The master of roster system

- It refers to the privilege of the **Chief Justice** to constitute Benches to hear cases. Be it the **Chief Justice of India** or **Chief Justice** of any high court it is he or she who heads the administrative side. It includes allocation of matters before a judge as well.
- **Reason of this privilege-** It was designed for a different era and judicial independence was rarely doubted.
- **Abuse of this privilege-** It has been misused by many courts to conclude the judgement in their favour. Example of such cases
- One of such examples was **Justice Dipak Misra's** tenure in which the assignment of work in the court 'remote controlled'.
- **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act** was struck down by the Court on grounds of excessive executive interference in the selection of judges. But surely, this judgment is of no use if executive interference is anyway possible in more subtle ways.
- **Justice Gogoi's** sexual harassment case.

### Action to be taken for a transparent judiciary

- **Random allocation- A** rules-based mechanism for allocation of cases is needed. Cases should be allocated randomly. A case allocation system that is neutral and rules-based will prevent bench packing, and demonstrate neutrality, impartiality, and transparency.
- **Unity in judges against unethical actions-** Any kind of rule can be implemented only if judges themselves take a stand and decide. There should be agreement that no discretion can be allowed, for that is the root cause of so many of our troubles.

### Way Forward

Thus, need is to ensure that courts are protected from outside interference; improves public confidence in the impartiality and independence of the judiciary; assures litigants of

equality and fairness; and protects basic rights and freedoms by not compromising on them.

### 17. Judiciary and Executive

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Judiciary

**Context:** Supreme Court's unwillingness to question government on major issues affects its moral authority.

#### State of affairs between the Supreme Court and the Government

- **None of Supreme Court's decisions have come as an embarrassment to the current government in the last 4 years.**
- The current government **blocked the elevation of Gopal Subramaniam as a judge of the Supreme Court** in 2014.
  - Subramaniam was the Court's impartial counsellor in **the Sohrabuddin case in which current Home Minister Amit Shah was the prime accused.**
- **The National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC):** The current government introduced a bill which would replace the Collegium system for appointing judges to high courts and the Supreme Court.
  - The NJAC Act was passed by Parliament in December 2014.
  - **The Commission would comprise the CJI, two senior judges and two "eminent personalities"** selected by a committee involving the CJI, the Prime Minister and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

**The SC struck down the NJAC Act.** It was the last time the SC opposed the government in a major case, stating that the NJAC Act would affect the independence of the judiciary.

#### Vacancies in the Court

- In early 2016, **more than 40 per cent of posts in the high courts were vacant** while the backlog of pending cases amounted to over four million.
- **Pending appointments:** 170 proposals for appointments to the high courts were pending.
- According to then CJI T S Thakur, the Indian judiciary was too understaffed to fulfil its obligations.
- **The government returned 43 out of 77 names** recommended by the Collegium for HC judges and the number of **vacant posts had by then gone up to about 500 in 2016.**

#### The role of the Supreme court in maintaining checks and balances:

6. **The court's reluctance to question the government:** Issues like the NRC, J&K, misuse of sedition law was not questioned by the apex court even when some of these are labelled by the BJP as its ideological projects.
7. **The way the judiciary has addressed allegations against itself:** Allegations such as Kalikho Pul, Prasad Education Trust, sexual harassment affects the moral authority of the judges, especially when they fail to apply the basic principle of natural justice by being judges in their own cause.
8. **The apex court's stance on controversial cases:**
  - a. The Court considered that **the Aadhaar Bill could be passed as a Money Bill.**
  - b. **The court validated the electoral bonds act.**



c. **The case of Special Judge Loya:** no additional investigation was ordered despite many grey areas that allegedly remains unresolved.

**9. The independence of the judiciary is unavoidably affected by the acceptance of post-retirement jobs.**

**Conclusion**

The court is indulging in judicial authoritarianism by trying to silence one of the few lawyers who have used the judicial arena to speak truth to power and convicting Prashant Bhushan of contempt.

According to Lynne Henderson, a court's jurisprudence appears "to manifest inflexibility, lack of compassion, and approval of oppression".

**18. Demographic dividend - Youth and atma nirbhar**

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Youth

**Context:** India can achieve the goal of self-reliance (atmanirbharta) by enhancing the capability of youth.

**Are we investing in our youth?**

- **The Central government spends about ₹2,710 per youth on education, skill development, employment, health care and food subsidies**, according to the national youth policy report.
- **The 2014 National Youth Policy (NYP)** defined youth as persons between 15 and 29 years.
- Assuming that States spend an equal amount on the youth, even then **the total investment in our youth would be under 1% of the GDP.**
- **The youth unemployment rate** is at least 18.3% (3.47 crore youths) according to the 2018 State of Working India Report.
- About 30% of youth fall under the **'neither in employment nor in education'** category and 33% of India's skilled youth are unemployed.
- Post the COVID-19 lockdown, **the CMIE estimated a loss of 14 crore jobs in April alone of which 2.7 crore concerned youth**, when around 50 lakh youth are expected to be entering the workforce annually.

**Steps to be taken**

- India has just a decade's time to realise the youth demographic dividend. So, the country **should launch an Indian Youth Guarantee (IYG) programme.**
  - **The European Union Youth Guarantee (EU-YG) launched a similar programme** in 2010 at a time when youth unemployment rates were soaring above 20%.
- In order to **ensure gainful and productive engagement of youth**, functioning of an Indian youth Guarantee (IYG) initiative as an implementing framework with legal backing could help.
- **Youth Component Plan:** the plan could help in the allocating budgetary resources under a separate head on the lines of the **Special Component Plan for the Scheduled Castes and the Tribal Sub-Plan.**
- **IYG's goal:** young people graduating from college or losing a job either find a good quality job suited to their education and experience or acquire skills required to find a job through an internship within a fixed time period.
- The district administration and local bodies should be incorporated by IYG for more effective outcomes.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- Existing youth schemes and skilling infrastructure need to be merged and modernised.

### Learning from MGNREGA

- **The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** has been very effective in providing rural livelihood security and social protection yet only about 4% of youth in the labour force have been impacted by it.
- Even though, an urban youth employment programme will be a new involvement, the rural youth employment should be instituted alongside MGNREGA.

### The youth development Index

- **The Youth Development Index (YDI)** in India serves as an advisory and monitoring tool for youth development and helps recognise priority areas, gaps and alternative approaches specific to each State.
- YDI can be revisited and deployed to play a vital role in crafting a region-specific IYG.

### The way forward

- IYG needs to be implemented across the country to address youth unemployment particularly given the rapid structural changes in the economy.
- India should focus on the youth of the country in order to become self-reliant.

## 19. India's confusing signals on India- China stand off

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- **GS 2-** India and its neighbourhood- relations

**Context-** The Indian government seem to be sending out confusing signals about the ongoing India-China stand-off on the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

### Contradictory stand of Indian Government

- **Ambiguous about situation** - On the one hand, it has decided not to reveal the exact nature of the situation on the LAC. Prime Minister had claimed on June 20 that “neither has anyone intruded into the Indian Territory nor has anyone captured any military posts.
- **Bilateral measures to solve the ongoing dispute** - On the other hand, it is attempting to negotiate Chinese withdrawal from Indian Territory rather than using kinetic means or tit-for-tat measures to reclaim its territory.

### Reasons for such contradictory stand

- **Domestic compulsion** - Acknowledging Chinese possession of Indian Territory is bad optics for a party whose hardcore supporters revel in the military bravado of the party.

### Implication of contradictory stand

#### Creation of ‘Two-and-a half front situation’ of India

- d. A restive Kashmir
- e. An aggressive China
- f. A Pakistan that never misses an opportunity to get at India

Thus, all of this together forms a formidable national security challenge.

### Challenges to solve current stand-off

- 3. Covid- 19 worries-** As all nations are preoccupied with the domestic political, economic and public health worries of COVID- 19, there is little enthusiasm to stand by India.
- 4. External support-** Due to India's inability to clearly articulate, identify and address the Chinese threat, no other nation or international system is able to stand by India in pushing back China.
- 5. Discrepancy within Indian strategic community-** Nations normally stand together and speak in unison, but this situation has not brought the country's political and strategic elites together unlike say during the Kargil crisis or the Mumbai terror attacks.

### Way Forward

India needs to stand together in unity and present the actual facts on the LAC crisis. So that it can take action accordingly in forming political strategies and policies with China and other nations to save its national interest, territory and integrity as a democracy.

### 20. Reduce state-level regulation

Source: [LiveMint](#)

**Syllabus: GS2: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.**

**Context:** There is need to reduce state-level regulation to aid job creation.

#### Debate over roles of the state and central governments:

- The debate over role of state seeded by the **introduction of dyarchy in 1919**.
- Later it became an important part for people who started drafting Constitution in 1946.
- As per former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, strong states lead to a weak nation.
- As per former Andhra Pradesh CM N. T Rama Rao, the central government is a conceptual myth.

#### Regulatory cholesterol for enterprises:

- 1. Too rigid regulations:** The compliance burden imposed by states on enterprises is too thick for industries to flourish and generate formal employment.
- 2. Approximate number of regulations:** there are around 1,536 Acts that create 69,233 compliances and 6,618 filings every year.
- Frequent changes in regulation leads to instability and reduce confidence of employers. For instance, regulations changed eight times a day last year.
- Massive, uncoordinated and punitive regulations made difficult for employers to create jobs.
- Adding to this, recently COVID-19 has challenged finances, guarantees and borrowing of States.
- 6. Centre- State share in increasing regulatory cholesterol:** 55% of the Acts, 63% of compliances, and 65 % of filings are at the levels of states. Both the Centre and states legislate on labour, these constitute almost 72% of all the state compliances. States account for a whopping 97.4% of the 2,721 labour registers, displays and returns demanded. On an average state has 50 different registers and 15 unique returns to be filed in a year.



**Possible implications of regulatory cholesterol:**

- a) Breeds informalisation of workforce and create sub-scale and uncompetitive enterprises.
- b) The farm sector continues to employ 45% of our labour force.
- c) Reduce productivity of enterprises.
- d) **Dwarf enterprises:** due to complex rules India doesn't have large factories.
- e) Poor social security to workers and minimum wage is also not guaranteed to workers in such enterprises.
- f) **Less revenue to government:** India's 63 million enterprises only translate to 120 million GST registrants and only 70,000 of these have annual revenues of more than ₹5 crore.
- g) **Regulatory cholesterol hurts MSMEs:** they don't have the resources, time or skills to handle the complexity that supports a parasitic community of consultants, retired bureaucrats and inspectors whose services include "good relations".

**Significance of MSMEs:**

- Account for 32% of India's gross domestic product (GDP), 24% of employment, 45% of exports, 33% of manufacturing, and 25% of services.
- They are the most vulnerable to the covid crisis, the least responsible for it, and the key to its solution.
- Jack Ma suggests Alibaba's biggest economic contribution is an ecosystem that helps Chinese small businesses grow.
- Angela Merkel suggests the backbone of Germany's industrial value creation is its Mittelstand, and Ronald Reagan believed small businesses embody American optimism.

**Steps that should be taken:**

**c. Rationalisation:**

- **Form a compliance commission:** with a 90-day mandate to review all compliances and filings for relevance.
- Redundant, duplicate and overlapping items should be identified and rescinded by way of an executive order.
- For instance, there are at least four different formats of accident registers, seven formats for wage registers, four of inspection/visit books, and several formats of attendance records, employee records and advances. The number of registers and returns can be reduced by 90%.

**d. Simplification:**

- Process of inspection of enterprises is highly manual and there is no coordination among inspectors.
- **Digital interface:** States need to review these practices and introduce risk-based, consolidated, faceless, presence-less, and digital inspection processes.
- **Telangana** has recently implemented such a process.

**e. Digitization:**

- **Introduce single interface:** States should catalogue all enterprise interfaces needed for one-time applications for licences, registrations, renewals, returns and payments.
- **Build or upgrade existing digital platforms:** to ensure that no physical visit or meeting is required to conduct day-to-day business with enterprises.
- **Reduce the need for third-party consultants:** Electronic document submission with unique tracking numbers, date and time stamps, service level agreements.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- Reduce the need of physical office visits for submissions, follow up and payments.
- **Establish a common portal:** to publish all regulatory changes, instead of multiple portals at the department, municipal, zila parishad and gram panchayat levels.

The time has come for States to rationalize, simplify and digitize employer compliances for India to attract factory refugees from China and create a fertile habitat for formal non-farm job creation.

### 21. India's democracy

**Source-** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

**Context-** Issues of the present Indian democracy.

**Indian anti-corruption movement, 2011-** A series of demonstrations and protests across India to establish a strong legislative regime against perceived endemic political corruption.

**Movement Lead by** - Anna Hazare.

**Aim and demand of the Anna Hazare movement-**

- The movement aimed to alleviate corruption in the Indian government through introduction of the Jan Lokpal Bill.
- Repatriation of black money from foreign banks.
- Electoral reforms and decentralization of power were essential.

**Nation's attention has moved away from weaknesses in institutions of governance to other major issue such as -**

1. Threats from china on the nation's borders.
2. To global problems caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

**Current electoral democracies issues-**

1. **Money power in politics** - The rise of illegitimate expenditure on vote-buying has become a matter of great concern as it is making only the rich to be more qualified.
2. **Paid Advertisement-** To influence vote-choice through election advertisement campaigns on social media and other propagandas has led to issue of paid advertisement.
3. **Alignment of views-** Too many parties and too many contradictory points of view are accommodated within a coalition, in the long run there can be break down in coalition and governance.
4. **Internal democratic-** If political parties are not internally democratic, they become means for self-aggrandizing politicians to amass power and wealth, and democratic nations suffer.

**Flaws in presidential and parliamentary system-**

1. **Parliamentary system-**

a. **Unstable government.**

b. **Dictatorship of the Cabinet-** When the ruling party enjoys absolute majority in the Parliament, the Cabinet becomes autocratic and exercises nearly unlimited powers.

c. **Against separation of powers-** The legislature and the executive are together and inseparable.

2. **Presidential system-**

- a. Conflict between legislature and executive.
- b. Non- responsible government.
- c. May lead to autocracy.
- d. Narrow representation

### Possible solutions-

1. **Resolving issues with reasons-** Complex issues, where many interests collide, must be resolved by reason, not settled by the numbers.
2. **Strong local governance-** Locals know bests how to balance local affairs democratically, so strengthening local governance structures such as Panchayati raj and municipalities.

### Way forward-

Electoral funding must be cleaned up, and democracy within political parties improved to make representative democracy work better. Citizens must appreciate that they have to be the source of solutions, and not become only the source of problems for governments and experts to solve for them. Those with the most needs in the community must be enabled to participate, alongside the most endowed, in finding solutions for all.

## 22. Issues with implementation of schemes – Farmer

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Governance

**Context:** Issues with the implementation of the poverty alleviation programmes.

### The gap between policy and impact on the rural economy

- **The PM Kisan scheme:** under this scheme, each **landowning farmer (landless are excluded) receives Rs 6,000 annually.**
- A farmer growing a combination of paddy and wheat utilises about **50 litres of diesel per acre** according to a Punjab Agriculture University study.
- Currently, **each litre of diesel gets taxed at about Rs 45** and the average country-wide **diesel usage per acre to 60 per cent is 30 litres.**
- The government is **virtually collecting a tax of Rs 1,200 per acre from farmers** and a small five-acre farmer could be paying **about Rs 6,000 as diesel tax, which is the same amount this scheme offers.**
- **The single-tax regime:** farmers **are now paying GST on purchase of inputs like seeds, pesticides, fertilisers, tractors and implements.** Farmers unlike other industries cannot claim input credit for this.
- **The Ujwala scheme:** the under privileged were paying **Rs 503** for the subsidised cylinder when international crude price was at **\$60 per barrel in July 2019.**
- The crude prices fell to stabilise at about two-thirds the price at **\$40 during the pandemic** but the price of the subsidised cylinder increased by nearly a fourth to **Rs 611 in July 2020.**
- The government is collecting more per cylinder from the poorest sections of society when it is popularly perceived to be providing increased financial support to them.
- **Minimum support price:** The **CACP report** projected an increase of 5.1 per cent in the composite input price index for 2020-21 over 2019-20, indicating a higher cost of cultivation.
- The MSP for paddy was **increased by 2.9 per cent during the COVID lockdown.**
- The government generously **raised MSP for paddy by 12.9 per cent in 2018.** However, the increases in MSP have been minuscule **at 3.7 per cent in 2019** and 2.9 per cent in 2020.
- The MSP has changed from being the **minimum support price to becoming the maximum selling price.**
- **Subduing farm gate prices:** If a consumer can afford to eat a more expensive dal or a more expensive non-essential produce (say, onions), then they don't need to be subsidised by subduing farm gate prices.

- For instance, **75 per cent of the dal consumed in India is chana and arhar and both are selling below MSP**, import duties on masoor dal were reduced by two-thirds to 10 per cent because there was a demand for it in one part of India.

### Way forward

Instead of focussing on the urban consumer from becoming restless and find a common cause for protest, the government should focus on the poor farmers and solve the problem of subduing farm gate prices as a reset in approach to mitigating inflation is a must.

### 23. NAM and India's present alignment

Source- [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

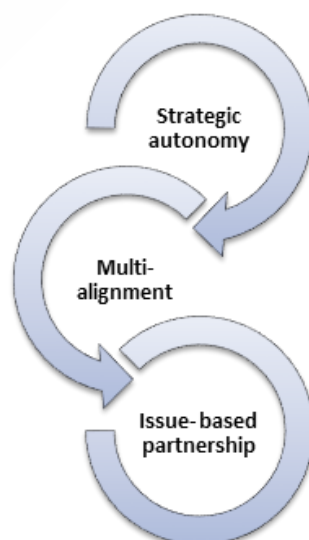
**Context-** From last few years, non-alignment has not been projected by the policymakers as a tenet of India's foreign policy.

#### Non- Alignment Movement (NAM)

- **Establishment-** It was established in 1961 through an initiative of the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and some leaders of different nations formed during the cold war to retain autonomy of policy between two politico- military blocs.
- **Members -** Presently, 120 developing world nations are its members.
- **Objective -** It is to ensure the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries in their struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference or hegemony as well as against great power and bloc politics.
- **Panchsheel principles-** It was based on the five principles, which were:
  - a. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
  - b. Mutual non-aggression.
  - c. Mutual non-interference in domestic affairs.
  - d. Equality and mutual benefit
  - e. Peaceful co-existence

#### Successive foreign policies

Indian policymakers have not yet found a universally accepted successor as a signature tune for the foreign policy. Successive formulations have been coined and rejected. Such as-



## India's present foreign policy options

### 1. Alliance strategy-

- In the wake of the current stand-off with China, there have been calls for India's foreign policy to shed its inhibitions and make a decisive shift towards the United States, as the only viable option to counter China.
- However, the government has been ambiguous in its approach. The External Affairs Minister clarified that a rejection of non-alignment does not mean a rush to alignment: India will not join an alliance system.

### 2. Geo- strategy-

- It derives from both geography and politics. While politics is dynamic, geography is immutable.
- Two major imperatives flow from India's geography:
  - a. **Economic and security interests in the Indo-Pacific space** – It has inspired the Act East policy of bilateral and multilateral engagements in Southeast Asia and East Asia and the Pacific.
  - b. **The strategic importance of the continental landmass to its north and west** - Shared India-U.S. interests in dealing with the challenge from China in the maritime domain have been a strategic underpinning of the bilateral partnership since the early 2000s.

## Way Forward

In today's world order, India should see tie with U.S. and other potential nations as a joint venture in which they could pursue shared objectives to mutual benefit through bilateral relations.

## 24. India-China Border Conflict

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** Gs2: India and its Neighborhood- Relations

**Context:** The ongoing border crisis with China calls for a strategic shift from punitive retaliation to prevention.

**Various factors involved for such incursions:**

- It was a clear mismanagement of the warning-intelligence system.
- Indian intelligence services did not collect sufficient data of Chinese intentions and early moves.
- The problem also lay in the Army's concepts for defending the country's borders.
- **Chinese incursion was not conventional:**
  - The Army expected that any Chinese bid to capture Indian Territory would come as a major conventional invasion, as it did in 1962.
- **China's 'grey zone' tactics of quick land grabs:** China opted for quick land grab looks increasingly permanent, like an attempt to change the border without triggering war.
- **Miscalculation:** Indian army thought China would make its point like earlier stand offs with a temporary transgression and retreat after talks.
- **Army was not prepared for the type of security threat China presents:**
  - The Army's prevailing doctrine is designed **to deter and defend against major conventional invasions.**
  - **Organisation of Army:** what equipment it operates, and where it is deployed. The Army expects to win wars, against Pakistan or China, by launching its **own punitive offensives after an enemy attack**, to either destroy enemy forces or seize enemy land.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- The Army's response includes large formations, with planning and command decisions made at the Corps headquarters or higher.
- **Improper response:** Indian side was instructed not to respond aggressively to avoid war.

### Way forward:

- **Focus on prevention:** unconventional threats should be prevented instead of trying to reverse them.
- **Need to change fundamental shift** in the Army's doctrinal thinking.
  - For instance, from strategies revolving around punishing the adversary to strategies that prevent its adventurism in the first place.
- Increased investment in **wide-area surveillance to detect and track adversary moves.**
- Well-developed command authority to respond to enemy aggression.
- Rehearsed procedures for **an immediate local response** without higher commanders' approval.
- **Capacity building and quick decision making:** local commanders must have the authority to take anticipatory action.
  - For instance, in chusul Indian Special Forces troops took position on previously unoccupied heights south of Pangong Tso.

India needs to learn the right lessons and be alert to similar tactics in other regions, like the Indian Ocean.

### 25. India-China border standoff in Ladakh

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- **GS 2** - India and its neighbourhood- relations.

**Context** -With the recent shift by China from Line of Actual Control (LAC) to Claim Line, a new national debate on demarcating the border is needed.

#### Border dispute

**Treaty of Amritsar** - In 1846, the British granted Kashmir to Gulab Singh without specifying its eastern boundary in Aksai Chin.

- According to Article 2 of the Treaty, the boundary was to be "defined by a separate engagement after survey".
- **1st survey- The Johnson- Ardagh Line** surveyed in 1865, ran along the Kunlun Mountain, included Aksai Chin in Kashmir and it was not communicated to China.
- **2nd survey- The McCartney-MacDonald Line** ran closer to the Karakoram Range, treating the Indus watershed as the border. The later survey, officially sent by the British to China in 1899, was not followed up, and the border remained 'undefined'.
- The dispute continues to be which watershed defines the actual boundary.

**1960's Indo- China border talk-** Between Jawaharlal Nehru and Chou-en-lai.

- **India's view-** Delimitation can take place by definition of high mountain areas and watershed.
- **China's view-**
  - i. China does not recognize the McMahon line but they were willing to take a realistic view with Burma and India.
  - ii. China would accept India's control over today's Arunachal Pradesh, which meant its de facto recognition of India's jurisdiction up to the McMahon Line, if India accepted China's control over Aksai Chin.

**The missteps by both countries have resulted in the current stalemate-**

- 1. Unacquainted experts-** Two civilizational states establishing their identity were ill-advised by poorly informed experts.
  - India issued new maps in 1954 removing the 'un-demarcated territory' tag.
  - China in 1957 also showed Aksai Chin with the only traffic artery between Tibet and Xinjiang in its new map.
  - A cartographic ambiguity was converted into clashing sovereignty, with unwarranted inherent notions of 'concession' and 'aggression'.
- 2. Missing element of negotiation-** In 1960, the history and tradition of the area were to be examined by a joint expert group which could not produce an agreed report as earlier maps considered basin boundaries, and not who had exercised control over territory.
- 3. Strong military presence-** Militaries remain tasked with defending borders where 'grey areas' and maximum restraint in 'face to face' situations despite mutually acceptable adjustments to their respective position.
  - Infrastructure development increases the potential for armed action.

**Way forward**

Boundaries can be defined by natural features such as rivers, watersheds and prominent landmarks or artificially by latitude and longitude reference. The government should audit the past, explain colonial ambiguity, establish the Himalayan watershed as border, and take a giant step for the \$5-trillion economy.

**26. Idea of block chain based voting**

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Governance

**Context:** The election commission of India is considering the idea of further digitising India's electoral infrastructure.

**Advent and rise of new applications**

- **The election commission held an online conference in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency ("TNeGA") and IIT Madras,**
- It explored the possibility of **using block chain technology for the purpose of enabling remote elections.**
- **A block chain** is a distributed record book of information which is replicated across various knobs on a "peer-to-peer" network for the purpose of ensuring integrity and verifiability of data stored on the record book.
- Block chain record books have traditionally been used as supporting structures for cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin and Ethereum.
- **'Remote voting'** would appear to benefit internal migrants and seasonal workers, who account for roughly 51 million of the population (Census 2011), and who have, faced considerable difficulties in exercising their democratic right of voting.
- This process might be useful for some remotely stationed members of the Indian armed forces.

**Key issues and security concerns**

- Electors would still have **to physically reach a designated venue in order to cast their vote.**
- Block chain solutions **rely heavily on the proper implementation of cryptographic protocols.** Any shortcoming could lead to **possibly unmasking of**

**the identity and voting preferences of electors** or allow an individual to cast a vote as someone else.

- For instance, a Russian media outlet reported that it was possible to access and decrypts the votes stored on the block chain due to a flaw in cryptographic implementation.
- An attacker may be able to **clone the biometric traits** required for verifying as another individual and cast a vote on their behalf.
- **Software backdoors placed on an individual system** could allow attackers to collect and presume voting choices of individuals.
- **Prone to targeted Denial-of-Service attacks:** An attacker would be in a position to block traffic from the system and can effectively prevent or can delay the registration of votes.
- **Digitised systems** may also stand to exclude and disenfranchise certain individuals due to flaws in interdependent platforms, flaws in system design and general failures caused by external factors.

#### Solutions to the problem

- **Solution to ballot portability:** Political engagement could possibly be improved by improving other existing methods such as postal ballots or proxy voting.
- Another proposed solution to this issue includes the creation of a **'One Nation, One Voter ID' system** which will allow citizens to vote out of their home state.

#### Obsession with techno-solutionism

- **This optimism for technological solutions** poses a threat and could stand to hinder free and fair elections in the future, if carried out with poor management.
- Any solution to electoral problems must be **software independent and fault tolerable**, where failure or tampering of one method would not affect the integrity or transparency of the overall process.

#### Way forward

Use of a new block chain system could maybe only be justified for lower level elections, and not for something as significant and politically binding as the general election.

#### 27. Issues with Health data collection

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Polity

**Context:** The national digital health mission is useful in delivering development outcomes, but technology has to be deployed carefully.

#### National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)

- Every Indian will get a **Health ID card and every time you visit a doctor or a pharmacy, everything will be logged in this card.**
- The NDMH seeks to **create an ecosystem under which health records will be digitised.**
- The government has clarified that this would be **voluntary, data will be stored locally and only anonymised data will be shared upwards.**

#### Technology and data collection

- The real intent of this policy is to **transform health outcomes, access and care, and not just separate data alone.**
- The U.S. has had this electronic health records initiative for a while.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- **Technology at the population level:** it can be used effectively to control the outbreak of a pandemic.
- **Accessibility:** NDHM provides accessibility to millions of people don't have access to quality healthcare.
- **Addressing connectivity issues:** Computing devices that can use 'store and forward' type architecture can overcome connectivity challenges.
- One can control digitised data through many methods such as **pattern matching and looking for trends, all real-time.**
- **Data protection:** AI algorithms can help in building layers of anonymisations to protect data and prevent theft.
- **Easy data collection:** The use of technology is the cheapest and easiest way forward, in collection of data and monitoring the quality. In the 1970s, it used to take years before Census data and family health survey data could be tabulated until the technology came in the 1990s.

### Problems associated with demographic and health data and other issues

- Cost is a big factor in addressing **sampling size, sampling errors, non-sampling errors, how frequently we collect data.**
- The organisations that handle the **existing legal framework for protecting census and other survey data are not strictly independent regulatory authorities.**
- For example, the Census Commissioner of India has the power under the Indian Census Act to say no and so an independent commission is needed.
- **There is a risk of malicious action by state agencies or other private agencies** who might be able to access data for political, economic or ideological reasons.
- **Private data used for analysis and policy making:** With anonymised data, people have less of an issue but in some cases it may not be anonymised — for instance, in contact tracing.
- When you go beyond health, we have other interesting issues in this public health crisis, policy issues — pensions, loans that were given to businesses.

### Steps to be taken

- **A legal framework that acts as a warning for anybody who is caught stealing or misusing personal health data.** It must be independent of any political machinery. So, possibly, create an independent commission, like the Election Commission.
  - There should be some provision to resolve the **conflict between private and public good.**
  - **Improve the system of our birth and death and marriage registration** and registration of other statistics for real-time capture of demographic data.
  - The other types of data which are also collected in the **Census regarding culture, language, economy could be collected at longer intervals.**
10. **Traceable technologies:** Traceability here implies that you should be able to understand exactly what happened at the individual level in the use of the technology.
  11. **An independent agency outside of the government to ensure** quality of data and sharing of data only at the broader units such as the State or district level.
  12. Technology could make data capture and analysis possible in smaller units but at the same time, one has to be very judicious doing that.

### Way forward

Technology can do a world of good in delivering health, education and other development outcomes, but one has to be very careful and judicious in its organisation, and there should be an independent and healthy regulatory mechanism to oversee that process.

### 28. Question Hour in Parliament

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- **GS 2-** Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these

Context- The Question Hour is the heartbeat of democratic accountability.

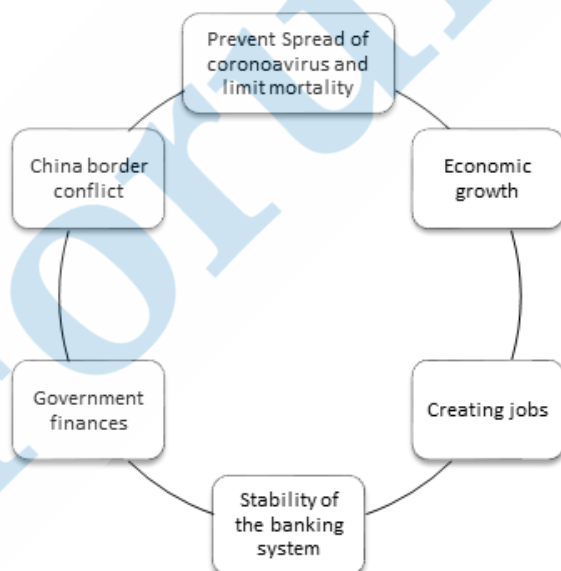
#### Democratic Government

- There are two type of democracy i.e. direct and indirect democracy.
- Direct Democracy-** Nations which have direct democracy, people exercise their supreme power directly through the referendum, initiative, recall, plebiscite. Such as Switzerland.
- Indirect Democracy-** Nations which have indirect democracy, the representatives elected by the people exercise the supreme power. Thus, carry on the government and make the laws. Such as Parliamentary and Presidential.
- India is an indirect democracy where the questions are asked from the civil society platforms, the mass media, community gatherings and ultimately within the highest temple of democracy, the legislature itself.

#### Working of Parliament during Covid- 19

- It will maintain physical distancing and reduce the necessity to touch surfaces.
- It has reduced the Zero Hour.
- It has cancelled Question Hour.

#### Challenges in front of the Government



#### The issue of Question Hour

##### Question Hour-

- It is the **first hour of a sitting session** of India's Lok Sabha.
- Members of Parliament raise questions to the concerned minister about matters of public interest and administrative activity whether domestic or foreign.

3. The concerned Minister is **obliged to answer** to the Parliament, either orally or in writing.
4. Copies of answers given are available to members at the Notice office before the start of the day's proceedings and on the websites.

**Issue with cancelling question hour** - Question Hour is one of the ways Parliament can hold the executive accountable. However, canceling it could damage our precedents and working of the parliament in future.

### Way Forward

The test of a functioning democracy is its ability to face crises — social, economic, political — and seek correctives premised on institutions of democracy. A resort to what has been called 'the politics of avoidance' does not help the process. Executive accountability upfront cannot be allowed to become a thing of the past.

### 29. Regulation of Online games

**Source:** [The Hindu Business line](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Polity

**Context:** Legalised online gaming will open up a revenue channel for governments.

#### More about the news

1. **The Andhra Pradesh government banned online gambling by amending the AP Gaming Act 1974** amid the growing and alarming popularity of gambling websites among youngsters.
2. **The Centre has banned 118 Chinese games and apps**, including the popular mobile game PUBG.
3. Andhra Pradesh government's move was recommended by several other States which reportedly are **contemplating introducing similar clampdowns**.

#### Potential of online gaming

1. According to estimates of **consultancy KPMG which along with the Federation of Indian Fantasy Sports, which recently brought out a report on the potential of online gaming:**
  1. India's online gaming industry is **a minuscule \$1 billion in comparison with \$200 billion market** globally.
  2. There is an **influx of entrepreneurs** in sectors such as e-sports, utility apps, edutainment, and more because of the powerful chips that are made available at affordable rates.
  3. **Gaming and simulations are now used to impart complex lessons in the education** sector globally.
  4. There exists a thin and **blurred line between the legitimacy and the illegality of online gambling or betting**.
  5. **Over 400 start-ups are active in the e-gaming space in India**. Together, they have drawn nearly \$450 million in investments (2014-2020), and the pooled money is growing faster.

#### Steps to be taken instead of a blanket ban on online gambling

- **Governments can adopt a realistic approach** by setting up a body to **classify, legalise and regulate online gaming**.
- Introduce a proactive and **transparent licensing regime to make sure online activities are monitored**.

- **Reform the out dated Public Gambling Act, 1867**, to sync it with the digital context.
- For instance, **State of Andhra Pradesh v. K. Satyanarayana and ors and KR Lakshmanan vs State Of Tamil Nadu And Anr**: The Supreme Court observations (1996) on horse-racing bets, which it has held as a game of skill.

#### Way forward

1. Legalised online gambling will open up a revenue channel for governments, considering the exponential growth in the number of online gamers; like legalised liquor, it can be a sustainable source of revenue.
2. Online gaming calls for regulation with just the right sense of balance.

### 30. India-China conflict

**Source-** [The Indian Express](#), [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus-** GS 2- India and its neighbourhood- relations

**Context-** Government need to create a new equilibrium in its future relations with neighbours, including China.

#### What are the reasons for current tension between India-China?

1. **Non-demarcated border-** The root cause lies in an ill-defined, 3,440 km (2,100 mile) long border that both countries dispute.
2. **Strong infrastructure buildup near border-** The two nations are also competing to build infrastructure along the border. India's construction of a new road to a high-altitude air base is seen as one of the main triggers for border tension.
3. **China's fear-**
  - India's tilt toward United States amid US-China tensions.
  - China views India's assertions regarding Gilgit- Baltistan, as an implicit attack on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), China's flagship programme.
  - Political and economic tension within China due to COVID- 19 pandemic.
  - India being a growing power in Asian region.
  - Potential threat to Chinese cultural hegemony in Tibet, because of the presence of the Dalai Lama in India.

#### What are the challenges that lie ahead of India?

1. **Severe winter –**
  - The administrative challenge of maintaining troop accretions at this altitude, during the winter season, will be of serious concern.
  - The armed forces need to ensure a high state of “operational readiness” until the onset of the severe winter.
2. **Political- diplomatic initiative-**
  - 1st challenge is to ensure that the current standoff is resolved without conflict. But in case of conflict, it must be localized to the Ladakh region.
  - It is important to ensure that the country is not faced with a “two-front conflict” [with China and Pakistan].

#### What has been Indian response to Chinese dilemma?

1. **Military-** India has moved in additional divisions, tanks and artillery across the LAC to match Chinese deployments.
2. **Economic-**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- Citing the emergent nature of threats from mobile applications, the government has banned more than 200 Chinese applications.
- Recently, the Indian government tightened FDI norms coming from the countries which share land borders with India. Government approval has been made mandatory.

**3. Foreign pressure-** India must ensure continued US and international pressure at China's other pain points like the South China Sea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Tibet.

**4. Isolating china-** Need to continue to isolate China on its insidious role in starting the current pandemic.

**5. Reinforcing the alliance-** India need to strengthen the Quad and other multilateral regional groupings of like-minded countries.

**6. Reworking on bilateral agreement-** The need is to insist with an unequivocal "no war pact" with China and a categorical, time-bound resolution of all border issues.

### Way forward

The first priority has to be to restore the status quo ante at the border as it existed in April. India needs a new paradigm of foreign policy which safeguard India's interests more assertively and where all options can be exercised. Resolving this conundrum will require not routine political guidance but great statesmanship on both sides.

### 31. 'Judiciary': Encroaching the housing rights of urban poor

**Source-** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

**Context-** The Supreme Court of India on August 31 ordered the removal of about 48,000 slum dwellings situated along the railway tracks in Delhi.

#### What are the directions of the Supreme Court?

A three- judge bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra, relying on an affidavit filed by the railways observed that

- There is a predominant presence of slums in close vicinity of the 140 km- long railway line in Delhi.
- While the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had constituted a special task force for the removal of encroachments from railway property — "There seems to be some political intervention against removal of such encroachments".

Thus the court ordered that:

- State authorities to remove the jhuggi jhopri clusters in the railway safety zone.
- Stated that "no court shall grant any stay with respect to removal of the encroachments".
- In case any such interim order is granted "that shall not be effective".
- These "encroachments" should be removed within three months and "no interference, political or otherwise, should be there".

#### What are the Fundamental flaws raised by the Residents?

The Fundamental flaws which are raised by the residents are that the Supreme Court has ignored:

- 1. Principles of natural justice and due process of law-** Since the Court decided on the removal of jhuggi jhopris without hearing the affected party which are the jhuggi dwellers.



2. **Judicial precedents on the right to shelter**-The Court ignored its long- standing jurisprudence on the right to livelihood and shelter upheld in various judgments such as-
- a. **Olga Tellis & Ors vs. Bombay Municipal Corporation & Ors. (1985)** held that the right to life also includes the “right to livelihood” and that no eviction shall take place without notice and hearing those affected.
  - b. **Chameli Singh vs. State Of U.P. (1995)** the Supreme Court recognised the “right to shelter” as a component of the right to life under Article 21 and freedom of movement under Article 19 (1) (e).
3. **State policies governing evictions**- The Court also failed to consider the policies and case laws on slum eviction and rehabilitation in Delhi. Such as-
- a. **Sudama Singh & Others vs Government of Delhi & Anr. (2010)** The High Court of Delhi held that prior to any eviction, a survey must be conducted and those evicted should have a right to “meaningful engagement” with the relocation plans.  
The procedure laid down in this judgment formed the basis for the **Delhi Slum and JJ Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy, 2015.**
  - b. **Ajay Maken & Ors. Vs Union of India & Ors. (2019)**  
A case concerning the demolition of Shakur Basti on railway land, where the Delhi High Court invoked the idea of the “Right to the City” to uphold the housing rights of slum dwellers. This case led to the framing of a **Draft Protocol for the 2015 Policy** on how meaningful engagement with residents should be conducted.  
Therefore, all this represents a dangerous turn of PIL jurisprudence.

### Way Forward

The jhuggi residents need to employ a combination of political and legal strategies to protect their housing rights and ensure that no eviction or rehabilitation is conducted without their prior informed consent.

### 32. Effective foreign policy of India

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- International Relations

**Context:** India’s handling of the stand-off with China in the last few months along the LAC.

**How are china’s relations with countries across the globe?**

- **President Xi Jinping has introduced an aggressive policy** with China’s neighbours since 2013. It has involved expanding cultural influence, improving regional security cooperation and socialising in the region to make countries accept China’s view of its core interests.
- In the South and East China Sea areas, **China has unilaterally enforced the Nine-Dash Line maritime boundary**, while neighbours like Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia watched helplessly.
  - **The UNCLOS tribunal decried** China’s historical claims based on the Nine-Dash Line. But China simply rejected the verdict.
- Even the **Americans and the Japanese find it difficult to face the aggression of the PLA navy in the South and East China Seas**. Their ships are regularly confronted, many times by moving dangerously close, by PLA naval warships.

### India and China along the LAC

China’s aggressive military exercises are met with stiff resistance from the Indian side.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- India's proportional response to the aggression came at **the Doklam tri-junction in North Sikkim in 2017**. Indian resistance forced the Chinese to backtrack.
- **The Indian response in the form of "active diplomacy and strong ground posing"** has forced China to alter its approach.

### How are the Indo-china relations in recent times?

- **India has isolated China at the UN Security Council on two occasions in the last one year** when it tried to push through a discussion over Kashmir at the request of Pakistan.
- **China couldn't secure support from any country** except Niger, when it tried to initiate a discussion on Kashmir and Pakistan's efforts to get some innocent Indians sanctioned by the UNSC as international terrorists too failed due to India's proactive diplomacy.
  - The US, several European nations like the UK and France came out in Indian support.

### What are the new challenges ahead for India?

- **The ECOSOC**, an important UN body on social and economic affairs, has Pakistan as the elected president.
- **On Kashmir, Turkey has largely sided with Pakistan** in the past and the country is taking over as the **Chair of the United Nations this month**.
- **Issues such as Islamophobia and Kashmir may return to dominate the international discourse** because China is raring to get back at India at all international forums and its efforts of supporting the Turkey-Pakistan-Malaysia leadership to counter the Saudi-led OIC.
- **India should be prepared for this new face-off at the UN** because the US will be less interested in these affairs for some time as US elections are around the corner.

### Way forward

- India needs to cultivate countries like Australia, Vietnam and Japan in the Indo-Pacific neighbourhood to tackle this new challenge, although its traditional allies in Europe will help.

### 33. Chinese strategy towards India

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- International Relations

**Context:** In the standoff with China, India has two choices: either walk into the trap that has been laid or learns from the 1962 event.

#### Tensions at Indo-china border

- The **tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)** are refusing to die down, despite the military and diplomatic-level talks.
- It is the **most serious situation" along the India-China border "after 1962"**.

### What led to the war?

- In 1950s, **India accepted Chinese sovereignty over Tibet and signed an agreement with Peking over trade with Tibet**.
- In return it expected that **China would respect its given boundaries - the McMahon Line in the east and the frontier (based on the 1842 Tibet-Kashmir agreement) in the west**.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- **The first setback** to this position was **the Longju incident**. Within two months, an Indian police patrol team in Kongla Pass in Ladakh came under Chinese attack.
- **India's proposal:** Indian prime minister asked Chinese troops to withdraw from Longju in return for an assurance from India not to reoccupy the area. He also proposed that both sides pull back from the disputed Aksai Chin, where China had already built (unilaterally) a strategic highway.
- **China's proposal:** Chinese were ready to recognize the McMahon Line in the east in return for India's recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Aksai Chin.
  - India rejected the Chinese offer because it would mean India abandoning its legitimate claims over Aksai Chin.
- After **the collapse of the Nehru-Zhou Enlai [Chou en Lai] talks in 1960** in Delhi, tensions escalated fast and China intensified patrolling along the border.
- In November 1961, Nehru ordered his **Forward Policy as part of which India set up patrol posts along the LAC**.
- India's move was seen as provocation in Beijing and **Mao Zedong ordered the invasion in October 1962**.

### How is the current border situation different yet similar in some ways?

- The overall current situation is different but the border conflict looks similar to what it was in the late 1950s and early 1960s.
  - **The boundary has still not been enclosed and fixed;**
  - China has not recognized the McMahon Line and India has not accepted China's control over Aksai Chin.
- **Ceasefire which was maintained since 1988 has now been disrupted** with China first moving to block Indian patrolling in the Finger area of Pangong Tso and the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh during the summer.
- **India made a forward move on the southern banks of Pangong Tso last month, similar to the Forward Policy in 1961**, taking over the heights of the Kailash Range.
  - When the Forward Policy was ordered, the aim was to secure the vast border and prevent further incursions. Now, **despite the experience of 1962, India appears to be taking a calculated risk by making forward movements.**

### What are china's strategic policies?

- **"Unity and struggle" policy:** Mao had taken up this policy post 1962 war. It meant laying emphasis on unity with India on mutually agreeable matters while continuing the struggle over the border issue.
- **China's strategic dominance:** The strategy which would yield positive outcomes, irrespective of the strategies of the rival player. China saw itself as the most powerful force in Asia as Japan had been devastated by the war.

### Understanding China's moves

China considers that it has arrived on **the global stage as a military and economic superpower**.

- **The COVID-19 outbreak has injured China's economy**, but it is recovering fast. **India, on the other side, is in a prisoner's problem on how to tackle China.**
- India is a big, rising power, but is going through **short-term challenges**.
  - India's economy is weak right now.
  - Its geopolitical standing in the neighborhood is not at its best.

- India has cautiously moved toward the United States but still, **there is no guarantee that it would discourage China or if the U.S. would come to India's help in the event of a war.**
  - China believes that it can play **the game of strategic dominance once again.**

#### Way forward

If India plays it on China's terms, there will be war and so India should learn from its past experience of 1962 and cautiously find a way to tackle with china.

### 34. Cancelling of Question Hour in Parliament

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- **GS 2-** Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Context- The decision to go without "Question Hour" during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, beginning September 14, has evoked serious concerns about the democratic functioning of the institution.

#### What is the democratic functioning of the government?

- a. There are two type of democracy i.e. direct and indirect democracy.
- b. **Direct Democracy-** Nations which have direct democracy, people exercise their supreme power directly through referendum, initiative, recall, plebiscite. Such as Switzerland.
- c. **Indirect Democracy-** Nations which have indirect democracy, the representatives elected by the people exercise the supreme power. Thus carry on the government and make the laws. Such as Parliamentary and Presidential.
- d. India is an indirect democracy where the questions are asked from civil society platforms, the mass media, community gatherings and ultimately within the highest temple of democracy, the legislature itself.

#### What is the Question Hour?

- It is the **first hour of a sitting session** of India's Lok Sabha.
- Members of Parliament raise questions to the concerned minister about matters of public interest and administrative activity whether domestic or foreign.

It is not only an opportunity for the members to raise questions, but it is a parliamentary device primarily meant for **exercising legislative control** over executive actions.

- The concerned Minister is **obliged to answer** to the Parliament, either orally or in writing.
- Copies of answers given are available to members at the Notice office before the start of the day's proceedings and on the websites.

It is a device to **criticise government** policies and programmes, ventilate public grievances, expose the government's lapses, extract promises from ministers and thereby, ensure accountability and transparency in governance.

**Illustration** of this role can be seen in the **Lok Sabha in November 1957-** In which the finance minister T. T. Krishnamachari had resign and took the moral responsibility for what had happened after the enquiry headed by Justice M. C. chagla.

#### Why is government trying to avoid Question Hour?

The government is duty bound to respond to the following failures in Parliament. However, by cancelling the Question Hour, the government has opted for a face- saving measure.

- f. Prevent Spread of corona virus and limit mortality.
- g. Unprecedented decline in GDP and its impact on the economy.
- h. New Education Policy.
- i. Rising unemployment.
- j. Miseries of migrant labour.
- k. Tension at the border.

Thus, these actions erode the constitutional mandate of parliamentary oversight over executive actions as envisaged under **Article 75 (3)** of the Indian Constitution. It needs to be understood that such actions are a planned covert attempt by the government to diminish the role of Parliament and turn itself into an “Executive Parliament”.

### Way Forward

Since the government is accountable to the parliament, the parliamentary proceedings meant to hold the government accountable should not be suspended or curtailed as it will go against the essence of the Constitution. The annals of history of parliamentary proceedings and functioning in India remind us of the strength and scope of Question Hour as an effective armour to raise the concerns of the people.

### 35. India's Policy on Tibet

Source: [LiveMint](#)

#### GS2: India and its neighbourhood

**Context:** Recently china has unveiled the Communist Party of China's (CPC's) new policy towards Tibet at a conclave.

#### What is China's new strategy towards Tibet?

- It entails a mix of persuasion, development, connectivity, indoctrination and coercion.
- It intends to construct an ironclad shield to safeguard stability against separatists and hostile foreign interests by sinicizing Tibetan Buddhism.
- It aims to step up ideological education, manufacturing a favourable historical narrative, strengthening border defence, deepening surveillance and enhancing connectivity to neighbouring Chinese provinces.
- The new policy continues to betray the CPC's insecurities vis-a-vis Tibet.
- It also indicates that China believes that it occupies the dominating heights of its relationship with Tibet.

#### What strategies China had in past Towards Tibet?

- a. Limit the Dalai Lama's global outreach.
- b. Constrain protests in Tibet.
- c. Change the demography of the region.
- d. Increased transgression across Indo-tibetan border.

#### What is Impact of Chinese strategy?

- a. Transform the Tibetan landscape and economy: it has created vested interests in favour of china's rule.
- b. It has found numerous ways to put pressure on New Delhi to limit formal interactions with the Dharamsala-based Central Tibetan Administration.
- c. Claims over Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh (China claims as “South Tibet”).

### How China is interfering with Dalai Lama institution?

- China is planning to **end the institution of the Dalai Lama** with Tenzin Gyatso's departure.
- **Identifying the next Dalai Lama:** China has planned to manage by invoking the **Golden Urn** process.
- A bureaucratic device used by Emperor Qianlong of the Qing dynasty to manage the politics of reincarnation in the late-18th century by drawing lots.
- China has declared that all reincarnations require the approval of the Chinese government.
- **Panchen Lama:** by tradition Panchen Lama is the preceptor of the Dalai Lama but it is already under Chinese control.

### What could be possible implications, if china has full control over Tibet?

- Rise in Chinese aggression across Himalayas once it has strong hold over Tibet completely.
- It will legitimise the People Republic of China's (PRC) annexation of Tibet.
- The balance of power will shift massively in favour of China.

### What role India needs to play in context of Tibet?

1. Ensure that China does not consolidate its hold over Tibet.
2. China's insecurities about the loyalties of ethnic Tibetans about the external legitimacy of its annexation will make harder to actively pursue territorial ambitions in the Himalayas.
3. Tibetan aspirations for autonomy or freedom from Chinese rule.
4. Ensure that senior lamas of all sects of Tibetan Buddhism, including the Dalai and Karmapa, remain free to pursue their religion and politics.
5. India should not accept the legitimacy of the **Golden Urn process** and China's self-arrogated authority to recognize religious reincarnations.
6. India is hosting the largest population of ethnic Tibetans outside their homeland. Hence, the next incarnation of the Dalai Lama can be from Tibetan residing in India.
7. **India's Tibet policy should concern itself with shaping:**
  - How the Tibetan people conduct politics.
  - The existence of credible, legitimate spiritual and political leadership outside China's control.

India needs to change its policy of incoherence towards Tibet and bring purposeful policy with substantive actions.

### 36. From peace to conflict Prevention

Source: [The Hindu](#)

#### Gs2: India – China Relations

**Context:** Recently, China and India have agreed over **five point consensus** to conclude CBMs (Confidence building measures) to maintain and enhance peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

#### What are the Major Clashes/wra/face-offs between India and China?

- 1962 war
- Clashes at Nathu La in 1967,
- Occupation of a post in Sumdorong Chu Valley by China in 1986.
- After the 1962 war, the India-China border was loosely controlled by both sides. It has a sparse deployment of troops.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- The China Study Group was established in 1976. It gave clarity to India's claims by laying down the patrolling points and guiding the scope of military activity along the LAC.
- Depsang intrusion in 2013.
- Intrusion at Chumar in 2014.
- 2017 Doklam standoff.
- Clashes in Ladakh

### **What are the steps have been taken to resolve border issues between India and China?**

#### **1993 India-China Agreement:**

- India Accepted the term LAC in this agreement. However, there was no clarity as to where this line lay on the ground.
- **Differing perceptions:** The ambiguity regarding LAC has forced India to adopt a **policy of appeasement** on the LAC. It called for creating a group of diplomatic and military experts for "resolution of differences between the two sides on the alignment of the line of actual control". Abstain from the use of force to settle the boundary issue. Principle of mutual and equal security: Reduce military forces along the line of actual control.

#### **Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity:**

- **Chinese occupation 1986:** It sparked realisation on both sides that the boundary issue needs to be settled and some mechanism must be evolved to keep peace along the LAC.
- After PM visit to Beijing in 1988, both sides came up with Confidence building measures and some of the recommendations were incorporated in the agreement.

#### **1996 Agreement on Confidence-Building Measures in the Military Field Along the Line of Actual Control:**

- Reduce or limiting military forces to minimum levels.
- Limit the deployment of major armaments such as tanks, artillery guns, and missiles to mutually agreed levels.

#### **2005 protocol on Modalities for the Implementation of Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field:**

- Confidence-building measures in the event of face-off between two militaries.
- Expand the mechanism of border meeting points.
- No mention of a reduction in military forces.

### **What are the reasons behind increased number of clashes?**

- **Unimplemented agreements:** unimplemented aspects of the agreements, combined with a shift in military posture by both sides, has led to an erosion of confidence-building measures.
- **Differences in the alignment of the LAC:** Some maps were exchanged of central sector but differences over the Western sector are not resolved. Also, the agreement on reducing military forces along the LAC to the minimum was not seriously implemented.
- **Faulty approach:** India perceived Pakistan as major security threat. However, many Military Operations Directorate stated that in about 15 years, India's primary adversary would be China.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.



- **Infrastructure development on Indian side:** for example, building 73 strategic roads along the LAC, two new divisions were raised to strengthen deployment in Arunachal Pradesh, additional formations deployment in Ladakh and raising of a Mountain Strike Corps for the Northern border.
- Frequent face-offs weakened the protocols. It led to complete loss of trust.

Five-point consensus is a good step forward but India should now focus more on conflict prevention.

### 37. Cancer burden in India

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Health

**Context:** In order to reduce India's cancer burden, the country needs to focus on early detection, programmatic and policy solutions.

#### What is the status of cancer in India and what are its causes?

- India recorded **13.9 lakh cancer cases in August 2020**, according to the reports of the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Cancer Registry Programme (NCDIR)**.
- **Steady rise in cancer cases:** India's cancer burden increased 2.6 times between 1990 to 2016 and deaths due to cancer doubled, according to 2017 report.
- **Late detection:** almost two-thirds of these cancer cases are at late stages.
- **Common cancers in men:** Cancers found are mostly of the lung, oral cavity, stomach and oesophagus.
- **Common cancers in women:** Cancers found are mostly of the breast, cervix, ovary, and gall bladder.
- **Risk factors:** Tobacco use (in all forms) is a major avoidable risk factor for the development of cancer in 27 per cent of cancer cases.
- Other important risk factors include use of alcohol, inappropriate diet, low physical activity, obesity and pollution.

#### What is cancer occurrence and what are the steps that can be taken to help cancer patients?

- **Cancer occurrence:** It is a complex interplay of host and environmental determinants, which makes it difficult to predict it at an individual level.
- Nearly **50-60 per cent of cancer cases can be avoided** by tackling the known risk factors effectively.
- **A multi-sectoral approach:** community empowerment with the help of government, private practitioners and civil society to increase health literacy and promote certain behaviour can go a long way in reducing potential risk factors.
- **Improved awareness:** In order to prevent the stigma attached to the disease, awareness about the disease needs to be increased.
- **Strengthening of health systems:** In order to get greater access to screening and vaccination, early detection, timely and affordable treatment, the health systems need to be improved and strengthened.

#### What is the importance of data?

1. The information collected through **the national cancer registry programme has been used effectively over the years to advocate for better access to screening, early detection, referral, treatment and comforting care services.**
2. **The data has also helped shape cancer research in India**, which is of crucial importance to guide our efforts on cancer prevention and control.

3. **Making cancer a notifiable disease:** This could be one of the ways to help drive this research further by providing greater access to accurate, relevant data that can drive policy decisions.

**What are the improvements and schemes introduced by the government?**

1. **Sustainable development goal:** India is aiming to achieve a one-third reduction in deaths caused by cancer by 2030 and it has made considerable progress.
2. **Improvements:** The country has improved in areas such as personal hygiene, which are distant drivers of cancer.
3. **Government programmes:** Ayushman bharat, swachh bharat abhiyan, poshan abhiyaan, pradhan mantri janaushadhi pariyojana.
4. Initiatives such as **FSSAI's new labelling and display regulations and drug price control** can encourage inter-sectoral and multi-sectoral action.
5. Some other initiatives include national health policy, the national tobacco control programme, and the national programme for prevention and control of cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

**Way forward**

- Reducing cancer is prerequisite for addressing social and economic inequity, stimulating economic growth and accelerating sustainable development.
- Emphasis should be on the inclusivity in thinking and action for equitable solutions that can reduce the impact of cancer across all socio-economic levels of the country.

**38. Malnutrition in India**

**Source-** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus-** GS 2 - Issues relating to poverty and hunger

**Context-** Malnutrition amongst the poorest in India remains high despite economic growth and government interventions.

**What is Poshan Maah campaign?**

**Poshan Maah-** It includes a month-long activities [during the month of September] focused on antenatal care, optimal breastfeeding, anemia, growth monitoring, girls education, diet, right age of marriage, hygiene and sanitation and eating healthy (food fortification). The campaign comes under the Poshan Abhiyan scheme.

**Poshan Abhiyan** - It also called as the National Nutrition Mission, it is Government of India's flagship programme to improve nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

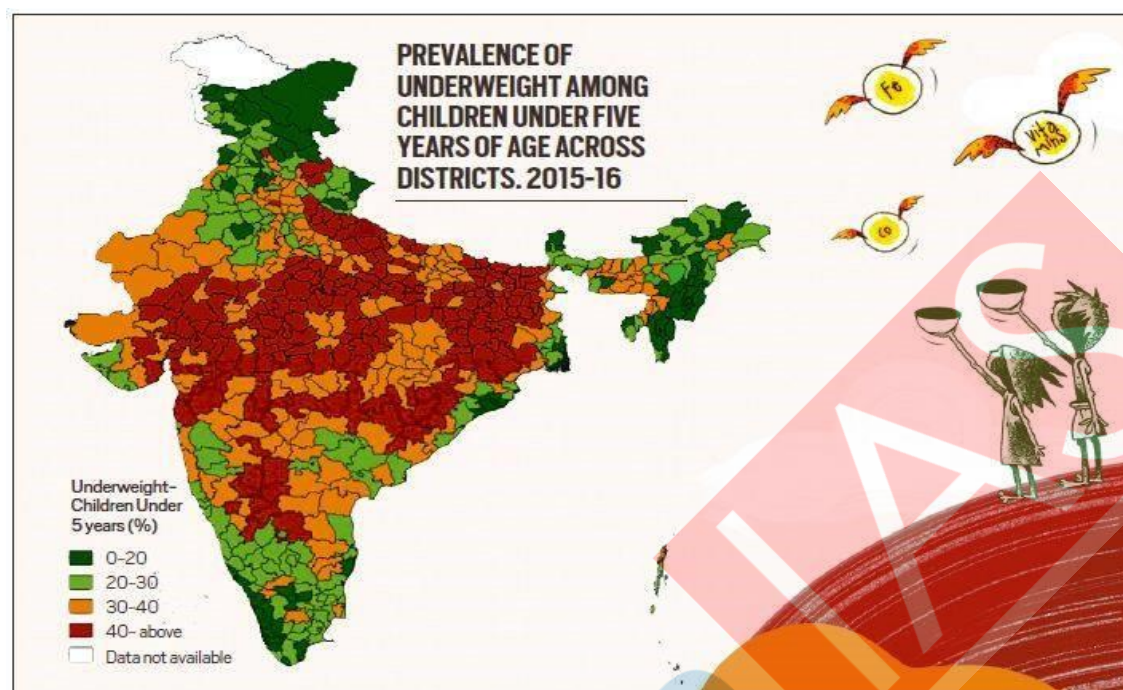
**Implemented by-** Ministry of Women and Child Development.

**Aim-** To reduce stunting, underweight and low birth weight each by 2% per year and anemia among young children, adolescents and women each by 3% per year until 2022.

**How deep is the issue of malnutrition amongst children below the age of five years?**

- a. India accounted for 28 percent of the world's stunted children (low height-for-age) less than five years of age, and 43 per cent of the world's wasted children (low weight-for-height) in 2019.
- b. As a proportion of India's own population, around 14 per cent were undernourished during 2017-19.
- c. As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS, 2015-16), the proportion of underweight and stunted children was as high as 35.8 per cent and 38.4 per cent respectively.

The following map represents prevalence of underweight among children less than five years of age across India-



**What are the key reasons behind massive malnutrition in India?**

- a. **Lack of women's higher Education-** Women's education has a multiplier effect on the child's feeding practice and the sanitation facility. Access and utilization of prenatal and postnatal health care services also play a significant role in curbing under nutrition among children.

**Reasons for lower rate in female higher education in India-**

- a. Lack of basic facilities in school infrastructure such as separate toilets for girls.
- b. Distance between the school and home, are major factors for higher dropout rates among girls.
- c. **Monoculture agriculture practice-**
  - Food-based safety nets in India focused on increasing food production, particularly staples (rice and wheat).
  - This led to lower production and consumption of indigenous traditional crops, impacting food and nutrition security in the process.
  - Farmers are not encouraged and incentivized for agricultural diversification.
- d. **Economic inequality-** One of the major causes for malnutrition in India is economic inequality. Due to the low social status of population, their diet often lacks in both quality and quantity.
- e. **Lax implementation-**
  - Providing nutritious food to the country's children is more a matter of political will and effective policy implementation at the grassroots level.
  - Lacunae at policy level- There is a lack of real-time data that brings all these factors together to show the extent of India's malnutrition.

**What are the possible solutions to tackle malnutrition problem?**

- **WASH in schools** - State governments need to promote sanitation in schooling via the provision of separate sanitation facilities for girls in schools.
- **Reducing drop-out rates** - Initiatives like the distribution of bicycles to girls in secondary and high schools could help reduce the dropout rates among girls.
- **Upskilling Aanganwadi workers** - Community participation via anganwadis can bring significant improvements in child-caring practices and antenatal care fothrough awareness programmes.
- **Diversified food basket** - Government need to provide a more diversified food basket, including coarse grains, millets, pulses and bio-fortified staples to improve the nutritional status of pre-school children and women of reproductive age.
- **More research and innovation** - The Harvest-Plus programme of CGIAR can work with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to grow new varieties of nutrient-rich staple food crops.

**Way forward-**

For POSHAN Maah to contribute towards the holistic nourishment of children and a malnutrition free India by 2030, the government needs to address the multi-dimensional determinants of malnutrition on an urgent basis. Moreover, fortification of government approved commodities within the social safety net programmes can improve nutritional outcomes.

**39. For a different yardstick: on 'Doing Business' report**

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS2: Important International Institutions, agencies and fora - their Structure, Mandate.

**Context:** Recently, the World Bank has paused the publication of its 'Doing Business' report because of statistical irregularities.

**What does the index indicate?**

- The index estimates the cost to business from regulations across areas including dealing with construction permits and paying taxes.
- The rankings encourage countries to compete even on cutting vital regulations on health and environment.

**What are the shortcomings of the index?**

- Shortcomings:** The World Bank's independent evaluation group (2008) and an external independent panel (2013) together flagged 15 shortcomings in the index, many of which are still relevant.
- Lack of transparency and objectivity:** For instance, questions have been raised on Russia's leap in ranking from 120 out of 190 countries in 2012 to 62 in 2015. The survey excludes the informal sector. Curiously, low scores for China and India were associated with high growth in FDI.
- Sidesteps societal costs:** Survey ignores the impact on health, ecology, worker protection and right to information. China and India improved their scores sharply in 2019 and 2020, though the world's first and third largest emitters increased carbon effluents significantly.
- Slack business safeguards produce tragic results:** The 2013 collapse of the Rana Plaza garment factory in Bangladesh resulted from slipshod factory regulation. Brazil, India, and the U.S. have slashed environmental standards.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- e. **Weakening of standards during pandemic:** India's Parliament is considering an Environment Impact Assessment, the draft of which is filled with dilutions of the environmental law.
- f. **Based on presumption that less regulation is better:** The 2008 global financial crisis resulted from too little banking supervision. Also, Climate change is driven by lax emission control in China, the U.S., etc.
- g. **One size fits all approach:** The survey assumes that lower tax rates are best, which overlooks each country's fiscal requirements. For example, Maldives and Qatar scored high on paying taxes, but are not role models for India as most of their revenue relies on unique assets.
- h. **Neglects other indicators:** such as indicators of infrastructure, entrepreneurship, and competition.
- i. **Supports lighter rules and taxation to encourage shifts from informal to formal sectors:** But formalisation as such may not create jobs and cut obstacles to starting a business if economy is facing severe capital shortage and a low-skilled workforce.
- j. **Unwieldy:** the survey is overloaded with too many variables.

### What needs to be done?

1. **Workers' well-being and safety:** Changes to labour laws, especially during the pandemic.
2. **Strengthen RTI:** Global lessons warn India of the pitfalls of diluting the 2005 Right to Information Act.
3. **Revamped indicator that rewards:** A revamped indicator should reward investments in workers' skills, health and safety, low polluting activities and climate resilience.

The need of the hour is to blend liberalisation of unhelpful barriers with fortification of needed regulations.

### 40. India's geopolitical interest

**Source-** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus-** GS 2- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**Context-** India's foreign policy to suit the demands of the present.

#### **Background:**

India's engagement with foreign countries has traditionally been focused on maintaining good relations with all the major powers in the region and avoiding involvement in their internal and intra-regional conflicts. However, the current geopolitical situations demand a significant change in India's foreign policy.

### What are the various Middle East peace deals?

- **USA-Taliban peace deal-**
- **USA's commitments** - US and Taliban signed an agreement for bringing Peace to Afghanistan, which will enable the US and NATO to withdraw troops in the next 14 months.
- **Taliban's commitments-** Taliban will not allow any of its members, other individuals or groups, including al-Qaeda, to use the soil of Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies.
- **Removal of sanctions-** UN sanctions on Taliban leaders to be removed by three months and US sanctions by August.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- **Ceasefire-** The agreement states ceasefire will be simply an item on the agenda when intra-Afghan talks start and indicate actual ceasefire will come with the completion of an Afghan political agreement.
- **UAE-Israel Peace deal- The Abraham Accords**
- 2. **Normalized relations-** Israel and the United Arab Emirates just agreed to a historic deal to normalize their long-strained relations.
- 3. **Importance-** This move is significant because, with the exception of Jordan and Egypt, Israel does not have diplomatic relations with Gulf Arab states owing to its long-standing conflict with Palestinians.
- 4. **Terms of the accord-** The agreement comes after Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to suspend plans to annex parts of the West Bank, one that had been bitterly criticized by these Gulf Arab states, Europe and a few other countries around the world.

How should India respond with the Middle East major powers?

- **Understand geopolitical landscape of the both peace deals-**
- Taliban could not be defeated on the battlefield and must be accepted as a legitimate political force.
- Need to accept the contradiction between Arabs and Israelis is no longer the dominant one in the region.
- **Arabia's enduring importance for the Subcontinent's geopolitics-**
- **Widening a horizon-** India needs to pay more attention to the unfolding realignments in the Middle East, especially between the Arabs and non-Arab states like Iran, Turkey and Israel rather than only focusing on ensuring oil supplies and promoting manpower exports.
- **Paradox of US power-**
- US political and diplomatic weight that facilitated the formal dialogue between Kabul and the Taliban and also led the efforts for reconciliation between Israel and Gulf Arabs. India needs to find its own space in such talks.
- **Aiding economic integration-**
- India should extend support to Arab economic integration, intra-Arab political reconciliation and the strengthening of regional institutions.
- India's needs to make strong ties with all major players in the region to achieve its geopolitical interest.

### Way forward-

In the current situation, it is essential for India to maintain its strong links with the Afghan government, build and support its traditional Afghan allies and open lines of communication with the Taliban. The UAE-Israel deal opens up new opportunities for India to play a much larger role in the regional security and stability in the Gulf.

### 41. NEP and socially and educationally backward

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Education

**Context:** NEP 2020 fails to cater to the needs of rural India's marginalised majority.

#### What is NEP and what are the issues with the report?

- **The National Education policy 2020 (NEP)** is a layered document that recommends significant structural changes to the education system.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- The NEP claims to **“bridge gaps in access, participation and learning outcomes”**. However, it overlooks the fact that poor quality education marks and ruins the lives of rural citizens.
- **Neglecting to engage with equality of educational opportunity and equality in quality education:**
- It **fails to address the growing school differentiation** in which government schools are now mainly attended by children of disadvantaged castes and Adivasi groups, while the private schools caters to the desires of the more advantaged castes.
- School differentiation **defies the idea of education as a leveller** and the possibility of schooling acting as a shared experience.
- **Growing privatisation of education along with no assurance of quality** is placing a huge burden on citizens and the report takes no notice of such trends.
- **Rural candidates are finding it increasingly difficult to gain entry into professional education.**
- The lack of fit between their degrees and the job market means that several lakhs of them find themselves both **“unemployable” and unemployed.**
- The report fails to take into account the **impact of poor-quality higher education on rural youth who are showing signs of hostility from their roots** and open to being recruited into violent anti-social activities.
- **Correspondence courses and distance education degrees have become a source of revenue generation** for universities and institutions. They are run without guarantees of quality yet it has no mention in the report.

### What are some key points that need to be added in the report?

- **Prepare youth for a global economy:** Promotion and support the teaching of “lok vidya”, and the report highlights the importance of yoga, AYUSH, and Sanskrit, which can be taught along with Artificial Intelligence, machine learning and digital learning.
- Even though, there is no scope for considering the establishment of smaller regional learning centres in which the youth can be taught a **range of revamped older knowledge systems along with newer skills and knowledge.**
- **Promoting environmental studies for local ecological restoration and conservation:** Introduction of agro-ecologies that can draw on the varied sophisticated regional agricultural knowledge and practices, reviving local health and healing traditions.
- **Recognising vernacular architectural traditions and skills, and a range of artisan and craftsmanship** to use local resources and thereby generate both employment and revive regional economies.

### Way forward

Such measures can create a pool of skilled and employable youth who may make meaningful lives in the rural areas itself rather than become part of the tide of migrant labour whose insecure and dangerous lives were all too evident during the lockdown return migration.

#### 42. The cost of peace: on intra-Afghan talks

Source: [The Hindu](#)

##### Gs2: India and its neighbourhood

**Context:** Recently held intra-Afghan talks were held between the Taliban, Afghan government and Afghan civil society in Doha.

##### **What are the reasons behind delays in talks?**

- The talks were a key outcome of the **U.S.-Taliban and U.S.-Afghanistan agreements** signed earlier this year.
- **Composition issues:**
  - **Delays over the composition** of the Afghan negotiating team led by chief negotiator Masoom Stanekzai.
  - There were also **differences over appointments** between the former rivals, President Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, who was appointed as the head of the High Council for National Reconciliation.
  - There were even concerns over whether the all-male Taliban team would deal with the negotiating team.
- **Issue of release of prisoners:**
  - The Taliban set **pre-conditions** including the release of all its prisoners, while not accepting the basic requirement of a ceasefire.
  - The biggest obstacle was the release of more than 5,000 Taliban prisoners and about 1,000 Afghan soldiers and others held by Taliban militia.
  - Issues of release of prisoners was resolved after a Loya Jirga of representatives approved the release.

##### **What should be the aim of talks?**

- **Declare a permanent ceasefire:** To stop violence in Afghanistan that has claimed another 1,300 civilian lives in the first half of 2020.

##### **What are the challenges present before Afghanistan?**

- How to shape Afghanistan's future with Taliban?
- Whether Afghanistan can retain the constitution and political processes while bringing the insurgents into the mainstream.

##### **What is the India's stance on talks?**

- India has modified its stand, and External Affairs Minister attended the inaugural ceremony in Doha via videoconferencing.
- It was the first ever address by an Indian official at a gathering that includes the Taliban (India still maintains that Taliban is a terror group).
- India always stated that peace in Afghanistan as a result of an **"Afghan-led, Afghan owned"** process is a desirable outcome.
- Peace should not come at the cost of gains made by Afghanistan in the post-Taliban era. Talks should include democracy, institutions of governance, and the rights of minorities and women.
- The recent talks also ensured safe return of three Indian hostages, held since 2018 by the Taliban.

#### 43. Disability issues

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2- Society

**Context:** Disabled professionals in the legal world.

**What is SCC and barriers to its access?**

- iii. SCC is the only database of India which supplies the true copies of judgements accepted in Indian courts.
- iv. **SCC Online has many accessibility barriers:** Such as unlabelled links, search filters which cannot be applied with screen readers and the text of judgments being inaccessible due to security settings.

**What are the various challenges that people with disability face?**

**Two fundamental issues** that prevent the disabled from leading lives of equal dignity and productivity:

- a. **An exclusionary mindset** and
  - b. **The inability to recognise the disabled as rights-bearing citizens, entitled to demand fair and equal treatment from every service provider, public or private.**
- **The Supreme Court of India held last year, in V. Surendra Mohan vs. State Of Tamil Nadu:** Tamil Nadu's policy, of reserving the post of civil judge only for people whose percentage of blindness does not exceed 40-50%, was rational and reasonable.
  - It ruled that a judicial officer has to possess a reasonable amount of sight and hearing to discharge her functions.
  - It accepted the claim that impaired vision makes it impossible to perform the functions required of judicial officers'.
  - **The misconception in this line of thinking:** A blind person is as much entitled as anyone else to freely choose what profession they wish to pursue.
  - But, it starts on the idea that the existing ways of doing things will always remain the way they are, so tough luck to those whom they exclude.
  - **The case of B.K. Pavitra vs. Union of India:** The Supreme Court held that if the benchmark of efficiency is grounded on equal access, our outcomes will reflect the commitment of the Constitution to produce a just social order.
  - **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016:** Section 46 of the Act requires all service providers, public or private, to comply with the rules on accessibility framed by the Central Government within a period of two years from the date of their declaration. This two-year period expired in June 2019.

**Way forward**

- Each one of us should be firmly committed to the idea of implementing the two fundamental changes mentioned above.
- We should pause to reflect on what it is that makes it so hard for them to succeed in the first place and what we can do to reverse this state of affairs.

**44. Parliament and its panels**

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** Gs2: Parliament and State Legislatures—Structure, Functioning, Conduct of Business, Powers & Privileges and Issues Arising out of these.

**Context:** There were speculation in the media that the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha is keen on amending the rules to give Department-related Standing Committees a fixed tenure of two years.

**What are DSCs (Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees)?**

- The Department-related Standing Committees were constituted in 1993.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees have a tenure of one year.
- There **are 24 Department-related Standing Committees**, each with a membership of 31 (10 of the Rajya Sabha and 21 of the Lok Sabha).
- Ministers cannot be members of these committees.
- They can accommodate 240 members of the Rajya Sabha and 504 members of the Lok Sabha.

### How tenures were fixed?

- **No fixed tenure in Rajya Sabha:** The standard prescription relating to the constitution of those committees' states that the **committee shall hold office until a new committee is nominated** and that the casual vacancies in the committee shall be filled in by the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
- **One-year tenure for important committees in Lok Sabha:** According to the Lok Sabha rules, Most of the committees have a tenure of one year, **except a few** for which no tenure has been prescribed.

### What does the rule say?

- According to **the Lok Sabha Rules and the Rajya Sabha Rules**, the term of office of the "members" of the committees shall not exceed one year.
- It is the **term of office of the members** and not that of the committees per se that is one year.
- The tenurial issue has to be looked at against the backdrop of the fact that the **Rajya Sabha itself undergoes partial biennial renewal**, since one-third of its members retire every two years by virtue of clause (1) of **Article 83** of the Constitution.
- As far as the Lok Sabha is concerned, it has a fixed tenure of five years, unless sooner dissolved. Given these facts, Vice President's suggestion is in consonance with the biennial partial reconstitution of the Rajya Sabha.

### What are the challenges in changing the tenure?

- **Mismatch between election schedule:** There is mismatch between the election schedule of the Rajya Sabha (every two years) and the Lok Sabha (every five years)
- **Concurrence of both houses:** Only Rajya Sabha cannot amend the tenure alone. Since these are joint committees of the two Houses of Parliament, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha also has to concur.

### What amendment are needed in the rules of the houses?

- **Different tenures:** Tenure of members can be two years for the Rajya Sabha members and for the Lok Sabha members, it may be coterminous with its life. Hence tenure of members can be amended and it should be in consonance with the tenure of the Houses.
- **Role of Presiding officer:** The Rules could also provide that casual vacancies may be filled in by the Presiding Officers. Presiding officers should also be empowered to reconstitute the membership of their respective Houses in the committees.
- **Members should not be forced to do double duty:** once a member is nominated to a committee, based on his expertise and/or preference, he should be allowed to continue till he retires or discontinues the membership in order that the committee is able to benefit from his experience and expertise.

There is a need to rethink the tenurial prescription for reconstitution of Department-related Standing Committees and make it more effective.

#### 45. The Independence of the Supreme Court

**Source-** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.

**Context-** Some people have confused judicial independence with the tendency to strike down legislation or executive action.

##### What is the role of Judiciary?

- The Judiciary is the system of courts that interpret and applies law in legal cases in the name of the state.
- The function of the judiciary is to be accountable by dispensing justice.
- Judicial independence goes hand in hand with judicial accountability.
- Judicial independence is one of the basic features of the Constitution of India.
- It is the guardian and protector of our fundamental rights.

##### What are the recent examples which demonstrate how the Judiciary stood contrary to the Government?

In Indian Constitution there is feature of Separation of Powers among the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. So, that each of them may work without any interference from the outside. The following are the examples of judiciary independent verdicts that were not favourable to the government-

1. Supreme Court struck down the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC).
2. Supreme Court lifted the ban from Goa mining sector.
3. Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the Aadhaar, while affecting the then-nascent fintech industry.
4. Supreme Court struck down the Reserve Bank of India's framework resolution plan for debt recovery which was proposed to ease the pains related to stranded assets.
5. The quashing of a Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC) appointment.
6. The quashing of spectrum allocation or striking down allocation of coal mines.

Thus, observing the rule of law and calling out illegality is not bias. These verdicts were not a political decision instead they were an act of calling out the loot of India's resources.

##### How does the government intervene with the judiciary and violates separation of power?

Some politicians try to influence the independent feature of the judiciary in the name of "legitimate criticism. Such as-

- Issuing threats such as impeachment for deemed "misbehaviour".
- Imputing motives to judges for their decisions.
- Referring to the judge's caste.
- Saying that judiciary was subservient to the government.
- Toeing the party's lines or agendas in the judiciary's actions.

**For Instances-** The following are the prime examples of the government using judiciary for ulterior motives and creating doubt where none exists-

- a. Justice Loya case.
- b. Public Interest Litigation on Assam's detention centres.



### Way Forward

The Supreme Court is an independent organ of the state, not a political organ. The need of the time is that people should be able to distinguish between a narrative of distrust being peddled for personal and political gains from reality. It is the duty of the court to observe the rules and laws while giving the verdicts and under no circumstances appease the aspirations of political proxies or lawyers for their personal ambitions. The Court should rule out strict laws to deal with the attacks on its integrity and independence.

### 46. Growing crisis of Indian federalism

Source- [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

**Context-** Federalism and India's democratic nationalism.

#### What were the features of nationalism before India achieved Independence?

##### 1. Single state based on unified culture-

- The idea that a community with a strongly unified culture must have a single state of its own, bifurcated into two nationalisms one for Muslims and another for Hindus:
- **For example**, for Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League, Hindus and Muslims were separate nations and needed states of their own.
- **Consequences-** The primacy of Hindu identity potentially had adverse consequences not only for religious but also linguistic minorities, including those Hindus who viewed their mother tongue as important as their religion. For Hindu nationalists, Hindu identity permanently outweighed being Tamil or Punjabi.

##### 2. State based on common culture-

- **Historical source** - Common culture was defined by shared historical experience, the struggle against British colonial rule, and developed through an interpenetration of ideas emanating from different cultural sources.
- It is secular; composite content is qualitatively different from Hindu or Muslim nationalisms.
- **Similarity with Hindu nationalism-** Common culture's basic form is not unlike Hindu nationalism. It too conceives common culture in terms of a strong idea of unity that marginalises or excludes other particular identities.

##### 3. State based on common culture which belongs to everyone-

- **Coalescent nationalism-** Communities nourished by distinct, territorially concentrated regional cultures have the capacity to design states of their own as also educational, legal, economic, and other institutions. They possess self-governing rights.
- They give up independent national aspirations, seeing themselves as constituents of a larger, equally significant common culture with another state that belongs to everyone.
- **Conflicts in common culture-** Occasional conflicts between the common culture of the central state and distinct cultures of constituent states are admitted but mechanisms to prevent them are also created. This may be called "a coalescent nationalism consistent with a fairly strong linguistic federalism".

#### What were the views of Jawaharlal Nehru about ethno- religious nationalism?

- A federation structured along ethno-linguistic lines might tempt politicians to mobilise permanently on the basis of language and divert attention from issues of material well-being.

- Like religious identities, it might 'freeze' linguistic identities and increase the likelihood of inter-ethnic violence, encourage separatism and eventually lead to India's break up.

**Which ideology is adopted as the official ideology with the rise of the Constitution and what are the reasons to do so?**

**Ideology-**

1. **Civic Nationalism-** When the Constitution came into force in 1950, India adopted unitary, civic nationalism as its official ideology.
2. **Coalescent Nationalism-**
  - After some time India shifted its allegiance slowly to a system of states that rejected the wholesale absorption of ethnic identities into larger civic identity.
  - Soon a commission was set up to reorganise states on a linguistic basis. However, commission argued that justice requires the creation of partially self-governing states that recognise all major linguistic groups.

**Reasons to adopt-**

1. **Civic Nationalism-**
  - Though a federal arrangement was accepted, the second tier of government was justified in functional terms not on ethical grounds of the recognition of group cultures.
  - The security and unity of India were cited as the primary reason.
  - A unitary mind-set shaped by the experience of a centralised colonial state was revived.
  - A special commission concluded that language-based provinces were 'not in the larger interests of the Indian nation'.
2. **Coalescent Nationalism-**
  - Creation of regional state governments improves administrative efficiency, deepens democracy, and alleviates anxieties of regional minorities induced by fear of linguistic domination.
  - Only federalism can block language-based majoritarianism, contain conflicts and strengthen Indian nationalism.
  - Only coalescent nationalism creatively combines claims of unity with claims of recognition of diverse cultures.

**Way Forward**

Centre needs to work on resolving the problems by deepening not abandoning coalescent nationalism. It should make sure that regions are treated respectfully and norms of democratic functioning works accordingly, only then the entire polity will work smoothly.

**47. New strategy needed to Counter China**

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** Gs2: India and its Neighbourhood

**Context:** In the wake of rising Chinese aggression across the LAC, a new strategy combining diplomatic and military means is needed to counter China.

**How it started?**

- China in March-April started to concentrate troops opposite Indian posts in Aksai China at Galwan, Finger posts and Depsang.
- By May-early June, they had consolidated close to 40,000 troops and accompanying artillery and armour.

### What are the different views regarding border clash?

#### 1<sup>st</sup> School of thought:

- **Territory expansion:** The Chinese exercise was a territorial snatch in Aksai Chin, which they believe is entirely theirs.
- **To teach a lesson to India:** India's firm stand on not conceding Aksai chin is seen as aggressive attitude. Indian Survey of India maps shows the entire Aksai Chin as Indian territory up to the **Johnson-Ardagh line**.

### What is the Flaw in this interpretation?

- **Unresolved questions:** China has not clarified what is their version of LAC and talks between NSA and Chinese counterparts are also not made public. It shows China want this issue to be shifted to next generation.

### What are implications of recent border skirmishes?

- **China Gained territory:** Militarily, the recent mobilisation of 40,000 troops, artillery and armour has gained approx. 800 metres at the western LAC.
- **For India:** Due to the recent expansion China has forced India to move forward three divisions to the western LAC (Line of Actual control). It is unlikely that China had thought of border clash for a tiny extension of their LAC.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> school of thought:

- **To lay down rules of world governance:** China is growing into perhaps the most powerful nation on earth, overtaking the actual US GDP by 2030.
- **India Standing against China:** India contest their entire southern border. India has also refused to join the Belt and Road initiative.
- **India seen as rivals:** India is also trying to create an anti-China maritime coalition and compete with them for influence in South East Asia and Africa. India is unsupportive of crackdown on Taiwan, Hong Kong and Xinjiang and moving ever closer to the United States.

### Possible Implications of this interpretation:

- **Chinese political thought:** Chinese don't follow Voltaire, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Descartes, Diderot, Locke, Kant and Spinoza, which can lead to the concept of establishing a democratic secular republic like USA. **Secularism, democracy and the rights of man will play no part in Chinese foreign policy**
- **Domination:** Chinas follows a **hands-off policy** only with nations which are paying its tribute to China such as North Korea.

### What India needs to do?

- **Deployment of troops to defend border:** If Chinese intention is to capture Indian territory, then India needs to strengthen border security.
- **Evolve new diplomatic and military strategy:** If the Chinese intention is to "teach us a lesson" or make us submissive. For example; strategy in India Ocean
- **Focus on larger picture:** After Galwan and Pangong Tso India needs to clearly approach the larger picture from a position of tactical inferiority.
- **Develop punitive capabilities:** India needs to develop punitive capability, which it seems could only be in the Indian Ocean.

China wants India to accept Chinese superiority which is Chinese trait. India should not talk from the position of inferiority as it will not lead to equitable solution.

#### 48. Disability issues

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Society

**Context:** The differently-abled community offers a massive potential that can be tapped with the right steps.

**Why was United Nations created? What are its values?**

- **The United Nations (UN) was created to restore faith in the dignity and worth of humans**, and in the equal rights of women and men, almost 75 years ago.
- **Its fundamental values** suggested that in order to live sustainably, we must practice tolerance and endorse the values of equality.
- **Staying true to UN values:** It is important to bring marginalized communities from the peripheries back into the development mainstream.
- **Importance of counteracting the cycle of oppression:** it is essential to achieve the greater equality which was promised many years ago.

**How disabilities make life difficult for the affected?**

- **Largest global minority:** According to the World Health Organization, nearly 15% of the world's population has some or the other form of disability, making disabled people the largest global minority.
- Continuous discrimination denies them equal access to education, employment, healthcare and other opportunities.
- **Capabilities considered essential for human development:** The stigma attached to persons with disabilities, compounded by a lack of understanding of their rights, makes it difficult for them to attain their valued “functioning”.
- **High risk of gender-based abuse:** Women and girls with disabilities are at a higher risk of experiencing sexual and other forms of gender-based violence.
- About 80% of the estimated one billion **persons with disabilities worldwide live in developing countries.**
- **73.6% of persons living with disabilities in India are outside the labour force.** Those with mental disabilities, women with disabilities and those in rural areas are the most neglected, according to the International Labour Organization.

**What were the steps taken to deal with the worst-hit group (the disables) during the pandemic?**

- **The COVID-19 pandemic has had its worst impact on marginalized communities.**
- For instance, students with disabilities have found it extremely difficult to access remote learning through digital platforms.
- **The UNESCO's 2019 State of the Education Report of India** acknowledges that **inclusive education is complex to implement** and requires a fine understanding of the diverse needs of children and their families across different contexts.
- **UNESCO joined its partners in the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network to raise awareness** about the need to put in place strategies to lessen the impact of school closures on learners with disabilities.
- **The implementation of the groundbreaking National Education Policy 2020** provides a historic opportunity to utilise the immense potential.
- India has made considerable progress in terms of putting in **place a strong legal framework and a range of programmes that have improved enrolment rates of children with disabilities in schools.**

### Way forward

- Further measures are needed to ensure quality education for every child to achieve the targets of Agenda 2030, the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goal 4.
- With the right investments, youth with disabilities in India can also be the country's largest asset.

### 49. QUAD grouping - India, Japan, US and Australia.

Source - [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus – GS 2- Bilateral**, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**Context-** As India faces China's challenge over the ground situation at the Line of Actual Control [LAC], the Quadrilateral will be useful but it will not be the answer to the challenges India is facing.

#### What is QUAD grouping?

1. **The quadrilateral formation includes-** Japan, India, United States and Australia.
2. **Purpose-** All four nations find a common ground of being the democratic nations and common interests of unhindered maritime trade and security.

#### What is the significance of QUAD?

1. India can use these partnerships for internal balancing and to build India's own capabilities.
2. QUAD is an opportunity for like-minded countries to share notes and collaborate on projects of mutual interest.
3. Members share a vision of an open and free Indo-Pacific.
4. Discuss cooperation on counter-terrorism, mentoring, assistance in disaster relief, airtime security, cooperation, development, finance and cyber security efforts etc.
5. QUAD can shape the future balance of power, even the present balance of power and try to restore deterrence in Asia, in the Indo-Pacific.

#### Is QUAD grouping helping India to counter China's aggregation at the LAC?

- No, India's presence in the QUAD will not deter china or the PLA from the transgressing the boundary as QUAD is not an alliance and will be fairly of limited use.
- However, to some extent, India may get support in matters like intelligence inputs or credible supplies of military hardware, but largely on its own when it comes to dealing with the Chinese challenge along the land border.

#### What are the different border hostilities china is involved in?

Beijing has been acting assertively on multiple fronts-

1. **India- China border conflict** - India's brawl with China in Ladakh's Galwan valley began as a military standoff in early May.
2. **China- Bhutan border conflict-** In 2017, ties between Bhutan and China flared up when Beijing tried to construct a road in Doklam, to which India objected. This resulted in a military standoff between two nuclear- armed nations that lasted for about 2 months.
3. **China- Nepal border conflict-** China's state- run Television Network claimed the Mount Everest as part of China and not Nepal.
4. **China's Maritime Conflict-** [with Taiwan, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam and Japan] - The South China Sea is one of the most important maritime



trade routes with annual trade worth of \$ 3.5 trillion. Due to the deep resources, China has been claiming the waters based on “historic rights”.

**How does India’s membership in multilateral grouping like SCO, BRICS and RIC work with being part of the four-nation Quadrilateral?**

Multilateral grouping like RIC, BRICS and SCO provides a good rationale for more proactive engagement in the QUAD setting.

India’s motives for being a part of multilateral grouping are-  
Keep Russia on its side for defence and strategic reasons.

India does not want to leave a platform to the rivals [China and Pakistan].

These are the only few platforms to resolve or try to manage some contradiction with rivals.

**Way forward-**

India has to work with the like-minded countries, and that includes the U.S., Japan, Australia and many other countries. At the same time, need to recognize that what could achieve through the QUAD is limited; it’s still work in progress. So, much more effort needs to be put in, to flesh out the idea of QUAD and to see how it can become an effective lateral grouping.

**50. Unilateral response of federal governance during Covid-19**

**Source-** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

**Context-** India’s response to the Covid- 19 pandemic reflects the power, problems and potential of federalism in the country’s polity.

**What was the recent debate on the distribution of powers under the Seventh Schedule of Constitution?**

**Debate-** If the Union government should contribute for health because it is nationally important, why should states not contribute for defence?

**What is the prime focus of centre and state in response to the pandemic?**

**Centre-**

- Achieving economies of scale in vaccine procurement,
- Knowledge production for setting standards and
- Guidelines for the states and mitigating inter-state externalities.

**State-**

- **Health crisis-** States continue to play the dominant role in the execution of the actual response to the health crisis. In other words, the fundamental principles of comparative advantage prevailed, but they were organised on the basis of certain functional roles and responses.

Thus, in spite of health being a state subject, the response to collective threats linked to the subject required some kind of organisation of federal responsibilities on a functional basis.

**How can coordination between Centre and States be sustained on a long-term basis?**

1. A typical response is to recommend shifting subjects to the Concurrent List to enable an active role for the Centre.
  - This is how the High-Level Group, constituted by the 15th Finance Commission, recommended shifting health from the State to the Concurrent List.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- A similar recommendation was made earlier by the Ashok Chawla Committee for water.
- 2. States needs to play a dominant role during such pandemic and the Centre must expand its role beyond the mitigation of inter-state externalities and address the challenges of security and sustainability.

### **For Instance-**

- The GST reforms are the most recent instance of such reworking of the Centre- state roles for a greater and collective goal.

Thus, the country's response to the pandemic has shown that carving out roles through consensus can address new challenges to federal governance.

### **Way Forward**

The country needs consensus- building between the centre and the states. It has to allow sustained dialogue and deliberation. It is the time to revisit the proposal for an elevated and empowered Inter- State Council.

### **51. Data insecurity**

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** Gs2: Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency and Accountability

**Context:** Recently, the government has set up an expert committee under the **National Cyber Security Coordinator** to examine the implications of digital surveillance on the privacy and personal data of Indian citizens.

#### **Why committee was set up?**

- **Recent cause:** An investigation by The Indian Express revealed how a Shenzhen-based big data firm, with links to the Chinese government, was systematically tracking over 10,000 prominent Indian citizens
- **Digitalisation:** The world is increasingly digital world where large quantities of seemingly unrelated data can be amassed and then deployed for other purposes.
- **Unrestricted use of personal data:** Personal data being compromised and finding its way into jurisdictions over which there is no control.
- **Era of "actionable intelligence":** The scale at which the targeted tracking of Indian citizens is being undertaken from politicians, to bureaucrats, industrialists and civil society alludes to the possibility of this threat materialising.
- **To protect democracy:** In a liberal open democracy, data security concerns should be articulated and addressed in a transparent manner.
- **Right to privacy:** In the age of data there is need that the individual concerned have say over the flow of information.
- **Data security:** The concerns over data security are also in line with apprehensions that led to the Indian government's decision to ban Chinese apps.
- **Global issue:** US President's stance on TikTok underlines growing concerns across the world.

#### **What the government should do?**

- The government must frame a strategy to deal with the issue of data surveillance at multiple levels.
- Adopt norms of **cyber hygiene**.
- **Enforce strict protocols** on what information key government functionaries can share on social media platforms.
- Build the **institutional capacity** required to pre-empt disinformation campaigns which the collected information could be deployed for.

Created with love ❤️ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

- **Build hybrid warfare strategy** to avoid social disharmony which discredit leadership and undermine institutions.
- Place a robust personal data protection framework with explicit provisions for seeking **consent on data sharing and for examining** and monitoring flow of information to third parties.

The necessary regulation needs to be made to protect individual rights after consulting all stakeholders and accountability must be assigned.

## 52. Gurushihya parampara and issues

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Society

**Context:** The guru-shishya relationship in Indian music has a power imbalance and is inherently prone to abuse. It needs to be demolished.

**How different are the practices in Hindustani music and its southern counterpart?**

- The shocking allegations of **sexual abuse and harassment against (late) Ramakant Gundecha and Akhilesh Gundecha** have shaken the Hindustani music space.
- The world of Hindustani music, though more modern compared to its southern cousin is actually more patriarchal **and medieval in mindset.**
- **The pedestal on which gurus are placed by Hindustani musicians** is far higher than any seat given to their counterparts in Dakshin Bharat.
- Despite all the differences and petty politics between musicians, **the “tradition” of watching each other’s back is far more prevalent in the Hindustani world.**

**What are the issues associated with the guru-shishya parampara ?**

- Like most relationships, **the guru-shishya relationship is grounded in a power imbalance, but here, crucially, the inequality is celebrated.**
- **A need to be subservient to and indeed submit to, the master** is an unspoken necessity.
- **Structurally flawed:** students are forced to commit to hours of household chores just to receive those few moments of wisdom, it is celebrated as sacrifice and commitment and endurance.
- It is also true that **abuse increases exponentially when the student comes from an economically poor or socially marginalised community.**

**What are the steps needed to be taken?**

- The system must begin **with respect for students, and recognition of their independence and rights as individuals.**
- **“Humanise” gurus:** This is vital because the power structure is naturally tilted in favour of the guru.
- The parampara that demands obedience and unquestioning regard, only because someone is a guru, needs to be demolished.
- **A problematic area in Hindustani and Carnatic music is the informality in the learning.**
- This informality is **justified on the basis that it creates a unique, unconditioned space for learning.**
- Informality can take so many forms, sometimes resulting in episodes of incredible learning, while on other occasions, there are **just demands made by the guru because he is in a position to make them.**

- There is a lot to learn beyond the school-university-class framework, but **such an arrangement cannot be an illogical, uncaring, student on-call system.**

**What are the positives in the gurushishya learning?**

- The guru-shishya parampara provides intimate learning and sharing that goes beyond the syllabus.
- There are students and teachers who share a bond that goes beyond what the university demanded of them.
- There are **stories of great gurus and famous shishyas across disciplines and geographies.**

**Way forward**

- In the guru-shishya parampara, rarely can a shishya stand up against her or his guru and hope to survive another day.
- The problem with our concretised version is that this promise of magic is used as an excuse to normalise inequality.
- The system and its core structure should be safe, respectful, and non-abusive of, students.
- Irrespective of the nature of the guru, the system should provide security and strength and empower the student emotionally and psychologically to stand on her or his own.

**53. US- Taliban Peace Pact**

**Source-** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

**Context-** The US officials and Taliban representatives have signed a final peace deal to end the United States's longest war, fought in Afghanistan.

**What is the background of US and Afghanistan war?**

- The war in Afghanistan was launched by the US in 2001 after the 9/11 attack. The US-led coalition aimed to overthrow the Taliban.
- More than 2,400 US troops have been killed during the conflict.
- About 12,000 are still stationed in the country. President Trump has promised to put an end to the conflict.

**What does the US- Taliban peace deal comprise of?**

- 1. Troops withdrawal-** US and Taliban signed an agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan, which will enable the US and NATO to withdraw troops in the next 14 months.
- 2. Taliban commitment-** The main counter-terrorism commitment by the Taliban is that Taliban will not allow any of its members, other individuals or groups, including al-Qaeda, to use the soil of Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies.
- 3. Sanctions removal-**
  - UN sanctions on Taliban leaders to be removed by three months (by May 29, 2020) and US sanctions by August 27, 2020.
  - The sanctions will be out before much progress is expected in the intra-Afghan dialogue.

4. **Prisoner release-** The US-Taliban pact says up to 5,000 imprisoned Taliban and up to 1,000 prisoners from “the other side” held by Taliban “will be released” by March 10. This process took longer than originally foreseen but has now been completed.
5. **Ceasefire-**
  - It has been identified as another potential “trouble spot”.
  - The agreement states ceasefire will be simply “an item on the agenda” when intra-Afghan talks start and indicate actual ceasefire will come with the “completion” of an Afghan political agreement.

### **What are the challenges ahead of India arising from this peace pact?**

#### **India's Dilemma**

#### **Due to the Taliban's coming to power, India faces a dilemma, between:**

- India should reconsider its current policy that a lasting political settlement in Afghanistan must come through an “Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan controlled process” (considering that the elected Afghan Government is hardly in control of the peace process).
- India might, consider the option of entering into direct talks with the Taliban. But, If India does so, it would constitute a major departure from its consistent policy of dealing only with recognized governments.

#### **What are the interests of major powers in this agreement?**

1. **US-** The peace talks provide U.S. President Donald Trump an exit opportunity weeks before his re-election bid.
2. **European Union-** It has made it clear that its financial contribution will depend on the security environment and the human rights record.
3. **China-** It can always lean on Pakistan to preserve its security and connectivity interests.
4. **Russia-** Blocking the drug supply and keeping its southern periphery secure from extremist influences is key.

Therefore, no major power is taking ownership for the reconciliation talks, but merely content with being facilitators.

#### **Way Forward**

The withdrawal of US forces has the probability of the creation of vacuum in the region and possibility of filling the void by terrorists and extremists. To ensure that regional security is maintained and Taliban does not dictate the nation, US and other stakeholders in the region like India, Russia, China, Saudi Arabia should come forward to aid Afghanistan to become politically stable for regional security and stability.

#### **54. Hate speech**

**Source-** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus-** **GS 2-** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

**Context-** The Sudarshan News case is a chance to infuse clarity in our legislation by identifying the distinction in merely offensive speech, hate speech and the exceptional cases.

#### **What is Sudarshan News Case?**

Recently, the Supreme Court of India injunctioned a Hindi language television Channel, Sudardhan News, from continuing its broadcast as object of the programme is to vilify Muslim community.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

The show added a number of evidently false statements-

- It claimed that the upper age limit for Hindus attempting the civil service examination was 32 years, while the age limit for Muslims was 35.
- Muslims were entitled to nine attempts at the examination when Hindus were entitled only to six.

**Supreme Court remarks-** It was “insidious” to use the freedom of press to make “rabid” allegations and mount an attack on a religious minority community.

### What is hate speech?

The term hate speech is understood as any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis their collective identity, be it race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexuality.

The hate speech attacks two key tenets of democratic republic-

- The guarantee of equal dignity to all
- The public good of inclusiveness.

### What are India's hate speech laws?

India prohibits hate speech by several sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and by other laws which put limitations on the freedom of expression and Article 19(2) of the Constitution gives all citizens the right to freedom of speech and expression but subject to "reasonable restrictions" for preserving inter alia "public order, decency or morality".

#### Section 153 (A) of Indian Penal Code

Whoever

- By words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise, promotes or attempts to promote, on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, caste or community or any other ground whatsoever, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities, or
- Commits any act which is prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities, and which disturbs or is likely to disturb the public tranquility.

#### Section 295 (A) of Indian Penal Code

Whoever

- With deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of [citizens of India], [by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise], insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of that class,

Shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to [three years], or with fine, or with both.

### The grounds that speech must reach a level of incitement to be criminalized are-

1. The utterance dispute must go beyond advocacy.
2. The second ground requires a re-imagination of our hate speech laws.

### Way forward-

The Supreme Court must chisel its contents into a feasible, constitutionally committed model. When it becomes evident that the basic objective of a broadcast is to evoke hatred and to vilify a vulnerable minority the law must find a way to foil the harm. A lot will ride on

how the Court strikes this balance — for hate speech, once uttered, not only leaves little room for restitution but can also ramify to serve all manners of undemocratic ends.

## 55. Peace in Afghanistan

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS2- India and its neighbours

Context: Recently, intra-Afghan talks commenced in Doha.

**What are the factors that should be considered during intra-Afghan talks?**

- **Polity:** The balance of Afghan society and polity which was shaken in 1973 with the monarchy's departure has never been restored need to be discussed.
- **Instability:** The country has witnessed the overthrow of the monarchy, a nationalist dictatorship, communist rule, the mujahideen era, the Taliban's Islamic Emirate and the current Islamic Republic.
- **Sovereignty:** It has also experienced almost three decades of the presence of foreign forces and outside interference, especially from Pakistan.
- **Social factors:** sharpening ethnic divides, extremist ideologies and theologies, large migration to foreign lands, internal displacement, spread of narcotics and violence.
- **Concerns of Youth:** over the past 15 years, a section of Afghan urban youth linked to the world through the social media wants more open systems within an Islamic framework.

**What are the challenges present before Afghanistan?**

- **Taliban is in a position of strength:** The Afghan political class had failed to consolidate the republic and to keep Taliban confined to a small area.
- **Taliban-Pakistan nexus:** The Taliban with Pakistani support has shown remarkable resilience and has gained great confidence.
- **No concrete steps taken against Taliban-Pakistan:** To effectively tackle the nexus, American troops would have had to enter Pakistan territory and carry out a sustained operation. That, none of the three presidents who had to deal with the Taliban after 9/11 were willing to do.
- **Flawed system:** The 2019 presidential election was deeply flawed. The declaration of the incumbent president, Ashraf Ghani, as victor was dubious.
- **Disunity among negotiators:** Ghani was forced to accept his rival Dr Abdullah as the head of the Peace and Reconciliation Council which implies that he would have to share authority in **decision-making in the peace negotiations.**
- **Issues of religious interpretation and social codes:** The constitution of the Islamic Republic, adopted in 2004, begins with the Islamic shahada and commits the state to the "Holy religion of Islam". Whereas the Taliban accept Hanafi jurisprudence like the majority of Afghans but believe that the Islamic sharia in its extreme Deobandi interpretation along with distorted Pashtun social codes.
- **Violence by Taliban to show influence:** it would be unrealistic to expect the Taliban to agree to a ceasefire though they may calibrate violence as the talks progress.
- **Fears among Non-pushtun:** At its core the Taliban is Pushtun. However, it has tried to put forward a pan-Afghan image and has succeeded in making some headway in a few non-Pushtun areas. However, old fears remain strong among many non-Pushtun especially in the cities.

**What needs to be done?**

- **Consensus building:** the search for durable peace and stability will not succeed unless all parties and, in some cases their foreign patrons, especially Pakistan, are willing to give up personal gains.
- **Flexible approach:** The world has been transformed and both sides need to be flexible. The Kabul elite would also have to make **concessions on political issues and social codes.**

**What was India's position?**

- **Solution should be Afghan led:** Indian policy-makers **refused to modify their Afghan approaches** even as it became increasingly evident that the Taliban had gained ground in the country and was getting international legitimacy.
- **Diplomatic contradictions:** India failed to strengthen its ties with Kabul and at the same time opened links with the Taliban while all other major powers were doing so.

**What India should do now?**

- India should continue with its traditional policy of fostering close ties with any legitimate Afghan government.
- In the interests of Afghanistan and the region, India should stress for a successful peace talks that their failure would be catastrophic for the Afghan people and the region.

**56. Basic Structure Doctrine**

**Source:** [IndianExpress](#)

**Syllabus:** **GS2:** Separation of Powers between various organs Dispute Redressal Mechanisms and Institutions.

**Context:** Recently, Kesavananda Bharati passed away whose name is synonymous with the famous doctrine of basic structure propounded by the Supreme Court.

**What is basic structure doctrine?**

- Basic structure doctrine holds that Parliament cannot touch certain parts of the Constitution that are fundamental to democracy, even with the consent of Legislature at the Centre and states by following the procedure established by law.
- The basic structure doctrine was coined in **1973. (Kesavananda Bharti case)**

**What is the significance of Basic Structure doctrine?**

- **Limitations on Parliament:** The doctrine holds that there are certain implied limitations on Parliament's amending power although these are not explicitly mentioned.
- **Aim:** To save democracy from the hands of a tyrannical few and to protect the fundamental rights of the citizen.
- **Torch bearer:** The doctrine continues to be valued by Judiciary and is recurrently applied in significant cases.

**What are the issues arising due to Basic structure doctrine?**

- **Not immune:** It was defeated within two years of the judgement when **Indira Gandhi suspended all fundamental rights.**
- **Not defined:** In the absence of any certainty as to what constitutes the "basic structure" it is left to the wisdom of the SC judges to decide upon it on **a case to case basis.**

- **Regularly tweaking the doctrine:** Newer features have been constantly added to list that is “basic” which gives them the immunity that the basic structure enjoys. For example, the **Right to Education was introduced by the 86th amendment** in the form of Article 21A.
- **Unlimited powers to Judiciary:** for example, the Court recently relied on the basic structure to strike down the 99th constitutional amendment act (National Judicial Accountability Commission). The Bill was passed by two third majorities of both Houses of Parliament and 20 state legislatures
- **Jolt to fundamental rights chapter:** The basic structure has now **frozen Part III of the Constitution** but crucial fundamental rights were violated during! 950-51. **For example**, the First Amendment heavily diluted the rights to property and free speech and expression These valuable aspects of democracy cannot now be debated by Parliament

It is certainly important for the Constitution to have **certain non-negotiable principles** but at the same it must be **narrow and comprehensively identified to protect democracy** from the hands of elected parliamentary representatives.

### 57. Abraham Accords [peace for peace deal] and India

Source- [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.

**Context –** Israel, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain have announced an agreement that will lead to reshaping the order of West Asia politics.

**What is UAE-Israel peace deal?**

1. **Normalize relations-** Israel, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain agreed to a historic deal to normalize their long-strained relations.
2. **Importance-** This move is significant because, with the exception of Jordan and Egypt, Israel does not have diplomatic relations with Gulf Arab states owing to its long-standing conflict with Palestinians.
3. **Under the accord-** The agreement comes after Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to suspend plans to annex parts of the West Bank, one that had been bitterly criticized by these Gulf Arab states, Europe and a few other countries around the world.
4. **As per the deal, the UAE and Bahrain will establish-**
  - Embassies and exchange ambassadors.
  - Working together with Israel across a range of sectors including tourism, trade, healthcare and security.
5. The agreement is also known as the **Abraham Accords**.

**What are the significances of the agreement?**

**The significance of the Abraham Accords-**

1. **Diversifying geographies-** The UAE and Bahrain can become the centre to Israeli exports of goods and services to diverse geographies.
2. **Providing skilled man-power-** Israel has the potential to supply skilled and semi-skilled manpower to the GCC states, particularly from the Sephardim and Mizrahim ethnicities, many of whom speak Arabic.
3. **Business perspective-** Israel is known as the start-up nation and its stakeholders could easily fit in the various duty-free incubators in the UAE.

4. **Sharing Technology**- Israel has niche strengths in defence, security and surveillance equipment, arid farming, solar power, horticultural products, high-tech, gem and jewellery, and pharmaceuticals.
5. **Religious diplomacy** - The Abraham Accords also open the door for Muslims around the world to visit the historic sites in Israel and to peacefully pray at Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the third holiest site in Islam.
6. **To alienate Iran** - The agreement could pave the way for the region's Sunni Arab kingdoms and the Jewish-majority Israel enhancing regional cooperation against their common foe, Shia Iran.
7. **Domestic politics of USA**- This agreement brokered by US is seen as diplomatic win of President Trump ahead of the November elections, where he seeks re-election.

#### What are India's interests in Israel and Gulf Countries?

1. **Energy** – The Gulf region is the world's largest oil-producing region accounting for 34% of world production, 45% of crude oil exports and 48% of oil proven reserves and India has been heavily dependent on energy supplies from the region.
2. **Military and strategic ties with Israel** - The rise of Islamic extremist terrorism in both India and Israel has generated a strong strategic alliance. Even Israel is the second largest source of military defence equipment for India.
3. **Diaspora**- India expatriates have constituted a substantial share of regional labour market of Gulf nations.
4. **Remittance from the region**- Over eight million Indian diaspora in the Gulf remitting annually nearly \$50 billion.
5. **Multifaceted and socioeconomic engagements**- Indians are also the biggest stakeholders in Dubai's real estate, tourism and Free Economic Zone.
6. **Geographical location**- The Gulf region is strategically significant due to its enormous energy resources, trade route links to different parts of the world.

#### Way forward

Israeli foray into the Gulf has the potential to disrupt the existing politico-economic architecture India has carefully built with the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] states. India would have to be on its guard to monitor and even pre-empt any threat to its interests in the Gulf. Moreover, India needs to manage the economic fallout of the Israel - GCC synergy.

#### 58. Dilution without adequate deliberation

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: Gs2: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

Context: Recently, the government withdrew three Bills related to labour laws and replaced them with new ones.

#### Background

- In 2019, the government introduced **four labour codes** as Bills to replace 29 existing laws.
- These Codes dealt with regulation of wages, occupational safety and health, social security, and industrial relations.
- The **Code on Wages** was passed by Parliament last year.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- The reports on the other three Bills were presented by the Standing Committee on Labour recently.
- Government has replaced these three bills that were introduced in 2019 with a new bill and it has been reintroduced in Lok Sabha.

### What is need of labour laws?

- To regulate labour and the employer-employee relationship.
- To **simplify and rationalise the complex regime of labour laws.**

### What are the major changes in new bills?

#### 1<sup>st</sup> change-2020 Bills raise several thresholds:

- **The Factories Act of 1948** defines any manufacturing unit as a factory if it employs 10 workers (and uses electricity) or 20 workers (without using electric power).
- These thresholds are **being raised to 20 and 40 workers**, respectively.
- **The Industrial Disputes Act of 1947** requires any establishment employing over 100 workers to seek government permission before any retrenchment.
- The threshold has been raised to 300, with the government empowered to raise it further through notification.
- **The Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act of 1946** requires employers to formally define conditions of employment under them if they have at least 100 workers. The 2020 Bill has increased this threshold to 300 workers.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Change-More power to Government:

- The Code on Industrial Relations governs working conditions, trade unions, retrenchment and layoffs, dispute resolution, and establishes industrial tribunals.
- The 2020 bills provide the government with the **power to exempt establishments from any or all of their provisions** in public interest

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Change: Compromises safety

- The Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions specifies leave and maximum work hours, requires health and safety norms including adequate lighting and ventilation and welfare measures.
- The 2020 Bill allows **the State government to exempt any new factory from its provisions in the interest of increased economic activity** and employment generation.
- It provides Wide discretion to the State government to exempt new factories from basic safety and welfare norms.
- However, the Factories Act permitted such exemption for a limited period of three months only during a “public emergency”.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> change- Restricts contract labour:

- The 2020 Code **prohibits the employment of contract workers** in any core activity, and specifically permits employment in a specified list of non-core activities including canteen, security and sanitation services.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> changes- Widens the scope for women employment

- The 2019 Bill on Occupational Safety allowed the government to **prohibit employment of women in undertaking operations that could be dangerous to their health and safety.**
- The 2020 Bill removes this power to prohibit employment of women and instead allows the government to require employers to provide adequate safeguards.

### What are the issues remaining to be resolved?

- There is no clarity whether such features which are left on the government, should be hard-coded in the Acts.
- The **issues of relaxations for small enterprises** to reduce their compliance burden is unresolved.
- **Safety standards** should apply to everyone while others that provide job security could be based on the size of the firm. However, the Occupational Safety Bill exempts small establishments from its purview.

The need of the hour is that there is **wider scrutiny and public discussion** on these Bills as several changes are introduced. The bills must be referred to the Standing Committee for due deliberation.

### 59. India- China and Russia

**Source-** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** : Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**Context-** India decided to pull out of Russia's Kavkaz 2020 military exercise due to India-China tensions along the Line of Actual Control.

#### How are the India- Russia relationships at present?

India's Russia engagement has remained steady till now-

##### 1. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visits-

- He visited Russia in June for the 75th Victory Day parade.
- He was in Moscow again on September 4 to attend the SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting, which also formed the setting for the bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart.
- These visits saw detailed discussions around furthering the India-Russia defence relationship alongside the promise to accelerate certain supplies based on New Delhi's requirements.

2. **India's External Affairs** Minister S. Jaishankar attended the online **BRICS foreign ministers meeting** on September 4 and also travelled to Moscow for the SCO Foreign Ministers meeting.

3. India will host the SCO Heads of Government Meeting in November.

#### How India- China conflicts are going to affect India- Russia relation?

1. **Uncompleted communications-** In June, the Russia-India-China Foreign Ministers meeting, convened at Moscow's initiative and coming days after violent border clashes that led to the death of 20 Indian soldiers, ended without an official communiqué.

2. **Russia's diplomatic role-** Moscow has been playing a quiet diplomatic role during the recent border clashes without actively taking sides.

Thus, it is hardly surprising that on-going conflict between two prominent members has given rise to concerns about its impact on India-Russia ties.

#### What are the roles of multilateral forums?

The multilateral forums are playing important role as they foster continued India-Russia cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

1. The increasingly divergent foreign policies of its members pose challenges of agenda-setting and overall scope.

2. It also underscores that at this moment of flux, countries such as India and Russia are keeping all their options open.

#### What are the challenges for India and Russia cooperation in the Asia?

1. **Balancing power**- The cold war between China and US, has led Russia to qualitative improve its ties with Beijing as the superpower looks to partner with a strong external player that can balance the West.
2. **US policies**- The U.S. policy towards Russia has further pushed the latter towards China, strengthening the rising power, to the detriment of both Indian and western interests.
3. **Bilateral relationship**- This makes it difficult for India and Russia to pursue fully convergent policies; it does not preclude the bilateral relationship from retaining its relevance.

#### Way Forward

India and Russia are pragmatic players looking at maximising their strategic manoeuvrability, which understandably has led them to align with different powers based on their respective geopolitical positioning. Both recognise the value of having a diversified portfolio of ties and that makes it imperative that seeming contradictions in their respective policies are managed pragmatically while taking a long-term view of the strategic partnership.

#### 60. UNSC reforms

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2- International relations

**Context:** Current political fragmentation is an opportunity for India to build a more dynamic coalition.

#### How has the pandemic affected the UN?

- The coronavirus has exposed the **structural weakness of the system (UN)** that was set up amidst the ruins of the Second World War.
- The UN has been unable to respond effectively to the once-in-a-century global crisis triggered by the coronavirus.
- **China blocked a serious discussion** on the origin and sources of the crisis at the UN Security Council. While the World Health Organisation did move a bit in that direction, the US was not satisfied with the outcome and walked out of the forum.
- UN was meant to be a concert of great powers who had a permanent seat in the Security Council and **cooperation among the great powers was the precondition** for its success in the security arena.

#### How should India restructure its traditional approach towards UN?

There are huge possibilities for enhancing India's multilateral standing

- **UN is more than the Security Council:** While the UNSC was dysfunctional, India developed a multilateral agenda of its own, from decolonisation and disarmament to a new international economic order and mobilised considerable political support for it.
- The past underlines the possibilities for shaping the global discourse in the present.
- **Basic relationship between national interest and multilateralism:** The primary objective of India's present multilateralism must be to ensure its territorial integrity.
- Delhi has worked mechanisms like **FATF** to mount pressure on Pakistan to stop supporting cross-border terrorism in India.

- **Writing the new rules and reshaping the global order:** India needs to strengthen its recent turn to a more dynamic coalition building, while reclaiming its role in the Non-Aligned Movement.
- India's new engagement with the US on building like-minded coalitions acquires much significance in this regard.

### Way forward

Raising Delhi's contribution to at least one per cent might convince its partners that India is serious about pursuing a more vigorous multilateralism as the shares of China, Japan and the US are at 8, 10 and 22 per cent respectively while India has 0.7 per cent share.

### 61. E learning in India

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Education

**Context:** Online learning may not guide a revolution in poorly performing educational systems.

#### What is the state of education during COVID-19?

- Our education system was never very efficient even in the best of times. The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced it to be extremely biased and faulty.
- There are several sets of guidelines and plans issued by the government, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) for online education.
- The Internet space is crowded with learning schemes, teaching videos, sites and portals for learning opportunities.

#### What are the key issues in the education system during pandemic?

##### 1. Exacerbation of inequality

- **The plight of millions of migrant labourers** proved the point adequately.
- The children of the same people will be at a disadvantage as they are deprived of resources.
- **Government plans:** The government began plans for students with no online access only by the end of August.
- These plans assume that semi-literate or illiterate parents will teach their children, community involvement, mobile pools which is not possible.
- **Inaccessibility:** Whatever online or digital education is available is for students with only online access. Thus, digital India may become even more unequal and divided than it already is.
- **The quality of online teaching-learning:** The NCERT declares in its Learning Enhancement or LEG that 60-70% students, teachers and parents consider learning satisfactory.
- However, its survey asks a single question on the feeling of students using the criteria of 'joyful to burdensome'. But it says nothing about the quantum and depth of learning.
- **Technical issues:** Listening to lectures on the mobile phone, copying from the board where the teacher is writing, frequent disconnections and/or having blurred video/audio can hardly and naturally connect the child's present understanding with the logically organised bodies of human knowledge.

**2. No focus on concepts**

- **Conceptual understanding missing:** In the science and mathematics videos, in particular, there are many misconceptions and doubts. The emphasis is more on 'tricks' to remember for success in an examination than laying the stress on conceptual understanding.
- **Khan academy:** The government of Delhi uses videos from here and American educators have questioned the quality of teaching and have pointed out inadequate or plainly wrong concepts, particularly in mathematics.

**3. The thrust, post-COVID-19**

- **The NCERT's LEG** states that "COVID-19 has created a situation which demands transformation in school education and the transaction mechanisms in school education may go through a drastic change.
- **Alternative modes:** It recommends that "alternative modes of education for the whole academic session including Internet-based, radio, podcast, community radio, IVRS, TV DTH Channels, etc." should be developed.
- **Increasing inadequacy:** This transformation of schools in the current understanding of pedagogy, suitability of learning material and quality of learning provided through IT will further devastate the already inadequate system of school education in the country.

**4. Institutional environment**

- The institutions function sub-optimally, students themselves create an environment that supports their growth morally, socially and intellectually in conversations and interactions with each other. The online mode of teaching completely shut out this opportunity.

**What should be the way forward?**

- It requires well-connected, regular efforts that are incrementally building to help the child focus his attention and to provoke him to distinguish and to discriminate, and develop a habit of staying on task.
- This requires help from someone who knows the child as well as understands the objective of education.

**62. Uniting to combat COVID-19**

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** Gs2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

**Context:** The growth prospects for the world's fastest-growing region, South Asia, appear grim due to the pandemic.

**What is the current scenario?**

- In April, the World Bank predicted that growth in the region would be 1.8%-2.8% this year.
- According to World meter, in South Asia, the Maldives has the highest number of tests per million population followed by Bhutan.
- Countries facing a surge in cases, such as India, could have flattened the curve by increasing the number of tests.
- The countries that have conducted more tests have been more successful in containing the pandemic.



### Low mortality in south Asian region

- India has the second largest number of COVID-19 cases in the world (over 55 lakh) after the U.S. Whereas Bangladesh has around 3.5 lakh cases.
- However, South Asian countries are experiencing a lower mortality rate despite having a higher infection rate.
- Probable reason could be due to the region's tropical climate, protection offered by a tuberculosis vaccine (BCG), exposure to malaria, and a weaker strain of the virus.
- Epidemiological studies and the World Health Organization's reviews have been sceptical about the hypotheses of low mortality doubting Issues of data reliability and under-reporting:

### Government responses in South Asia:

- **Lock down measure:**
  - India resumed its economic activities on a limited scale following a strict lockdown imposed in late March and lasting through April.
  - Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka did the same after an extended lockdown.
  - Bhutan and the Maldives have managed to largely contain community transmission and avoid prolonged lockdowns due to a higher testing rate.
- **Stimulus Packages:**
  - India announced a \$22.5 billion relief package to ensure food security and cash transfers to save the livelihoods of an estimated 800 million people living in poverty.
  - Bangladesh announced a stimulus package worth about \$8 billion in addition to an earlier \$595 million incentive package for export-oriented industries.
  - Pakistan unveiled a comprehensive fiscal stimulus package of \$6.76 billion.
- **Monetary measures:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) slashed the repo and reverse repo rate to create liquidity for businesses. Pakistan's central bank also slashed the interest rate.
- **Regional cooperation:** the Maldives government mobilised a \$161.8 million emergency fund. It also announced a short-term financing facility for the tourism industry. Sri Lanka signed an agreement with the RBI for a currency swap worth \$400 million to support domestic financial stability. The Afghan government allocated about \$25 million to fight COVID-19.

### Issues in Implementation

- **Issue of distribution:** India and Bangladesh announced financial and material stimulus packages, distribution concerns remain unaddressed. For instance, the **Open Market Sale in Bangladesh** appears ineffective as there is **no physical distancing**.
- **Political tampering and poor governance:** In India, the announcement of the lockdown gave citizens less than four hours to prepare.
- **Hoarding of supplies:** In India, it caused a shortage in the market. The lockdown disrupted supply chains. It was a similar situation in Nepal and Pakistan.

### What needs to be done?

- **Coordinated response mechanism:** leaders of the region need to look beyond narrow geopolitical rivalry and come together to work towards a well-coordinated response mechanism.

- **Operationalise SAARC COVID-19 fund:** It was created following Indian Prime Minister's call to South Asian leaders, but governments are yet to decide on its modus operandi.
- **Leverage existing institutional framework:** For instance, **SAARC Food Banks** could be activated to tackle the imminent regional food crisis, and the **SAARC Finance Forum** can be activated to formulate a regional economic policy response.

### 63. Vulnerable section – Homeless people and their mental health

Source- [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

**Context-** In the current situation of COVID-19, the most affected are homeless persons and the ultra-poor.

#### **What are the challenges faced by the homeless persons with mental illness?**

Homeless persons living with mental illness have following challenges-

1. Abject poverty, conflict, natural or man-made disasters.
2. Lack of access to health and mental health care.
3. Lack of adequate nutrition.
4. Social hardships, disruptions in care-giving, domestic violence which led to shunning of them by their family and kinships.
5. Ridicule by the society, which lead to isolate them from mainstream society and occupying a lowly place in society's hierarchical structure.
6. Risk of sexual violence, violent victimisation, assault and long-term incarceration.
7. Their experience of loneliness and hyper-segregation contributes to their low sense of self-worth, shrunken group identity and weakening their collective ability to influence change.
8. They are the most long stay patients in State mental hospitals.

#### **What are the actions taken for the homeless persons?**

##### **United Nation-**

- The UN set up a fund of \$2 billion to alleviate the distress of the ultra-vulnerable, including those living with disability or chronic illness.

##### **Best Practices - Tamil Nadu Government-**

- Taking cognisance of the mental health needs of homeless persons, the government will take to scale **Emergency Care and Recovery Centres (ECRC)**
- **District level-** ECRC will support the treatment and community inclusion of this vulnerable section in 10 districts (in addition to the five districts where ECRCs were set up in 2018).
- **Facilities available-** Three hundred bed spaces will be earmarked for homeless persons in psychosocial distress, with a capacity to service more than 1,000 people a year, in smaller and integrated care units in district hospitals and/ or social care centres.
- **Better living-** Early enrolment into care may result in reduction of exposure to harm, injury and starvation, and better prognosis.
- **Removal of stigma-** An integrated approach may also help address stigma associated with this group.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- **Reducing homelessness-** Facilitation of social needs care and livelihoods may reduce the recurrence of episodic homelessness, critical to sustaining and enhancing well-being gains.
- **Three sectors** — the government, development and corporate sectors — will partner to ensure that the lives of those who live on the fringes matter.
- **The mental health team-** That anchors the Centre may also lend further support to the District Mental Health Programme, and offer counselling support to address mental health issues in the context of the pandemic.

### Way Forward

The action taken by UN Secretary is a powerful start to acknowledge the need to focus on minority mental health. The need for the homeless persons at the present situation is to incorporate heterogeneity of experiences and multimodal approaches to care and nurture them in an environment of patience, love and affection, not by out-casting them.

### 64. Pandemic Helping to Recognize Real Education

Source: [LiveMint](#)

**Syllabus: Gs2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.**

**Context:** The Pandemic disruptions have revealed the core of education and highlighted the invaluable role of true learning in fulfilling aspirations.

#### How brutal inequity, fragility and injustice in School education exist?

- For the vast majority of children, the shutting down of schools is a change in the trajectory of their lives.
- Losses of education is much longer and even permanent.
- Deprivation arising from shut schools is also a **loss of assured meals**.
- Innumerable girls face social pressure to drop out of school and get married.
- Uncertainty is also **eroding the hard-won social consensus** that sending children to school must be the norm.

#### How education is a social-human endeavour?

- Physical presence, attention, thought and emotions, all must be sewn towards learning goals, step-by step, often back-and-forth, and differently for each student.
- Online education is ineffective because of the absence of intense **verbal and non-verbal interactions**.
- Lack of access to the net and online resources.
- There is deep realization of the social-human nature of education.
- State after state that was enthusiastic about online education in May this year has backtracked and tried to implement other modes of student engagement.
- Such as teachers systematically going to the communities where **students live and organizing classes with small groups**, usually out in the open.

#### How pandemic has revealed usurious face of Private schools?

- Most private schools are bothered about making money and not about education or people.
- Commercialisation of schools have pushed every lever to squeeze money.
- For instance, demanding fees for "re-admission", insisting on parents buying net-access devices, lobbying for the charade of online education, and more.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- Private schools have exploited their teachers even more than usual, cutting or not paying their salaries arbitrarily.
- Public school have attempted a range of things to keep their students engaged because their goal is public service.
- Only a small percentage of schools run and owned by private bodies, which are truly public spirited.
- Education is effective only when it is truly animated by the spirit of public service

### Why teachers are central to education?

- With teachers, education can happen anywhere, even under a tree without any other resource, as thousands of dedicated public-school teachers have shown.
- Teaching is not only about **subject knowledge and pedagogy**.
- It is about patience and dedication, about **empathy and judgment**, and also about balancing all this in the service of the **overall development of the child**.
- Teaching is a matter of deep human relationships and bonds.
- Pandemic have also made many realize how poorly we do for our teachers.

### Why an education system is the most precious of things for any society?

- It shapes the future of a society and at the most basic level, the education system is also a vast child-care system too.
- The disruptions in our rhythms of social and economic life have made it clear that for the aspirations and promises of our society to be fulfilled, education is the fundamental social process.

India does not need a once-in-a-century pandemic with its devastating human toll to reveal all this about education. India needs to focus on basic character of education to make us more humane, and more together.

## 65. Culture of Secrecy

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** Gs2: Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency and Accountability

**Context:** Paradoxically, In India the culture of secrecy is growing and sometimes justified in the name of transparency.

**How culture of secrecy is evolving in India?**

**Examples of Culture of secrecy in different areas:**

- **Judiciary: Sealed envelope has become a modus operandi**
  - **Case1: Related to political funding:** a three-judge bench headed by the then Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi in 2019 directed political parties to submit the details of donations received to the ECI in sealed cover.
  - **Case 2: Related to National Register of Citizens:** The Assam administration to show the progress it was making in the implementation of the National Register of Citizens submitted reports in sealed covers to Justice Gogoi.
  - **Case 3: Related to Sexual harassment at workplace:** Justice Gogoi was accused of sexual harassment. The panel formed by the SC found “no substance in the allegations” on the basis of a report it had received in a sealed cover.
- **Electoral bonds:**
  - Introduced in 2017, it allowed anonymous donations to political parties and to protect the **privacy of the donors**.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- However, The Election Commission of India (ECI) criticised the opacity of this financial mechanism and described it as “a retrograde step”.
- As per ECI, it would **prevent the state** from ascertaining whether a political party has taken any donation in violation of provisions under **Section 29B of the Representation of the People Act**. (Sec 29B prohibits the political parties from taking donations from government companies and foreign sources).
- **Limiting CIC powers:** In 2019, government amended the RTI Act to limit the power of the CIC. The five-year fixed tenure for the Chief Information Commissioner and information commissioners was abolished.
- **Dilution of the Whistleblower’s Protection Act:** Whistleblowers can now be prosecuted for possessing the documents on which the complaint has been made.
- **Non-publication or alteration of some statistical information:** for instance, the National Statistical Commission and the Chief Statistician of India faced a credibility crisis when the new GDP series was released. The 75th round survey of consumer expenditures was not released which had found that the percentage of citizens living below the poverty line had increased between 2011-12 and 2017-18.

### What are the implications of growing culture of secrecy?

- **Vaguely defined Public interest:** Issues flagged by whistleblowers have to be in “public interest” and should not be “affecting the sovereignty and integrity of India”, related to “commercial confidence” or “information received in confidence from a foreign government”.
- **Reducing institutional independence:** growth rate figures were changed and the National Crime Records Bureau has been affected by delays and deletions. For instance, lynchings and “religious killings” are no longer enumerated and the number of members of religious communities in the police forces is not listed.
- **Weakened the Right to Information Act:** the government did not appoint a Chief Information Commissioner for a year and did not fill vacant information commissioner posts in the Central Information Commission (CIC) between 2016 and 2018.
- **Huge pendency:** The backlog of pending appeals had reached 30,000 cases in late 2019 as the CIC has become a rather dysfunctional body.
- **Refusal of information:** For instance, queries about phone tapping are not responded. In 2016-17, the home and finance ministries rejected close to 15 per cent of the applications they received while the RBI and public sector banks rejected 33 per cent.
- **Reduces accountability:** For instance, RBI refused to give any information about the decision-making process that led to demonetisation.
- **Secrecy affects decision making:** To conceal the truth would make things worse because the actors in the economy would not be in a position to adjust to the real situation.

Transparency is necessary for making the economy work and to maintain democratic polity.

### 66. COVID-19- A spotlight on democracy

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- **GS 2-** Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Context- The unprecedented COVID-19 crisis has resulted in major social, political and legal challenges globally.



### What is international day of democracy?

The International Day of Democracy provides an opportunity to review the state of democracy in the world. Democracy is as much a process as a goal and only with the full participation of and support by the international community, national governing bodies, civil society and individuals, can the ideal of democracy be made into a reality to be enjoyed by everyone, everywhere.

- **Declared on-** The International Day of Democracy is celebrated around the world on 15 September each year.
- **Observed by-** It was established through a resolution passed by the UN General Assembly in 2007, encouraging governments to strengthen and consolidate democracy.
- **Theme for 2020-** COVID-19- A spotlight on democracy.

### What are the main concerns in many countries in the context of COVID-19?

- **Liberty issues-** Measures to control the flow of information, crackdown on freedom of expression and press freedom against an existing background of shrinking civic space.
- Arrest, detention, prosecution or persecution of political opponents, journalists, doctors and healthcare workers, activists and others for allegedly spreading “fake news”.
- **Aggressive cyber-** Policing and increased online surveillance.

### What are the key features of Indian Democracy?

India democracy credited as world's largest democracy with following key features-

- There are multiparty elections with universal suffrage.
- The smooth changeover in government after election.
- The existence of an independent press and judiciary, and the guarantee of civil liberties justiciable in courts of law.

However, to an extent it amounts to admiring a form of government for its own sake without concern for the socioeconomic outcomes that are produced.

### Why there is dystopia in India's democracy?

**Dystopia-** Dystopia was imagined as a place where the people experience great suffering as they fend for themselves under the watchful eyes of an authoritarian state.

**Life satisfaction-** An important metric as it is based on people's perceptions on what matters most, including the responsiveness of the government to their needs.

- **UN's World Happiness Report 2020-** India ranked 144 out of the 153 countries evaluated.
- **UN's Human Development Index 2019-** India ranked 129<sup>th</sup> out of 189 countries in which the main element of ranking were Health and Education.
- The criterion that in a democracy the people must be satisfied with their life is given very little thought these days.

### Ways to be free democracy-

1. **Build by the people itself-** The institutions that enable persons to lead fulfilling lives are built by the people themselves.
- **Example- United States in 1960s-** Saw movements for black empowerment, women's emancipation and sexual liberation. These movements were remarkably successful in the outcomes they achieved, while receiving no support from the U.S. state.

2. **Role of the states-** Laws must not constrain liberty when it is self-affirming and must change when it is realized that they do.

#### Way forward-

Liberty and capability are conjoined as the ultimate aspiration in a democracy so that people can participate in their own governance and government should do some endowment of individuals with capabilities that allow them to undertake the functioning or do the things that they value.

#### 67. The foreign hand: On FCRA amendments

Source: [The Hindu](#)

#### Gs2: Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency and Accountability

**Context:** Recently, the amendments to the FCRA were passed in Parliament.

#### What are the key amendments?

- Bill proposes to make **Aadhaar a mandatory identification document** for all the office-bearers, directors and other key functionaries of an NGO or an association eligible to receive foreign donations.
- The Bill proposes to include **“public servant” and “corporation owned or controlled by the government”** among the list of entities who are not eligible to receive foreign donations.

#### What are the concerns associated with the recent amendments?

- **Over-regulation of NGO:** New regulations put **onerous conditions** on civil society organisations, and educational and research institutions that have partnerships with foreign entities.
- **No discussion on amendments:** The amendments were not discussed with the stakeholder and passed with limited discussion in Parliament.
- **Against Constitutional rights:** The International Commission of Jurists has said the new law was incompatible with international obligations and India’s own constitutional provisions on rights.
- **Discourage social work:** Thousands of NGOs serve extremely disadvantaged sections. Only presumption of guilt against them all, followed by control, amounts to throwing the baby out with the bathwater.
- **Selective barriers:** the over-regulation appears to be towards select categories of global ideas and ideals such as environmentalism, human rights and civil liberties.
- **Reduce investments and technology flow:** As a growing economy, India has been proactive in seeking global capital and technology.
- **Against Indian cultural ethos:** Prime Minister has often cited the ancient Indian ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam as the framework for its global engagement. It does not go well with India’s legitimate ambitions to be a global player

#### Why such amendments?

- **Misuse of foreign funding:** In Parliament, the government alleged that foreign money was being used for religious conversions. For instance, In 2017, the government barred American Christian charity, Compassion International.
- **Loss to the GDP:** during the UPA that an official report even quantified the GDP losses allegedly caused by environmental NGOs, insinuating a foreign conspiracy against India.
- **To enhance transparency and accountability:** The annual inflow of foreign contribution has almost doubled between the years 2010 and 2019, but many

recipients of foreign contribution have not utilised the same for the purpose for which they were registered or granted prior permission under the said Act.

**What can be the way forward?**

- **Delink** religious propagation and conversions from the question of foreign funding.
- There are **adequate laws against conversion** by inducement. It cannot be decided against the touchstone of the source of funds, native or foreign.
- Seamless sharing of ideas and resources across national boundaries is essential to the functioning of a global community.
- Civil societies should not be discouraged unless there is reason to believe the funds are being used to aid illegal activities.
- Civil societies **supplements government works** and sometimes reach to the sections where government cannot.

**68. Extent of media regulations**

**Source-** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Development processes and the development industry

**Context-** The Supreme Court underlined the need for laying down clear guidelines, and their effective implementation, for the media against hate speech in the Sudharshan TV case.

**What happened when the government attempted to regulate the media?**

The government has made several attempts in the past to regulate the media but all such attempts came crashing down in the wake of public outcry. The last attempt was-

- **April 2018-** When the Information and Broadcasting Ministry issued a circular stipulating that the accreditation of a journalist found to have “created and/or propagated” fake news will be suspended or permanently cancelled.
- The next 15 hours witnessed a huge furore against the circular, culminating in the I&B ministry revoking the circular.

**What are the possible forms of checks and regulations to stop abuse of freedom of speech?**

**Government regulations-**

- Currently, the government has own regulation policies. Such as-
  - a. Cable Television Network Rules of 1994
  - b. Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act of 1995
  - c. The Policy Guidelines for Up linking of Television Channels from India of 2000

Thus, the provisions within give it the power to block the transmission and retransmission of any channel in the country. Its effectiveness is a matter for critical examination.

1. **Self-regulation-** It is though ideal, is easier said than done and continues to be a pipedream in India.
2. **Independent regulation-** The main concern is it will be set up by whom. If the government does it, the whole world is ready to pounce on it.
3. **Self-cum-independent regulation-**

**News Broadcasters Association (NBA)**

- It was set up in 2008.
- It further set up the **National Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA)** with Justice J. S. Verma as its chairman.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- **Condition-** Justice J. S. Verma agreed to chair NBSA on the express condition that this will be an independent body and that he would brook no interference from the parent body- NBA.

### **National Broadcasting Standards Authority**

- It was formed with the object to foster high standards, ethics and practices in news broadcasting and take action against defaulters.
- Its role has been acknowledged by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Election Commission.
- **Shortcomings-**
  - a. Its writ extended only to its members, which was limited due to its voluntary membership. Those who were unhappy with a verdict found it easy to walk out.
  - b. It lacks statutory backing from the government.
  - c. Extending its jurisdiction to non-members as well.
  - d. Empowering it to take punitive action like suspending and cancelling licences.

### **What are the several indigenous models to preserve the independence of the media?**

1. **Empowering the NBSA-** With statutory backing, more stringent powers and extending its writ to all news channels.
2. **Supreme Court appointed monitoring panel** — like the one it set up in 1998 to monitor encroachments in Delhi which worked very effectively till the members became too old and the Court just forgot about them after appointing them.
3. **Press Council model-** An equal failure, spineless and toothless, despite a retired SC judge heading it.
4. **Like the Election Commission** — a constitutionally-appointed body which was empowered by the SC in 2002 as a regulator to enforce the model code of conduct evolved by the political parties voluntarily for self-discipline.

### **Way Forward**

The Supreme Court should see this case as an opportunity to change the image of inaction and insensitivity it has unfortunately acquired during the last couple of years. Both Social media and television are needed to be dealt with a suitable and independent model with reasonable powers. Both needs to be dealt with decisively and urgently as unrestricted powers is always dangerous. Therefore, some restrictions on media will be able to keep the country's social harmony undisturbed.

### **69. The new NEP 2020 and its flaws**

**Source-** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

**Context-** The NEP has been charged with fostering inequalities and most importantly replacing constitutional values with banal ideas such as seva, ahimsa, swacchta, sacrifice and courtesy.

#### **What is NEP 2020?**

**New National Education Policy 2020-** Recently cabinet approved a new national education policy which will refine and re-engineer classroom transactions with an aim to:

1. **To reduce curriculum content** – It will enhance essential learning, critical thinking and more holistic experiential, discussion and analysis based learning.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

2. **New pedagogical structure** - It also talks about a revision of the curriculum and pedagogical structure from a 10+2 system to a **5+3+3+4** system design in an effort to optimize learning for students based on cognitive development of children. The new model likely to look like this-

<b>Foundational stage</b>	3-8 years	3 years : play school/anganwadis 2 years : primary school
<b>Preparatory Schooling Stage</b>	8-11 years(grade 3 to 5)	Experiential learning across the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities.
<b>Middle school</b>	11-14 years in grades 6 to 8	a subject-oriented pedagogical learning style
<b>Secondary level</b>	14-18 years(grades 9 and 10)	Creativity, away from rote learning

3. **New assessment pattern** - It will compel educators to make pedagogical practices more child-centered. Such an approach will allow students to make mistakes, take risks, be creative and move away from rote learning.
4. **Building soft skills**- Envisaging more towards empathy, resilience, conflict resolution and relationship building skills, which offer the key to success in a rapidly changing world.

### What is Kothari Commission?

In order to remove the defects in the field of education, the government appointed a new education commission to advise the government on the national pattern of education along with general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages.

### What are the flaws in new NEP 2020?

1. **Load of studies**- Reducing load of studies is mistaken for a mechanical reduction of syllabus/ textbook content, despite the mental load of incomprehensibility — a situation where a lot is taught but little is learnt or understood.
2. **Integrated curriculum**- The dilemma for textbook developer/ teacher of what needs to be integrated, resort to random addition/ deletion of content.
3. **Lack of time**- If most of the teachers' time is spent on collecting evidence, record keeping and saving their skin because they know that students' assessment will be used to assess their performance, then no amount of formative assessment (FA) will improve students' learning.
4. **Lack of clarity**- Confusing the notion of critical thinking with de-contextualized logical thinking whereby textbooks have no mention of conflicts/contradictions which children experience in their daily lives.
5. **Mistakes in programmes**- Mistake of “fun in learning” for “fun of learning” thereby reduce the meaning of learning/pedagogic processes to song and dance and banal activities.

### Way forward-

It is important that NEP's fundamental flaws are acknowledged and addressed with immediacy. The aim of new NEP 2020 should not be limited to imparting children with foundational skills of literacy, numeracy and competencies but removing structural disadvantages, thus enabling them to live a meaningful life, simultaneously strengthening our society as a secular, democratic space.



## 70. Cess pool: On CAG report of Centre's accounts

Source: [The Hindu](#)

### Gs2: Functions and Responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

**Context:** The audit of the Union Government's accounts tabled in Parliament revealed that the Finance Ministry retained over 40% of all cess collections in 2018-19 in the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI).

#### What are key issues highlighted by CAG?

- **Cess were made part of general pool:** A large chunk of the money collected as cess to the general pool making it difficult to ensure that the funds were used for specific purpose.
- **Diversion of cess:** As many as 35 different cesses, levies and charges yielded ₹2.75-lakh crore in the year. Around ₹1.64-lakh crore was remitted to the specific reserve funds for which these cesses were levied.
- **No new dedicated fund was created:** A new 4% Health and Education Cess on income tax was partly deployed towards education, but no fund was created for health. Similarly, Social Welfare surcharge levied on customs.
- **GST compensation:** The GST Compensation Cess, over which the Centre and several States have now locked horns with ₹47,272 crore was not remitted to its rightful account over the first two years of GST.
- **Changed statistics:** diversion helped understate India's revenue and fiscal deficit numbers.
- **Disturbed fiscal federalism:** compensation cess transfers to States were accounted as Grants-in-aid to States which distorted the Centre-States fiscal math.
- **Over-reliance on Cesses:** Centre's reliance on cesses and surcharges to raise revenue has increased significantly since the States' share of the divisible pool of taxes was raised to 42% in line with the 14th Finance Commission's suggestions.
- **Cesses complicates taxation:** It is arguable that such levies are in sync with a nation trying to simplify its tax regime.

#### Other similar incidents:

- Over 10 years, not a paisa of the ₹1.25-lakh crore of cess collected on crude oil was transferred to an oil industry development body it was meant to finance.
- Part of the hefty cess collected as additional excise duties on petrol and diesel to finance roads and infrastructure was similarly retained in the CFI.

#### What should be done?

- **Centre need to rebuild bridges:** a climate of distrust is hovering over India's federal polity. For instance, the GST compensation dispute or the passage of Farm sector Bills without taking States on board.
- **Rationalisation of Cesses:** for example, the excise duties on petrol and diesel need to be rationalised to provide stimulus to citizens whose incomes and job prospects have been reduced by the pandemic and a shrinking economy.
- **Ensure transparency:** It is needed in the management of cess receipts so that Parliament and the people do not need to wait for audit findings to learn of this subterfuge.

## 71. Parliamentary committees

Source- [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 2- :** Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

**Context-** The past few years only 26% of the Bills have been referred to the standing committees and have been passed without scrutiny by parliamentary standing committees.

**What parliamentary oversight mechanisms are followed in India?**

The parliamentary scrutiny of the regulators can take place through the following means-

- Question hour
- Discussion in Parliament
- Parliamentary committees

Some of the means of legislative oversight, such as annual submission of reports by regulators to Parliament, are provided in enactments.

**What is Parliamentary Committee?**

The Parliamentary committees are established to study and deal with various matters that cannot be directly handled by the legislature due to their volume. They also monitor the functioning of the executive branch.

**Types of Parliamentary committees-**

1. **Ad hoc committees-** These committees are temporary committees established by the board of director to address a specific issue. The latter are created on an ad hoc basis as the need arises and they are dissolved after they complete the task assigned to them.
2. **Standing or permanent committees-** A committee consisting of Members of Parliament. It is a permanent and regular committee which is constituted from time to time according to the provisions of an Act of Parliament or Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business.
  - Due to capacity and time constraints, it is not possible for MPs to scrutinize all policies and legislation on the floor of the House. It was felt that by forming smaller groups of members to examine the subjects would ensure deeper deliberation and debate. The standing committees are of the following kinds-
    - **Department related standing committees (DRSC)** - Aligned with specific ministries examine their performance and budgets apart from Bills or subjects related to their respective ministries. Currently there are 24 DRSC that comprise members from both Houses of Parliament.
    - **Financial standing committees (FSC)** –Primarily responsible for scrutinizing the expenditure priorities of the government, suggest measures to improve efficiency in spending and performance of Public Sector Undertakings.
    - **Administrative committees-** Primarily responsible for ensuring day-to-day activities of the legislature are planned in consultation with the members.

**What are the current issues and relevance?**

1. **Fewer Bills Referred** - To strengthen the lawmaking process, it is important that all Bills are examined by Standing Committees before passage. This ensures thorough scrutiny of the law. The government has shown extreme reluctance to refer Bills to Select Committees of the Houses or Joint Parliamentary Committees.
  - The 14th and 15th Lok Sabha saw 60 percent and 71 percent of bills referred to committees. This number has dipped sharply to just 27 percent in the 16th Lok Sabha.
  - The last Bill referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee was The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Second Amendment) Bill, in 2015.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- Some of the most momentous Acts of Parliament in recent years such as the radical overhaul of Article 370 were not processed by any House committee.
- 2. Centre's willfulness-** The government used its majority in both the Houses of Parliament and steamrolled the Bills (with hardly any discussion), amid the predictable din and noise that a fragmented Opposition could mount.
  - 3. Longer Tenure for Members-** The committee system allows a smaller group of legislators to develop technical expertise on a particular subject and ensure better deliberation. In the present format, the members are nominated to a Standing Committee for one year. However, shifting of committees every year defeats this purpose.
  - 4. Speaker's traditional non-partisan role-** Very few Speakers, with exceptions such as G.V. Mavalankar, P.A. Sangma and Somnath Chatterjee, have taken cudgels with their party leaders to uphold the autonomy of the House.

### Way forward-

The need of the hour is for greater and effective utilization of Parliamentary Committees to strengthen Parliament as a deliberative body which can ensure effective oversight. The government must make amends and restore the democratic majesty of Parliament.

# General Studies Paper - 3

## General Studies - 3

---

### 1. Environmental challenge

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Environment

**Context:** Environment protection should be considered a national issue and not be viewed through an ideological or political lens.

#### India's environmental ranking

- In the **environmental performance index** ranking shows **India at 118 in 2006, 123 in 2010, 155 in 2014 and 177 in 2018**. Thus, the index shows a consistent drop for several years.
- The Environmental Performance Index has been developed by two U.S. universities (Yale and Columbia) in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and European Commission.

#### Political record

- The **link between the great winter smog and pollution in North India**, and the present EIA draft is not reasonable, since winter pollution in North India did not begin in 2014.
- The winter smog and pollution in North India demonstrate **the irregularities of federalism, where the rules of the Centre and States differ**.
- There are problems of **environmental laws which are effective in principle against point sources like industries but not against agriculture related pollution** such as stubble burning or public usage pollution relating to vehicular and household sources (which are predominantly non-point in nature).
- The UPA governments were unable to frame subordinate **legislation and implement the Forest Rights Act effectively for eight long years**.
- **'Forests' was a State subject until transferred to the Concurrent list by the 42nd Amendment Act**. However, the powers of the State governments continue, which is why, regardless of political affiliation, State governments hesitate to fully implement the Forest Rights Act.

#### Focus on deforestation

- **Deforestation** has to be a primary concern for any government. Forest clearances for mining and industries are a major cause, but not the only causes of deforestation. Other causes include the following:
  - **the slash-and-burn (or jhoom cycle) due to population pressure;**
  - conversion of forest to cultivated land;
  - **Increasing use of timber for household and industry purposes.**
- While diversion of forests for mining and industry is regulated by law and challenged in courts, the other major drivers are not even discussed.

#### Crucial dimensions

- The vital dimensions of environment preservation are as follows:
- The **balance of requirements between the environment and poverty eradication**.
- The critical need to harmonise the working of the central, State, and local governments as also intelligence, **monitoring and compliance with law**.



### Way forward

The environment is a national issue which requires the unwavering participation of all governments, and all citizens, regardless of political affiliation and it should not be looked from an ideological or political viewpoint.

## 2. COVID 19 – Policy window for overdue reforms

Source- [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

**Context-** Post pandemic, the government needs to undertake key reforms to utilize the global demand.

### Effects of COVID-19

1. **GST shortfall-** The GST compensation requirement is estimated to be around Rs 3 lakh crore this year, while the cess collection is expected to be around Rs 65,000 crore – an estimated compensation shortfall of Rs 2.35 lakh crore.
2. **GDP contraction-** India's economy shrank nearly 25 percent in the last quarter, the most drastic fall in past decades.
3. **Unemployment-** India's overall unemployment rate for the month of July stood at 7.43 percent, down from nearly 28 percent during the month of April.

### Factors in India's favour

1. **Unsustainable Chinese GDP-** The trade issues with US has affected many Chinese companies and its global trade. Moreover, its domestic consumption is not sufficient to substitute for global trade loss.
2. **China's border conflicts-** China's military overreach is unifying the region and creating coalitions and alliances which may favor India.
3. **Low oil price-** Muted global growth means oil prices will remain low; which can prove advantageous to India.
4. **Global demand of software talent** - The global digitization super cycle creates demand for software talent which India's youth can provide with their skills.
5. **Developed countries ageing problem-** Most rich countries with their ageing populations, creaking health systems, and huge public debt will struggle to grow. Whereas India is yet to reap its demographic dividend.

### Government needs to bring reforms in following for being more productive



Created with love ❤️ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

### Way forward

Government needs to create an environment for entrepreneurs, firms, and citizens with key reforms that will give them economic 'Poorna Swaraj' and take per capita income of \$2,500 to \$10,000 in next five years. Risk adverse bureaucracy need an attitude change for better governance of all.

### 3. GST compensation Standoff

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- GS 3- Government Budgeting

Context- Differences of opinion have emerged between Centre and states at the 41<sup>st</sup> Goods and Service Tax [GST] Council meeting over compensation deficit.

- **GST**- Goods and Services Tax, is an indirect tax which has replaced many indirect taxes in India such as the excise duty, VAT, services tax, etc. GST is a single domestic indirect tax law for the entire country.

### GST [Compensation to States] Act, 2017

- States are guaranteed compensation for loss of revenue on account of implementation of GST for a transition period of five years (2017-22).
- The compensation assures an annualized 14% growth rate from the base year of 2015-16.
- States no longer possess taxation rights after most taxes, barring those on petroleum, alcohol, and stamp duty, were subsumed under GST.

### Distinction in shortfall

1. **Pending payment**- GST compensation payments to states have been pending since April, with the pending amount for April-July estimated at Rs 1.5 lakh crore.
2. **GST revenue gap** - The GST compensation requirement is estimated to be around Rs 3 lakh crore this year, while the cess collection is expected to be around Rs 65,000 crore – an estimated compensation shortfall of Rs 2.35 lakh crore.

### Options made by the Centre

#### Option 1 –

- **Special borrowing window** - To provide a special borrowing window to states, in consultation with the RBI, which has to be repaid by the states after 5 years.
- A 0.5 percent relaxation in the borrowing limit under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management [FRBM] Act would be provided.

#### Option 2-

- Meeting the GST compensation gap of this year.
- No Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act relaxation has been mentioned for this option.

### Challenges for central government

1. **Options rejected**– Several States have rejected both options. Some states like Tamil Nadu, have urged the Centre to rethink in view of their essential and urgent spending needs to curb the pandemic and spur growth.
2. **Compensation cess levied** on demerit goods will stay on beyond 2022. This may hurt few sectors such as auto sector.

### Way forward

Centre need to resolve this impasse in a way that future GST reforms do not fall victim to the trust deficit engendered by this standoff, the pandemic response is strengthened and all-round government capital spending to bolster sagging demand not derailed.

### 4. To Rebuild and Recover

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3: Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

**Context:** India needs to focus on rebuild and recover to achieve economic growth of 7-8 per cent.

#### Need to address some traditional sore points:

- **Pandemic impact:** Indian economy is suffering due to the pandemic with declining growth and limited scope for a fiscal stimulus.
- **Demand-supply issue:** India's slowdown is largely a structural demand problem that cannot be addressed through piecemeal aid and transfers.
- **Contrast in GDP growth:**
  - First phase- when growth was driven by domestic investment and global growth.
  - Second phase- the post-global financial crisis stimulus phase.
  - Third phase- the leveraged consumption phase. The economy is estimated to have lost around Rs 20-28 trillion due to a lockdown, with FY2021 growth likely to be around (-) 11.5 per cent.
- **Focus on demand side:** Consumption led growth provides limited scope for a sharp recovery over the medium term without exogenous (and often unsustainable) triggers.
- **To prioritise long term growth:** broaden the consumer base by empowering the low and middle-income consumers rather than pushing consumption itself.
- **To protect India's labour market:** If the pandemic results in a prolonged retrenchment of the workforce, it will deepen faultiness in labour market.
- **Uncertainty and savings:** temporary incomes coupled with income uncertainty will induce precautionary savings without any impact on growth.
- **Poor social security:** The PLFS 2018-19 report places around 24 per cent of the workforce in the regular wage/salary category. However, around 40 per cent do not have a written contract, paid leaves, or security while 70 per cent do not have any written contract. Since most of the workers are informal employee, consumption-led growth in the aftermath of a crisis become a substantial risk.

#### Steps that should be taken to reform, recovery and rebuild:

- **Increase public borrowing:** since revenues have cratered, funding of additional expenditure should be done through higher borrowing. public spending should be directed towards sectors such as roads, railways, infrastructure, healthcare and educational facilities to help rebuild the economy
- Set up a Development Financing Institution, and an asset monetisation programme.
- **Increase sustainable investment:** debt should be seen in the context of future investments being hampered due to current consumption.
- **Streamline processes** for quick approvals and ensure timely payments to private operators.
- **Fiscal prudence:** India's public debt/GDP will likely reach around 85 per cent and the consolidated gross fiscal deficit to GDP ratio could be around 12.5 per cent this

year. These metrics will take quite a few years to revert to pre-COVID levels and rapid consolidation will adversely impact growth.

- Any kind of “stimulus” should be well-targeted and have a **large multiplier effect**.
- **Creating steady and well-paid employment for the bottom and middle segments:** to broaden its consumer base beyond the top 10-20 per cent of the population to improve long-term growth prospects.
- **Inclusive growth:** focus on infrastructure and manufacturing as the PLFS 2018-19 report indicates that around 50 per cent of the rural non-agriculture workforce and 35 per cent of the urban workforce is engaged in the construction and manufacturing sectors.
- **Make manufacturing easier:** the focus should be on labour reforms, fewer/quicker approvals, reducing the compliance burden, and promoting export-oriented sectors.

India needs to address traditional sore points such as the large infrastructure deficit, the weak financial sector, archaic land and labour laws, and the administrative and judicial hurdles to protect a decade of favourable demographics.

## 5. COVID - 19 and India's road to economic revival

Source – [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus – GS 3** - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context** - ‘Unlocking’ and ‘Revival package from the government’ are the two basic factors that will determine the course of India's economy for the rest of the year.

### Impact of COVID-19 on GDP

**GDP contraction-** India's economy shrank nearly 25 percent in last quarter, the most drastic fall in decades. The following sectors reflects how deep the problem is-

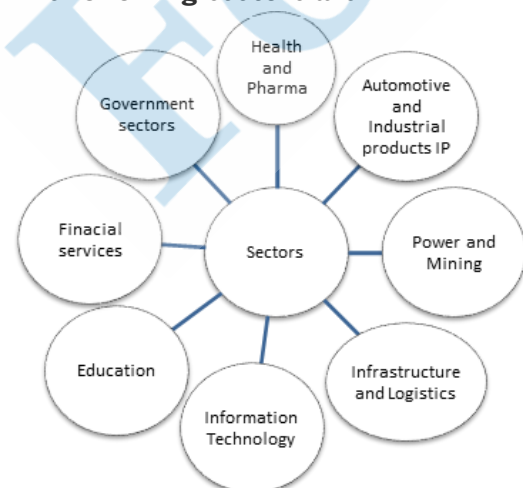
1. **Public administration-** Higher government spending was in the form of transfer payments rather than spending on goods and services, which resulted in a negative growth number.
2. **Manufacturing and Services-** The sector has been in the negative zone across the board due to the national lockdown since end of March.

### Factors that influence the growth prospects for the coming quarters

#### 1st Factor - Unlocking economy activity-

2. **Unlocking frictions** in nine core sectors and the MSME segment, which make up 75 per cent of the pre-pandemic GDP, can significantly uplift the economy.

The following sectors are-



Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

### Challenges

#### 1. Industries in which it is harder —

- **Travel or Entertainment**— It will still be in a gradual normalization process, and probably won't rebound completely until a vaccine is available.
  - **Real estate**- The present stress on home loans can hinder a revival in the residential real estate.
2. **Unchanged scenarios**- Based on the first quarter performance, 25 per cent of the economy, which would be in the services category, would probably still be struggling in the fourth quarter.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Factor - Revival package from the government

1. **Additional capital expenditure**- By increasing capital expenditure [capex], the government can begin a virtuous cycle of creating assets as well as providing employment. This will create a dual impact on the economy.
2. **Transfer of Cash benefits**- Money in the hands of people can provide an immediate sense of security and confidence, which is the cornerstone to restoring economic normalcy. This will raise the consumption and demand of the economy and can bring back the virtuous cycle in play.
3. **Banking system**- COVID-19 assistance measures undertaken by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the government such as interest rate reductions, credit guarantee and liquidity enhancement schemes are welcome steps.

### Way forward

Government can certainly make a difference by altering its stance on fiscal policy, going in for some pump-priming. It is important to address and resolve ground level issues sector-wise and industry-wise in order to formulate the new policies.

### 6. Regional Conversation series on Building Back Better

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- **GS 3**- Disaster and disaster management

**Context**- To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has launched the Regional Conversation Series on Building Back Better.

#### Socio-economic impact of COVID-19

**Uncertain Economy**- Countries in Asia and the Pacific have been experiencing sharp drops in foreign exchange inflows due to declines in export earnings, remittances, tourism and FDI. With continued lockdown measures and restricted borders, economic recovery seems uncertain.

#### Comprehensive financing strategy to safeguard the Sustainable Development Goals-

- a. To address the challenge of diminished fiscal space and debt vulnerability
- b. To ensure sustainable recovery
- c. Regional cooperation

### Measures to achieve Sustainable Development Goals by ESCAP

**Regional Conversation series on Building Back Better** - United Nation Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has launched a large-scale, coordinated and comprehensive multilateral response to the COVID-19 emergency.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- a. **Building Back Better** - An approach to post-disaster recovery that reduces vulnerability to future disasters and builds community resilience to address physical, social, environmental, and economic vulnerabilities and shocks.
- b. **Parent organization** – United Nations Economic and Social Council.

### Regional conversation in the series has following components-

1. **Improving Fiscal space** - Central banks can continue to keep the balance of supporting the economy and maintaining financial stability with tax reforms and improving debt management capacities.
2. **Environment Sustainability**- The aim is to enhance international cooperation to attain clean air. The policy paradigm must mainstream affordable, accessible and green infrastructure standards, while promoting social equality and environmental sustainability principles.
3. **Regional Cooperation**- Regionally coordinated financing policies can restart trade, reorganize supply chains and revitalize sustainable tourism in a safe manner. Governments must pool financial resources to create regional investment funds.
4. **Accelerating Digital Connectivity and Leveraging Innovation** - Pathways to digital inclusion and innovation drawing from the perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders.
5. **Facilitating more MSME's** - Addressing the impact of the crisis and mitigating its implications require focused **support for micro, small and medium enterprises** and the informal economy.

### Way forward-

Regional and sub-regional financial institutions and capacities should be harnessed to complement other financial sources. Existing institutional cooperation arrangements should be reformed and strengthened to enhance societal well-being and economic resilience of future pandemics and crises.

### 7. India's Tax Charter

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3: issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources

**Context:** In the wake of pandemic and slowdown in the economy, tax system needs efficiency in case selection and consistency in assessment.

#### Need of efficient tax system:

- a. **To improve tax collection:** An economic contraction this year will deal a severe blow to tax collections.
- b. **Rising uncertainty and reducing ability to pay:** With a shrinking tax base, any calibration of rates or the tax base is difficult since a hurried approach can have wider consequences.
- c. **Limited policy space:** the only tool available to the government to maintain its tax base is to urge voluntary compliance.
- d. **To increase compliance:** compliance is achieved through a fine balance between enforcement and encouragement. Compliance is also a function of the perception of the administration.
- e. **Enforcement-driven measures are less effective:** the taxpaying population has remained at a fraction (6 per cent) of the total population even after strict enforcement driven measures.
- f. **To encourage people:** complexity can discourage individuals from filing returns. For instance, complexity is reflected simply in the difference between the number of

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

taxpayers and the returns filed — the former exceeds that latter by around 20 million.

- g. To Build trust between the administration and the taxpayer:** the government has announced measures to usher in transparency in the system. This includes a **taxpayer's charter and faceless assessments.**

### Taxpayer's charter:

- Countries such as the UK and Canada had introduced a charter in the 1980s, while India earlier only had a citizen's charter.
- The charter is a document that lists a taxpayer's rights and obligations. However, charter cannot be enforced, unless backed by legislation.

**h. India's new charter includes:**

- **Confidentiality, right to representation and fair treatment which** are in line with global practices.
  - India's citizen charter also specifies timelines for completion of different administrative processes.
- i.** India's charter conveys a commitment to reducing compliance costs in administering tax legislation, holding its authorities accountable and publishing a periodic report of service standards.
- j.** To end personal interface, e-assessment was introduced in 2019, wherein a taxpayer could digitally respond to any query related to their return.
- k. Faceless assessment:** It seeks to automate the case selection and the distribution function of the assessing officer — assessment, scrutiny and drafting order — among various units located outside the jurisdiction of the taxpayer which will reduce corruption and delays.
- This does not apply to search and seizure cases, and cases related to tax evasion and international taxation.

### Concerns:

- 1. Poor Dispute resolution leading to poor success rate:** There is evidence of inconsistent and delayed decisions often culminating in the poor success rate of the tax department at various levels of dispute.
- 2.** Tax returns can be voluminous and the information contained therein can be unique. Therefore, taxpayers must ideally have an opportunity to explain their case in person.

### Way forward:

- It is critical that the details of tax charter are spelt out concerning how these may be implemented in practice. There is urgent need of swift coordination for the implementation of the tax Charter.
- A tax ombudsman is needed to ensure that some of these standards are met.
- **Fair and impartial system and a time-bound resolution of matters:** the new processes, with reviews and anonymity, must ensure efficiency in case selection and consistency in assessment.

## 8. Indian economic recovery - Unlock phases

Source- [The Indian Express](#), [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

**Context-** India's economy shrank nearly 24 percent in first [April-June] quarter of 2020, the most drastic fall in decades.

### Reasons for GDP contraction

- **Draconian lockdown-** India had the most intense lockdown starting from March 25, resulting in the unprecedented suspension of economic activity in the first quarter of this fiscal year.
- **Parsimonious fiscal response-** Fiscal response of the free food, subsidized credit and a handful of transfers to the most vulnerable not only limited the contribution of government spending to the economy, but was also insufficient to offset the drag caused by households and firms scaling back consumption and investment.
- **Low growth rate in consumption, investment and export** - GDP is contracted because Private consumption, investments by businesses and Import which account for over 88% of Indian total GDP, saw a massive contraction.

### Advantages of early lockdown-

- a. Slowed down the spread of the virus to provide extra time to resist.
- b. Provided extra time to ramp up the health and testing infrastructure.
- c. Lower death count as compared to other affected countries.

### Figure regarding GDP decline due to COVID-19, economics green shoot and recovering economy in unlock phase-

#### Figure 1-

- GDP being 23.9 per cent lower was primarily due to the pandemic-induced lockdown.
- India's death per lakh is an order of magnitude is lower.
- India's humane economic policy based on the principle that while GDP growth will recover but human lives that are lost cannot be brought back.

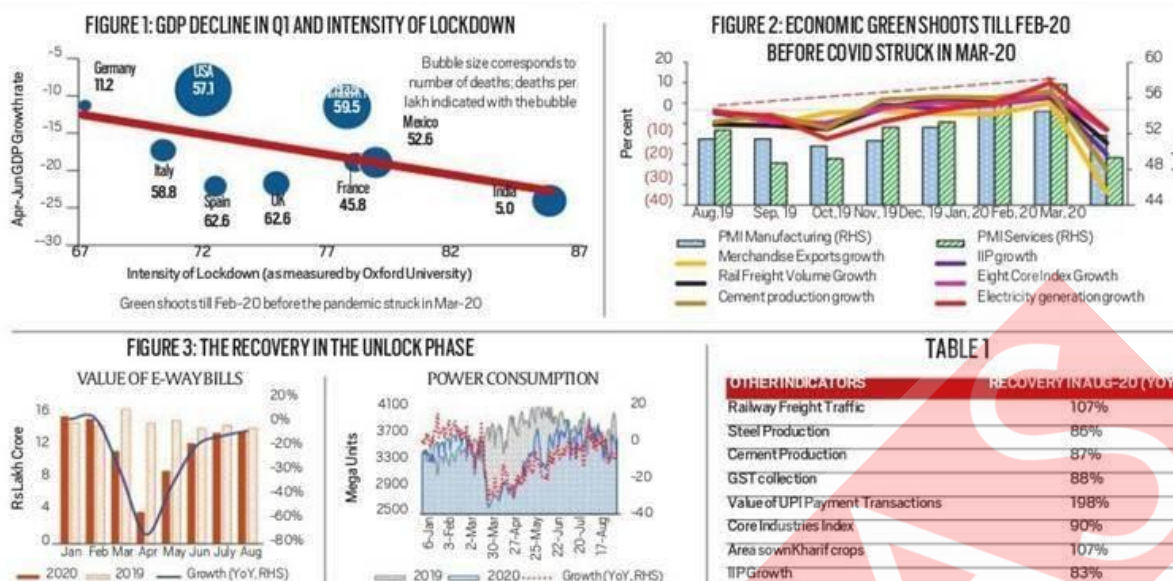
#### Figure 2-

- The green shoots before the pandemic display that the government's policy thrust since July 2019 was having the desired impact.
- The services sector has been most affected by the need for social distancing and the lockdown.
- The purchasing managers index (PMI), had trended up sharply with Services PMI registering the best growth by February before dropping precipitously below 50 per cent in March.

#### Figure 3 and table1-

- The V-shaped recovery in these indicators suggests that the government's measures are enabling a recovery in the unlock phase.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020



### Different Phases to return to normalcy-

- 1. Gradual unlocking** - Gradual process of unlocking, with supply-chain normalization and pent-up demand resulting in faster sequential momentum.
- 2. Exiting from the lockdown**- The post-lockdown pent-up demand typically fades, while operations plateau below the pre-pandemic levels
- 3. Exit path from the pandemic**- Going back to pre-pandemic levels either through the flattening of the curve, the emergence of vaccines or the development of herd immunity.
- 4. Post-pandemic new normal** - Fourth phase in which potential growth settles lower

### Way forward-

Coordinated fiscal and monetary policies are required to finance higher deficits. The RBI has focused on support via liquidity in secondary markets and other regulatory measures to bring yields down, flatten the yield curve, and incentivize banks to buy more government paper. Debt monetization, as Indonesia has already done, might be the second round of defence in coming months.

## 9. Complex Naga conflict

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus: GS3:** Linkages between Development and Spread of Extremism, Role of External State and Non-state Actors in creating challenges to Internal Security

**GS1:** Social Empowerment, Communalism, Regionalism & Secularism

**Context:** North east is strategically significant but it has largely remained marginal in the country's popular imagination as well as mainstream politics.

### Current scenario:

- The region has witnessed multiple crises including bloody insurgencies.
- It lacks the emotional resonance of the Kashmir conflict due to geographical, cultural, and ethnic factors.
- Naga insurgency: culture of extortion and the collapse of general law and order situation in Nagaland.
- Organised armed gangs run their own parallel 'tax collection' regimes. Extortions in the name of taxes have been a thorny facet of the Naga issue.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- The 'taxes' levied by insurgent groups are intertwined in almost all developmental activities in Nagaland that any serious discussion of the issue has been conveniently avoided

### Features of Naga insurgency:

- The Naga insurgency has defied a lasting solution due to
  - Politics of sub-nationalism.
  - Complexities of regional geopolitics.
  - Evolving dynamics of counterinsurgency tactics,
- It is an extraordinarily complicated conflict whose management has involved a mix of violent response and bargaining.
- The current peace talks and resolution efforts only testifies the intractable nature of the conflict.
- The major aims of the NSCN-IM has been to acquire formal recognition to this informal practice of taxation and violence through negotiations.

### Reasons for continuation of Naga insurgency:

- **Safe havens:** Naga insurgents were provided with 'safe haven' in Myanmar. China and Pakistan also provided them with vital external support at one point of time.
- **Multiple stakeholders:**
  - Government led talks are not negotiating table alone where various issues pertaining to the Naga problem are being discussed and addressed. The politics of its 'resolution' is taking place at multiple sites.
  - Various types of political systems are found among the Nagas—ranging from the pure democracy of the Angami to the autocratic rule of the Ahngs (tribal chiefs) of the Konyaks, from the gerontocracy (Tatar) of the Aos to the semi-republics of the Zeliangrongs.
  - The NSCN split into several factions, the Centre entered into peace negotiations with almost each of them.

### Peace efforts made:

- A major accommodative tactic in the form of statehood to Nagaland in 1963 was not successful.
- **Shillong Accord (1975):** The Naga National Council (NNC) leadership agreed to give up arms. Its unacceptance by several sections led to the split of NNC, whose offspring was the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN).
- **The NNC Ceasefire Agreement (1997):** The NSCN-IM signed a ceasefire agreement with the government to stop attacks on Indian armed forces. In return, the government would stop all counter-insurgency offensive operations.
- **Framework Agreement (2015) with NSCN (IM):** In this agreement, the Government of India recognised the unique history, culture and position of the Nagas and their sentiments and aspirations.

### Underlying issues:

- **Outcome of these 'ceasefires':** Creation and existence of unspoken 'spheres of influence'.
- After framework agreement with NSCN (IM), Centre realised that privileging one insurgent group could eventually **distort the contours of the final peace accord.**
- **Non-inclusion of all Naga groups:** the NSCN- Khaplang, whose cadres are reported to be inside Myanmar, is still outside the formal process. Government subsequently



enlarged the peace process by roping in seven other Naga insurgent groups under the umbrella of **Naga National Political Groups (NNPG)**.

- NSCN (I-M) is opposed to the treatment of the Naga issue as a 'law and order' problem.
- **Varying interpretation of 'sovereignty'**: Naga demand for a separate flag and a 'constitution' has been a key hindrance in building trust among the parties.
- **Disturbing regional peace through mobilisation of the Naga population**: Naga's demand of Nagalim includes various parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Assam and Myanmar as well.
- **Proliferation of weapons**: As a 'ceasefire' group, its cadres are supposed to retain their weapons inside the designated camps for self-defence only, but many influential cadres are seen moving with weapons in civilian localities.
- **Trust deficit**: NSCN (I-M) has alleged that the interlocutor has subtly manipulated the framework agreement.

The Centre must keep in mind that most of the armed insurgencies across the world do not end in either total victory or comprehensive defeat, but in a **grey zone called 'compromise'**.

#### 10. Consolidation of land holdings

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: **Gs3: Land Reforms in India**

**Context**: In the last three decades, the issue of land and consequently land reforms was an important topic.

**The elements of land reforms:**

- The abolition of intermediaries.
- Regulation and stability of the tenurial system
- Ceiling on land holding.
- Consolidation of land holdings.

**Background of land reforms:**

- After Independence, **compulsory consolidation** was replaced by voluntary consolidation in almost all states. However, considering its utility, the **National Commission of Agriculture** recommended that consolidation schemes should be made compulsory across the country.
- **Land consolidation:**
  - As much as 120 lakh Ha had been consolidated by the end of the Fourth Plan, while 440 lakh Ha of land was consolidated by the end of the Fifth Plan.
  - Punjab and Haryana have almost completed the work of consolidation of landholdings.
  - The Sixth Five Year Plan had targeted the completion of consolidation in 10 years. During its period, only 64.75 lakh hectare of land was consolidated. Progress was not uniform across the states.
  - Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu and other southern states have not even begun the task.
- Now, structure and composition of the economy changed, the importance of agriculture and consequently of land-related matters went down.
- In the last 15 years, land acquisition and computerisation of land records have become more important issue than land reforms.

### Current scenario:

- **Farmer crisis:** for instance, Rural debt waivers, farmers' agitations, farmers' suicides, migration and reverse migration in the wake of COVID-19.
- **Fragmentation of land:** The average holding size in 1970-71 was 2.28 hectares (Ha), which has come down to 1.08 Ha in 2015-16. The holdings are much smaller in densely populated states like Bihar, West Bengal and Kerala.
- **Uneven and skewed distribution:** Nagaland has the largest average farm size, Punjab and Haryana rank second and third respectively.
- **Rise in number of holdings:** the number of holdings is rising at almost the same pace as the population. These holdings are not in one chunk but in multiple sub-parcels located at different places in a village.

### Implications:

- **Poor investment:** fragmentation of land leaves no incentive for the farmer to invest in the farm land due to lack of productivity.
- **Subsistence farming:** Farmers are unable to raise plantations because the size is not substantial for them to invest in ancillary works like drip or appoint a caretaker.
- **Difficult to dispose of such fragmented land:** As there are number of landholders, that's why buyers do find it attractive to buy. It is difficult to deal with so many landholders and to arrange necessary infrastructure like road, water supply and electricity.
- Fragmentation of land and difficulty in disposing of such land leads to poor investment in rural areas.

### Significance of land consolidation:

- It helps farmers to make investments, enabled roads and irrigation channels to be laid.
- Reduced litigation.
- Allows farmers to formalise informal partitions
- Reduced inequity in landholdings to some extent.
- Enhance farmer's autonomy.
- Increased production and productivity.
- Promote rural investment.

### Way forward:

- Non-farm sector employment contributes about 60 per cent to the household income in rural areas. Therefore, policies conducive for the promotion of sectors such as small industries, education, health and other service enterprises need to be made.
- **Encourage land consolidation:** consolidated holdings would make it easy for the government or private enterprises to acquire land, and for public agencies to lay the road, pipeline or electric supply.
- **Land leasing:** It is also proposed by NITI ayog. It should be adopted on a large scale to enable landholders with unviable holdings to lease out land for investment, thereby enabling greater income and employment generation in rural areas.
- **Promote use of technology:** information technology, drone technology, and land record digitisation can be used to consolidate land.

## 11. RBI-Government Tango

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus: GS3:** Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

**Context:** In the wake of pandemic there is need of coordinated inequilibrium strategy between RBI and govt as most effective policy response.

### More on news:

- As the pandemic continues to ravage India, there is renewed discussion in policy circles on kick-starting the economy.
- There is a clear divide on when to unleash the second round of policy support.

**Need of policy inequilibrium:** India's recovery during 1957 shows that a coordinated in equilibrium strategy between the RBI and the government is the most effective policy response in the current pandemic.

### Options available:

- Both the government and the RBI have two options between them — either a contraction or an expansion.
- Four policy options that can result in a **Nash Equilibrium**. A Nash equilibrium occurs when neither the government nor the RBI can increase its payoff by unilaterally changing its action.
- **There are four options:**
  - A fiscal policy expansion and a monetary policy contraction.
  - A fiscal policy expansion and monetary policy expansion.
  - A fiscal policy contraction and a monetary policy contraction.
  - A fiscal policy contraction and a monetary policy expansion.

### The payoff scenarios:

- The government is assumed to favour an **expansionary policy** and gets maximum payoffs from a fiscal expansion, either with monetary expansion or contraction (the payoff is obviously maximum when the RBI also expands).
- The monetary authority (RBI) ideally wants to **contract the economy** to fight inflation and gets maximum payoffs from a monetary contraction, either with a fiscal contraction or expansion (the payoff is obviously maximum when government also contracts).

### What needs to be done:

- **Echoing “procedural rationality”:** To promote fiscal expansion and a monetary expansion is the desirable outcome.
  - **“Procedural rationality”:** the current pandemic is resulting in behavioural changes of individuals in terms of risk-taking. In the Indian context too, there is a massive jump in health insurance in the current fiscal, indicating behavioural changes in terms of risk-taking. In FY20, the behavioural change was to build up retirement products as households deleveraged.
  - People are now preferring small and medium size compact cars to avoid public transport.
  - For instance, many of the current companies were also born during the financial crisis, like Uber (2009), Microsoft (1975), Disney (1923), General Motors (1908) and General Electric (1890).
- **Effective communication by both the RBI and the government:** Government should manage market expectations with coordinated communication and leave

matters of financing the fiscal deficit, through measures like monetisation, to the RBI.

## 12. The twisted track of Bt cotton

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- **GS 3**- Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country

Context- The benefits of Bt cotton have been modest and short-lived.

### History of Cotton

- **Origin**- Cotton fabric from around 3,000 BCE has been excavated from the ruins of Mohenjo-daro, and archaeological findings in Mehrgarh, Pakistan, show that cotton was used in the subcontinent as far back as 5,000 BCE.
- **Domination in world trade**- Indian cotton fabrics dominated the world trade during the succeeding millennia and were exported to many places, including Greece, Rome, Persia, Egypt, Assyria and parts of Asia.

### Indigenous Varieties that have been lost

- **Desi cotton**- Much of the cotton cultivated until the 20th century was of the indigenous 'desi' variety, **Gossypium arboreum**.
- **Hybrid cotton**- From the 1990s, hybrid varieties of **G. hirsutum** were promoted. These hybrids cannot resist a variety of local pests and require more fertilizers and pesticides.
- **Damage due to infestation**- Cotton suffers from plenty of infestation from **moth pests** (Lepidopteran) such as the **Pink Bollworm (PBW)** and **sap-sucking** (Hemipteran) pests such as **aphids and mealy bugs**.
- **Man-made resistant pests**- The increasing use of synthetic pyrethroids (group of man-made pesticides) to control pests and the rising acreage under the American long-duration cotton led to the emergence of resistant pests. Resistant Pink and even American Bollworm (ABW), a minor pest in the past, began increasing, leading to a growing use of a variety of pesticides.
- **BT Cotton**- In 2002 genetically modified (GM) cotton, the plant containing the pesticide gene from the bacteria *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT), has been grown in India. This pesticide ought to protect the plant from bollworm. Thus, increasing yields and reducing insecticide spraying on the cotton plant.

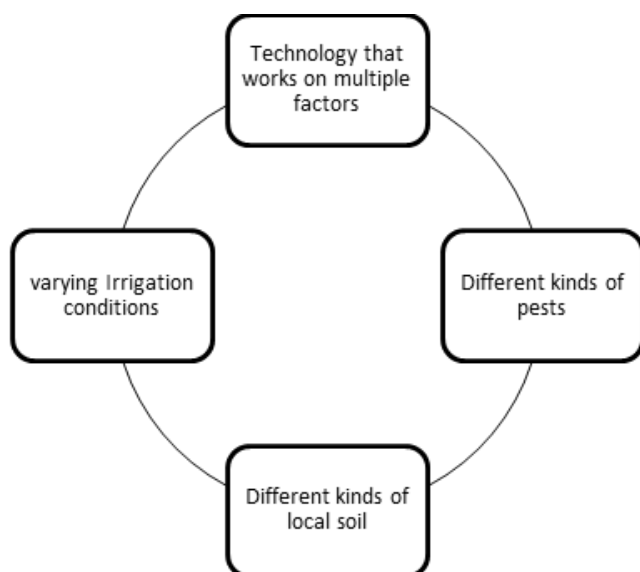
Thus, with the increasing pressure to buy hybrid seeds, the indigenous varieties have lost out over the years. Rising debts and reducing yields, coupled with increasing insect resistance, worsened the plight of cotton farmers.

### The use of BT cotton-

7. **Maharashtra**- Yields climbed in the decade after 2000, with no change in the rate of increase when Bt cotton was introduced.
8. **Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan**- Yield increase in inappropriate with the spread of Bt cotton.
9. **Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh**-
  - There are no correlation between the adoption of the variety and increase in yields. For instance- Gujarat's surge in cotton yields was 138% in 2003, even as Bt cotton was used only for 5% of land under cotton.
  - However, in Gujarat due to improvement in irrigation rise in cotton yields was observed as from 98 kg/ ha in 2003 to 224 kg/ha in 2013.

Thus, there is a strong correlation between the rise in use of fertilizers in individual states and yields, and this bias increases when it is combined with improvements in irrigation.

### Challenges in evaluating Bt cotton yield



### Way Forward

India should yield 'desi' varieties as they resist many pests and don't present the problems faced with hybrids. With the pure-line cotton varieties, high density planting and short season plants, cotton yields can be good and stand a better chance at withstanding the vagaries of climate change. Also government should make policies regarding backing for resources, infrastructure and seeds to scale up 'desi' varieties.

### 13. Aatmanirbhar bharat in toy making

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs3: Changes in Industrial Policy and their Effects on Industrial Growth

**Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants India to attain 'aatmanirbharta' in Toy manufacturing sector and called upon the country to become a global toy hub.

#### Need:

##### Famous Indian toy making centre

- Chennapatna – Bengaluru
- Chitrakoot - Uttar Pradesh
- Kondapalli - Andhra Pradesh

- **High Domestic demand:** India is home to 25 per cent of world's children aged between 0 and 12 years.
- **Inherent capacity:** India possess a rich history and culture in the field of toy making.
- **Economic value:** India's share in the global toy is just 0.5 per cent (\$500 million) whereas real market, estimation stood at \$90 billion.
- **Reduce import dependence:** 80 per cent of the toys sold in India are imported from China.
- **Labour intensive:** It offers large-scale employment to semi-skilled/unskilled workers and, especially, women.



**China's Story-the toy supplier to the world**

**Infrastructure:** Huge factories were built that can employ as many as 30,000 workers.

**Flexible labour laws:** Workers were paid on an hourly or per piece basis.

**Result:**

- Produced huge volumes which reduced the cost of production.
- Now, China manufactures almost 70 per cent of all the toys sold globally.

**Challenges in Toy making Industry**

- **Seasonal:** Shelf life of a toy is limited. **For example**, a Transformer Toy sells good during the movie releases and slows down soon thereafter.
- **Inflexible Labour laws:** Indian laws do not permit recruitment or retrenchment based on demand thereby reducing the potential of the firms to grow big.
- **Small firms:** Hamper the advantage of economies of scale make it less attractive in market.
- **Shying away by big players:** Unfriendly business laws prevented large corporate player to emerge in the sector.
- **Inefficient supply chain:** Owing to fragmented nature of the sector.
- **Input Dependence:** Every time a new toy is to be made it needs different tooling but tooling in India is costly leading to over dependence on China.

**Way forward:**

- **Flexible labour laws:** Government should allow companies to hire and retrench employees based on demand and to protect workers the government can fix minimum wages.
- **Labour pooling:** It can allow women to work at night with adequate safeguards.
- **Leveraging technology:** The domestic toy sector needs to tap into India's expertise in information technology to offer games that capture the imagination of the children.
- **Ensure quality:** A large-scale skilling programme is key to ensure of global quality
- **Branding:** Producing toys in an eco-friendly manner will help Indian toy making industries to command a premium for their toys

The ₹5,000-crore **toy cluster at Koppal** in Karnataka is a step in the right direction. For India to become a toy hub, the government needs to create large scale special economic zones focussed on toys with plug-and-play infrastructure.

**14. GST council meeting**

**Source-** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus- GS 3- Government Budgeting**

**Context-** Union Finance Minister, after the 41st GST Council meeting, proposed two options to states to resolve the issue of compensation cess shortfall under the GST regime.

### Distinction in shortfall

- **Pending payment-** GST compensation payments to states have been pending since April, with the pending amount for April-July estimated at Rs 1.5 lakh crore.
- **GST revenue gap** - The GST compensation requirement is estimated to be around Rs 3 lakh crore this year, while the cess collection is expected to be around Rs 65,000 crore – an estimated compensation shortfall of Rs 2.35 lakh crore

### GST [Compensation to States] Act, 2017

- States are guaranteed compensation for loss of revenue on account of implementation of GST for a transition period of five years (2017-22).
- The compensation is calculated based on the difference between the states' current GST revenue and the protected revenue after estimating an annualized 14% growth rate from the base year of 2015-16.

### Outcome of the 8th GST council meeting

- In case the amount in the GST Compensation Fund fell short of the compensation payable, the GST Council shall decide the mode of raising additional resources (including borrowing from the market). It could be repaid by collection of cess in the sixth year or further subsequent years.

### Challenges for the Centre

- **Borrowing challenge-**
- **Hike in interest rate-** Borrowings by the Centre would push up the bond yield rates, which in turn would push up the bond yield of the states setting off a spiral leading to hike in the interest rates for businesses and individuals.
- **Borrowing limit** -The Centre has already breached the budgeted borrowing limits for the current year in the first four months.
- **According to Attorney general statement-** Compensation gap cannot be bridged using the Consolidated Fund of India [CFI].

### Options made by the Centre

#### Option 1 –

- To provide a special borrowing window to states, in consultation with the RBI, to provide Rs 97,000 crore at a “reasonable” interest rate and this money can then be repaid after 5 years by extending cess collection.
- A 0.5 percent relaxation in the borrowing limit under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management [FRBM] Act would be provided.

#### Option 2-

- To meet the entire GST compensation gap of Rs 2.35 lakh crore this year itself after consulting with the RBI.
- No Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act relaxation has been mentioned for this option.

### Possible solution-

- **Low borrowing rate for the States-** The single window under option-1 being arranged by the Centre and the entire debt being serviced from future cess receipts will ensure that the cost remains close to the G-sec rate.
- **Attorney General suggestion-** Compensation cess levy can be extended beyond 5 years, to meet the shortfall.

### Way forward

Center needs to renege on its promise to find ways to compensate the state for loss of revenue. States should come forward and work with the Centre in the true spirit of cooperative federalism that the Council has come to be known for these past few years.

### 15. Reducing the vulnerabilities of urban employment

Source- [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context-** The contraction of the economy raises concern on the employment situation as the shrinking sectors are those that create the maximum new jobs in India.

#### What are impacts of COVID-19 on the economy?

- **GDP contraction-** India's economy shrank nearly 25 percent in last quarter, the most drastic fall in decades.
- **Public administration-** higher government spending was in the form of transfer payments rather than spending on goods and services, which resulted in a negative growth number.
- **Manufacturing and Services-** The sector has been in the negative zone (-39%) across the board due to the national lockdown since end of March.
- **Industries which have been hit harder —**
- **Travel or Entertainment (-47%)** - will still be in a gradual normalization process, and probably won't rebound completely until a vaccine is available.
- **Real estate (-50%)** - The present stress on home loans can hinder a revival in residential real estate.

#### What is the impact of lockdown on low-end informal jobs in India?

The pandemic and associated policy responses have exposed the severe vulnerabilities of urban low-end informal jobs; the share of vulnerable employment is higher in India as compare to the world.

**Vulnerable employment-** It characterized by inadequate earnings, low productivity and difficult conditions of work that undermine the basic rights of workers.

- GDP contraction and lack of demand in the economy, which results a significant dip in urban employment generation.
- In India, capital and labour are moving from low value-added activities in a sector to another sector, but not to higher value-added activities. This leads to a situation where a large proportion of the jobs being created is of poor quality (and is expected to remain so).

#### What are the possible solutions in securing the livelihoods of workers in urban areas?

##### 1. Generate more jobs-

- The focus on urban employment generation programmes should be in coordination with local governments.
- A major local initiative would be to design and implement employment-intensive investment policies.
- Private investments need to be facilitated by conducive contractual relations between labour and capital.
- Small and micro enterprises, the fulcrum of industrialization, need extra support to balance the interests between labour and capital as neither have collective bargaining powers.

- Needs to launch of an urban employment scheme oriented toward building large-scale medical, health and sanitation infrastructure in cities and towns across India.
- 2. To reduce vulnerabilities by providing decent wage and some form of job security-**
  - It is important that MGNREGA be expanded by both increasing the budgetary allocations and the guaranteed minimum number of days of work.
- 3. Prioritize urban infrastructure-**
  - Infrastructure investments would spur employment, generate earnings and contribute to small enterprise formation.
  - Construction of low-cost housing is another activity that can be carried out using labour-intensive methods, while yielding substantial collateral benefits for urban dwellers’.

#### Way forward-

Given the structure of the economy and demographic profile, Government needs to focus on reducing the vulnerabilities of urban informal jobs in the long run.

#### 16. Economic trilemma- Capital inflows, High inflation and Currency appreciation

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context-** Capital flows can bring numerous benefits to emerging markets, but they can also lead to macroeconomic imbalances.

**What are the issues in front of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) with respect to capital inflow?**

##### 1. Macro-economic imbalances-

- **Currency appreciation-** A typical concern associated with capital inflows is that they lead to currency appreciation pressures— via inflation under fixed exchange rates, and via nominal appreciation under more flexible exchange rate regimes— resulting in overvalued exchange rates. Such appreciation raises competitiveness concerns and even if temporary, could do lasting damage to the export sector through “hysteresis” effects.
- **High inflationary-** A common concern of emerging market policy makers is that large inflows lead to economic overheating, and result in positive output gaps and high inflation.

**What are possible causes for capital inflows, currency instability and high inflation?**

##### a. Capital inflows-

- A net outflow of **foreign portfolio investment [FPI] due to the lockdown.**
- The combination of weak economic growth, lackluster domestic demand and low oil prices has shifted the current account balance from deficit into surplus. Imports have fallen more than exports.
- Capital has also been flowing to India in the form of **external commercial borrowing (ECB)** by Indian corporations.

##### b. Currency instability-

- **Capital flow-** Relaxation in the capital account and lack of intervention by the RBI in regulating foreign capital inflows are also the reasons. Mostly short-term in nature, these capital flows have played a major role in strengthening the rupee.
- Exchange rate appreciation will further damage the already hard-hit export sector.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- **Perception-** Positive growth prospects among major economies created expectations that the rupee would appreciate. This encouraged capital inflows, particularly into the equity market. This was with the expectation that any rupee appreciation would also result in a proportionate increase in return on investment.
- c. **High inflationary-**
  - When the RBI buys dollars in the FX market, it sells rupees. This increases the domestic money supply and is therefore inflationary.

### **What are decisions taken by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to counter the COVID-19 impact on economy?**

RBI opted following measure in order to provide relief for the ongoing pandemic in India-

1. Reduced its policy interest rate to negative levels in real terms-
  - By cutting the repo, reverse repo rate and reducing cash reserve ratio.
  - RBI also undertakes Long Term Repo Operation and allowing further liquidity with the bank.
2. Bought government securities to push down long-term interest rates-
  - RBI buys long-term government securities and sells short-term bonds in order to lower the yields on the longer end of the maturity spectrum.
3. Allowed large capital inflows, then intervened in the foreign exchange market to prevent the appreciation of the rupee.

However, these actions are incompatible and will eventually generate a serious policy dilemma.

### **Way forward**

The constraints of the trilemma have tightened. The government and the RBI should step in to correct the misalignment in the exchange rate and allow the rupee to depreciate to move towards its true value. Moreover, RBI needs to give up either on its exchange rate objective or its inflation objective.

### **17. Income support for households and firms**

**Source-** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus-** **GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context -** Income support to households and firms for recovery post-pandemic.

### **What is Brazil's Capped Government Expenditure Act- 2016?**

**Act-** The amendment sets a cap on most federal expenditures for the next 20 years. This law effectively set a ceiling on government spending at around 20 per cent of GDP that can only be reviewed in 2026.

Outlays on healthcare, education, pensions, infrastructure, and defense will only be permitted to rise with the rate of inflation inevitably decreasing real spending per capita.

### **Purpose of the Act-**

1. Proponents of the amendment point to the need to regain market confidence and keep inflation under control to avoid a future debt crisis.
  - **Market confidence-** It is linked with foreign investors and their proposed ability to generate jobs and income.
2. The spending cap sets a transparent fiscal anchor that restored macroeconomic stability.



### What is income support and its advantages?

**Income support-** It is an income-related benefit for some people who are on a low income, but have a reason for not actively seeking work.

The outbreak has caused broad and large economic impacts on firms and households, and expenditure policy responses face the task of addressing a number of issues rapidly and simultaneously by following measures-

1. It can protect, to varying degrees, household and SME balance sheets from the extensive damage.
2. Liquidity support for firms-
  - To allows employers to retain employees.
  - Companies accept reduces working hour.
  - Keep viable firms alive.
3. Income and in-kind support for the vulnerable, including the unemployed.
4. Preserving employment linkages.
5. Direct income support to jobless, freelancers and self-employed.
6. Facilitates post crisis recovery.

**Target-** To specific households and firms involves several tradeoffs that need to be carefully managed.

- **Protection-** Targeted policy measures focusing on the most impacted households and firms can provide better protection for a given spending envelope and help contain fiscal costs, which is especially important in countries with limited fiscal space.

### Way forward

Appropriate economic measure now can have a much bigger and long-lasting impact when the pandemic has been brought under control and an economic recovery gets underway in earnest. Government needs to provide income support for households and firms now so that the recovery is not hamstrung by excessively damaged balance sheets.

## 18. Climate change and India

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Environment

**Context:** The UN Secretary General has asked India to reduce emissions by 45% by 2030.

### How did the UN put pressure on India?

- **Move in climate diplomacy:** At the Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), in New Delhi, it called on India to make no new investment in coal after 2020.
- While releasing **the latest climate report of the World Meteorological Organization**, it asked China and India too to reduce their emissions by 45% by 2030, at par with the developed countries.
- The advice was delivered after it was evident that **India, with the lowest per capita income among the G-20, is undergoing the worst economic contraction.**

### How is India's track record in climate change?

- **Country's renewable energy programme is aspiring while its energy efficiency programme is delivering**, especially in the domestic consumption sector.
- **India is one of the few countries with at least 2° Celsius warming compliant climate action**, and one of those currently on track to **fulfilling their Paris Agreement commitments.**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- Despite the accelerated economic growth of recent decades **India's annual emissions, at 0.5 tonnes per capita, are well below the global average of 1.3 tonnes per capita.**
- China, the United States and the European Union (EU) are the three leading emitters in absolute terms, whose per capita emissions are higher than this average.
- **Collective emissions: India's contribution by 2017 was only 4% for a population of 1.3 billion**, whereas the European Union, with a population of only 448 million, was responsible for 20%.

### What then lies behind the UN chief's call to India to set aside coal right away?

- **The developed nations (excluding Russia and east Europe) have reduced their annual emissions by only 1.3%**, according to the UNFCCC between 1990 and 2017.
  - This amounts to practically nil, given the unavoidable errors in such accounting.
- **The global North has concealed the reality of its continued dependence on oil and natural gas**, both equally fossil fuels, with no timeline for their phase out.
  - Their commitments into the future set the world on a path for almost 3°C warming, **they have diverted attention by uncertain talk of "carbon neutrality" by 2050.**

### What has been the First World's strategy?

- The first world countries **have turned to pressure the developing countries to bear the brunt of climate mitigation.** Their strategies include :
  - The **demonising of coal mining and coal-based power generation**
  - Promoting claims **that immediate climate mitigation would miraculously lower domestic inequalities**
  - **Ensuring climate adaptation** and promoting Third World natural resources as active sites of moderation and not adaptation
  - **Promoting theories of "de-growth"** or the neglect of industrial and agricultural productivity for the pursuit of climate change mitigation.
- All of these are accompanied by **increasing appeals to First World financial and development institutions to force this agenda on to developing countries.**
- **The UN secretary has rarely called out the U.S. for its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement**, or called out **the EU nations for their long-term reliance on gas and oil** while hiding behind their irresistible pretentious focus on coal.
- The UN Secretary has **been promoting the agenda of carbon neutrality by 2050** as national level goals applicable to all, **without any reference to global and international equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in climate action.**

### What will be the consequences if India indeed ceases all coal investment from this very year?

- Currently, **roughly 2 GW of coal-based generation is being decommissioned per year**, which indicates that by 2030, India will have only 184 GW of coal-based generation.
- Meeting the 2030 **electricity consumption target of 1,580 to 1,660 units per person per year**, based on the continuation or a slight increase of the current decadal growth rate, **will require anywhere between 650 GW to 750 GW of renewable energy.**

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

- Currently, **manufacturing growth powered by fossil fuel-based energy is itself a necessity, both technological and economic**, for the transition to renewables.
- **70% to 80% of all generation capacity is possible through renewables depends on technology development** which includes improvements in:
  - The efficiency of conversion of energy from its source into electricity.
  - The management of the corresponding electricity grids.
  - The advancement in storage technologies.
  - **Dependence on external sources: Lacking production capacity in renewable energy technologies and their large-scale operation**, deployment on this scale will expose India to increasing and severe dependence on external sources and supply chains.

#### Way forward

- The UN Secretary General, taken all together, amounts to asking for the virtual de-industrialisation of India, and stagnation in a low-development trap for the vast majority of its population.
- India must unanimously reject the UN Secretary General's call and restate its long-standing commitment to an equitable response to the challenge of global warming.

#### 19. GST Compensation disagreement between the Centre and the States

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- **GS 3-** Government Budgeting.

**Context-** The onus would be on Centre to resolve this impasse with regard to compensation cess of GST reforms.

#### What is GST compensation?

- The Centre is obliged to pay to the States, for a period of five years, compensation for revenue shortfalls in return for their having ceded the power to levy the multiple taxes that were subsumed into the GST.
- The compensation is calculated based on the difference between the states current GST revenue and the protected revenue after estimating an annualized 14% growth rate from the base year of 2015-16.

#### What is current GST compensation situation?

1. **Pending payment-** GST compensation payments to states have been pending since April, with the pending amount for April-July estimated at Rs 1.5 lakh crore.
2. **GST revenue gap** - The GST compensation requirement is estimated to be around Rs 3 lakh crore this year, while the cess collection is expected to be around Rs 65,000 crore – an estimated compensation shortfall of Rs 2.35 lakh crore.

#### What were the Options given by the Center to the States?

##### Options made by the Centre-

##### Option 1 –

- To provide a special borrowing window to states, in consultation with the RBI, to provide Rs 97,000 crore at a “reasonable” interest rate and this money can then be repaid after 5 years by extending cess collection.
- A 0.5 percent relaxation in the borrowing limit under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management [FRBM] Act would be provided.

##### Option 2-

- To meet the entire GST compensation gap of Rs 2.35 lakh crore this year itself after consulting with the RBI.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- No Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act relaxation has been mentioned for this option.

### Issues raised by the States-

1. Several States have rejected both options and some, including Tamil Nadu- have urged the Centre to rethink in view of their essential and urgent spending needs to curb the pandemic and spur growth.
2. Enforcing a cut in compensation and bringing in a distinction between GST and Covid-related revenue loss is unconstitutional.
3. The two options offered to the States would impose huge debts on the states and as a result many would not even be able to pay salaries.
4. States simply do not have the headroom to borrow money to make up for the GST shortfall as every single State has reached its FRBM [Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management] limit.

### What are the expected reasons for Revenue shortfall for the fiscal year 2020-21?

1. **Corporate tax collection loss** - Companies in sectors such as airlines, hotels and consumer durables will show losses and therefore, pay less tax.
2. **Less income tax collection** - Large numbers of workers have lost employment and/or have faced salary cuts. Many private firms are also likely to incur losses. So, income tax collection will also be short by much more than 20%.
3. **Less import** - The Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) and customs duties will also decline with fall in import.
4. The production **of luxury and sin goods has been severely impacted** and they pay the high rate of tax — 18%, 28% and cess on top.
5. The direct tax/GDP per cent may be expected to fall from 5.5% last year to less than 4% this fiscal.

### Way forward

Center needs to renege on its promise to find ways to compensate the state for loss of revenue. Only the Centre is in a position to do such massive borrowing as Reserve Bank has itself said that for the Central government to borrow would be both easier and simpler. Central government would pay 2% less interest than the states.

## 20. Market Failure

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: Gs3: Issues related to Direct and Indirect Farm Subsidies and Minimum Support Prices

Context: Recently, an allied party's Minister of NDA government has resigned in protest against the farmer Bills.

### What was the subject matter in the bill?

- Bills seek to replace ordinances issued on key aspects of the farm economy — trade in agricultural commodities, price assurance, farm services including contracts, and stock limits for essential commodities.

### What are the issues with the bill?

- **Fear of ending MSP** (Minimum Support Prices): Fears that the free market philosophy of the bill could put an end to MSPs for produce that has so far been centrally procured by the government.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- **Against cooperative federalism:** Several States have already liberalised agricultural marketing, amending their APMC Acts, and some have allowed regulated private commerce including direct marketing.
- **No levy/fee:** provisions in the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, providing for unfettered commerce in designated trade areas outside APMC jurisdictions without levy of any fee.
- **Removing APMC's will not bring in private investment:** for example, Bihar removed the APMC system. The markets suffered loss of fee revenue but with no significant private investments in the sector.
- **Inaccessible APMC's:** The small farmers, who form the majority has access levels to markets under the APMC system at the rate of one for an area of 434.48 sq. km on average. It is below the recommendation of the National Commission on Farmers (NCF), at one market for 80 sq. km.

### What needs to be done?

- Strengthen competition.
- Massively fund the expansion of the APMC market system.
- Remove trade cartels and provide farmers good roads, logistics of scale and real time information.
- Empower farmers through State Farmers Commissions recommended by the NCF, to bring about a speedy government response to issues.
- Bring strong institutional arrangements.
- Agriculture and markets are State subjects, and there should be no tinkering with the MSP and Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC), that form the backbone of existing trading arrangements.

There is no guarantee that liberalisation bring investment. Also, government need to consider that **laissez-faire policy** may harm lakhs of unorganised small farmers, who have been remarkably productive and contributed to the economy even during a pandemic.

### 21. The genuine concerns of farmers

Source- [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country, – different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints

**Context-** The Prime Minister blamed the Opposition parties for misleading farmers about the three Bills on agriculture in Parliament.

#### What are the bills and their purposes that have been protested by the farmers?

The farmers have been protesting against the bills ever since it was promulgated as ordinances in June. The bills are following-

1. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020.
2. The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020.
3. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

#### The purposes of the bills are-

- The Bills aim to do away with government interference in agricultural trade by creating trading areas free of middlemen and government taxes outside the structure of Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) along with removing restrictions of private stockholding of agricultural produce.
- Farmer organisations also agree that there is excessive political interference.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- There is need for reform as far as functioning of mandis are concerned.

### What is the issue in implementing these bills?

Several reforms at the level of the central government as well as at the State level have been introduced and welcomed by farmers. However, the issue is not about the Bills-

1. **Avoiding stakeholders-** The government has failed to have or hold any discussion with the various stakeholders including farmers and middlemen.
2. **Rejecting the role of state government-** The government didn't consult the bills with State governments even though the subject of trade and agriculture are part of subjects on the State list.
3. **Corporation of agricultural sector-** The farmer organisations see these Bills as part of the larger agenda of corporatisation of agriculture and a withdrawal of government support.
4. **APMC Mandis and MSP-** The immediate concern has been the attempt to weaken the APMC mandis and eventual withdrawal of the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) guaranteed by the government.
5. **Ignoring poor farmers conditions-** The preference for corporate interests at the cost of farmers' interests and a lack of regulation in these non-APMC mandis are cause for concern.

Therefore, the attempt to pass the Bills without proper consultation and given the track record of this government on many issues including demonetisation of 2019, the introduction of Goods and services tax, and many more adds to the mistrust among various stakeholders including State governments and farmers.

### What are the roles of APMCs Mandis and the concerns for farmer?

1. Plays an important role of price discovery essential for agricultural trade and production choices.
2. Most farmers are familiar with the functioning of mandis and see it as an essential part of agricultural trade despite shortcomings.

### Farmers concerns-

- Farmers in these Punjab and Haryana have genuine concern about the continuance of the MSP-based public procurement given the large-scale procurement operations in these States
- After the abolition of mandis, farmers in Bihar on average received lower prices compared to the MSP for most crops.
- Despite the shortcomings and regional variations, farmers still see the APMC mandis as essential to ensuring the survival of MSP regime.
- The vilification of APMCs and the middlemen who facilitate trade in these mandis is a poor reflection of the understanding of functioning of agricultural markets as The middlemen are a part of the larger ecosystem of agricultural trade, with deep links between farmers and traders

### Way Forward

The government should make reforms in its rising input costs, so that farmers do see the market providing them remunerative prices. At the same time, ad hoc interventions by the government such as raising import duties on masur and a ban on onion exports should be taken into reconsideration to erase the suspicion about the intent of the government to leave the price discovery mechanism on the market. If government will take steps for the benefit of the farmers, instead of pushing them into a miserable condition alone. Only then

farmers may end their protests and place their trust on the government and its stated objectives of these reforms.

## 22. Aatma nirbhar action plan required

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Economy

**Context:** Action plans should be prepared to ensure success of Atma nirbhar Bharat project.

### What is ANBA and why is there a need for it?

- India's dependence on other countries has been exposed in several areas ever since the spread of covid-19. The country should **now refocus on manufacturing, and be self-reliant.**
- **The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (ANBA) was announced as a part of the post-pandemic economic revival package.**
- **Rs 20 lakh crore (10 per cent of India's GDP)** was set aside for the purpose.
- **Self-reliance and self-esteem:** Only a self-reliant nation can serve the diverse needs of its population and provide them with choices.
- A content nation can also contribute to the welfare of other counties with a sense of self-pride.
- **It is a rare opportunity for India to reinvent itself, economically** because of the COVID-related pressures and the unfortunate border tensions with its largest import partner.
- **India imports goods from China worth \$65 billion**, these imports include raw materials, components and intermediates required in producing finished goods by a large number of enterprises across several sectors, including MSMEs.
- For example, **the pharmaceuticals sector imports nearly 70 per cent of its raw material and drug intermediates.**

### Is the thought of reviving the local born out of unrealistic enthusiasm?

- **It may not be feasible to replace all Chinese imports** in the near future.
- It may also be **debatable if the end goal is to replace the entire chain of imports from a country.**
- Some economists pick up, **a majority demand for dumping all that is of Chinese origin, may be forgotten soon.**
- Experts and industrialists do state that the ANBA is an excellent initiative and gives India the opportunity to board on the self-reliance drive.
- **A major part of the Vocal for Local mission rests on the MSMEs which are struggling for survival.** However, the reforms announced as part of the ANBA should put them on a stronger footing. Some reforms are:
  - Collateral free credit
  - Expanding the scope of the sector
  - An online market place exclusively for it
  - The proposal that governments will pick up equity stakes in enterprises that show growth potential

### What are the positives of ANBA?

- **Creation of large scale employment opportunities** for both the skilled and unskilled workforce.
- **A stronger manufacturing base will also lead to positive derivatives** related to the supply-purchase of local raw material and capacity building of allied manufacturing units.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- **ANBA has a well-defined charter.** Even, then implementing the reforms would require innovative ways to overcome day to day obstacles and challenges.

### What are the steps to be taken?

- **An action plan should be drawn by the Niti Aayog** listing all possible categories of targets under the ANBA and the Vocal for Local Mission.
- **A monitoring agency will review and suggest course correction** to ensure that no delay is allowed to build.
- **Each state/UT will develop an action plan in consonance with the umbrella plan with a similar agenda and a healthy mechanism.**
- A separate **organisation created by each state will be responsible for the implementation of the action plan**, as well as running all related operations on a day-to-day basis.
- It will **also conduct regular studies to identify local and global market trends and invite competitive solutions** to meet market demands.
- Each district will work out a more detailed action plan, and license of responsibilities for ground level officers and departments.
- **The district action plan should incorporate the setting up of certain bodies/groups.**
- **An autonomous authority to be headed by an additional DM** or a technocrat to manage and pilot the implementation of the listed measures on ground, and be solely accountable for timely delivery.
- **Scaling up and setting up of a certain number of companies/ industries/ manufacturing units** over a fixed time period.
- **The authority will also set up a 24X7 facilitation centre to help the existing and the newcomer companies** and resolve their doubts and disputes.
- This agency will be responsible for **creating public awareness amongst all stakeholders.**
- Another group in the **district authority will be tasked to lay out detailed norms and guidelines on safe working conditions in each sector.**
- It will be responsible for matters related to **workers' families welfare, particularly in respect of health, education, and decent civic conditions.**
- The state/ UT and district authorities should be **headed by a few hand-picked officers.**
- **The state government will facilitate regular interactions amongst district authorities and help develop sector-specific strategies.**

### Way forward

The ANBA is a mission to empower the people of India. People of the country and executive machinery should keep their faith in the spirit and mandate of this mission. It will in all likelihood become a benchmark of how governments and their various organisations can work in a mission mode.

### 23. Future of Work - Industry 4.0

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-3- S&T

**Context:** Technological change need not cause a destruction of productive jobs and that is why a plan is required for industry 4.0

### How will technological change affect the jobs in India?

- **Size of youth:** India's global significance in mastering the future of work and employing the largest global unit of 820 million youth is huge.
- **Government policies and labour markets:** They should sustainably manage the Fourth Industrial Revolution which triggered "storm of creative destruction" in employment.
- **The potential of capital-labour substitution** and the new ecosystem of software/AI/automation-mediated work will overturn 100-year-old ideas of work and employment.
- **Lack of jobs:** The ILO warns that the future may not hold enough jobs for everyone and 428 million workers in low middle-income countries like India may not find new jobs.
- **Change in the nature of jobs:** In 5-10 years, 10 per cent of human jobs will be substitutable and 50-70 per cent of jobs could be partially automated.
- Two-thirds of jobs in developing countries including India are prone to automation.
- **Tech Economy 4.0 "transformers"** in India's world of work include robotics, AI, the Internet of Things, cloud computing, supply chain 4.0, 3D printing, big data, digital payments, retail, health, education and professional services.
- **The most-affected labour-intensive sectors** include textiles, finance, construction, hospitality, travel, tourism, media, electronics, mining, agriculture, transportation and entertainment.
  - **The Indian ICT sector**, another major employer, is susceptible to AI/robots replacing workers in its major IT export markets.
  - **The retail sector**, the largest employer of lower skill youth, is job shedding as e-retail accelerates and human jobs in logistics, warehousing and delivery services are being robotised.

### Explain the char dham roadmap for steering technological change?

We could steer technological change to four powers of possible destinations or Char Dhams:

- **Gyaan Dham** is establishing a national observatory for scoping the tech-to-work equation and its trajectory.
- **Databases on existing and future trends**, sector by sector, need to be created.
- India's future of Tech-Economy 4.0/ employment tie using a human power by 2030 compass and hinge relevant strategies towards that.
- **Kaushalya Dham** means **nurturing "human capabilities"** for Tech-Economy 4.0 work. To meet labour market needs, potential skill gaps must be closed through the NEP and comprehensive training infrastructure.
- **Suniyojan Dham** involves transformative investments in multi-stakeholder ecosystems to empower the youth and women through future-of-work transitions.
- It is vital to raise institutions, job-rich sectors and MSMEs, close the rich-poor, rural-urban and gender gap in access to high-quality digital and physical infrastructure and tools.
- **Samajik Nyaya Dham** means ensuring a just transition through a new social compact among all stakeholders and a universal social protection floor. A human-centred and equity-based approach in future labour market policies and standards is needed.
- **Local and rural production**, care and green economies and social and health services must be fostered as job generators.
- **Upakram Dham** involves taking special initiatives enabling India to leverage the world's third-largest ICT workforce to pole-vault into Tech4 excellence.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.

Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- India's diversity, scale for neural net, data richness, huge base of engineers, mathematicians and coders of AI available or trainable at scale, and decent ecosystems in ICT metros are critical assets.

### Way forward

Following this Char Dham roadmap, we could avert the alarming prospect of a job-poor future. India's ambition of sustainably transitioning to Tech 4.0 future of work is recognised in PM Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat.

### 24. India's jobs conundrum

**Source:** [LiveMint](#)

**Syllabus: GS3:** Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

**Context:** A country progresses when small and mid-sized firms grow, and create jobs alongside. India over the years is facing the **problem of inadequate mid-sized firms**.

#### How are job creation and firms' size related?

- **Contribution of Large firms:** McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) in a recent report titled India's turning point, an economic agenda to spur growth and jobs points out that India has around 600 large firms which earn a revenue of more than \$500 million per year.
- **Higher productivity:** The labour productivity of large firms is 11 times higher than that of the overall economy.
- **Growth in export and employment generation:** These firms are also responsible for 40% of exports and employ 20% of the people in the direct formal workforce.

#### Why does India have fewer large firms?

- **India's missing middle of mid-sized firms:** It's the mid-sized firms which grow into large firms, and create jobs and competition along the way.
- **Slow corporate growth:** slow corporate growth led to slow economic growth and a situation where only 77 mid-sized firms became large between 2012 and 2018.
- **Chain reaction:** since 2017, India's GDP is free falling and in 2018, the revenues of large Indian firms amounted to 48% of nominal GDP compare to 58% in 2012.
- **Comparison with Other countries:**
  - The contribution made by large firms in other emerging economies like China, Malaysia and Thailand was 1.5 to 1.6 times that of India.
  - India has **fewer large firms** relative to gross domestic product (GDP) than China, Malaysia, South Korea and Thailand.
  - As per MGI, India's 1,500 mid-sized firms per \$1 trillion of GDP, with revenue between \$40 million and \$500 million, are only about half the number in peer emerging economies relative to their GDP.

#### What are the possible reasons for mid-sized firms?

- India's high **cost of compliance**.
- The small and mid-sized firms **lack the organizational resources** to manage costly procedures.
- Due to **cumbersome procedure**, it takes 1,445 days to enforce a contract in India. However, in South Korea it takes 290 days.
- Lack of access to low-cost capital stops firms from growing bigger.



**What steps should be taken to tackle this?**

- Lack of capital problem can be tackled by **deepening India's capital markets**.
- India needs to triple the size of its large firms by 2030.
- Unlocking land supply and allow prices to fall by 20% to 25%.
- Creation of flexible labour markets, privatizing the 30 largest PSU firms.
- Efficient power distribution.
- Improving ease of doing business and sector specific policies to improve productivity.

**25. Farmer's protest on new farm bills**

**Source-** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support price

**Context-** There have been a strong protests from farmers, especially from the states Punjab and Haryana against three Bills on agriculture reforms introduced in the Parliament to replace the ordinances issued during the lockdown.

**What are the new Farm Bills?**

Three Farm Bills that are bond for contention-

- The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020.
- The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020.
- The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

**Why are these bills being opposed?**

**1. Against the spirit of cooperative federalism-**

- Since agriculture and markets are State subjects – entry 14 and 28 respectively in List II – the ordinances are being seen as a direct encroachment upon the functions of the States.
- The three ordinances passed by the Centre are viewed as against the spirit of cooperative federalism enshrined in the Constitution.

**2. Absence of any regulation in non-APMC-**

- According to farmers, the proposed bills give the preference for corporate interests at the cost of farmer's interests.
- In the absence of any regulation in non-APMC, the farmers may find it difficult to deal with corporates, as they solely operate on the motive of profit seeking.

**3. End of MSP [Minimum Support Price]-** By allowing trade zones to come up outside the APMC area, as a sign of ending the assured procurement of food grains at minimum support price.

- There is no mention whatsoever of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) regime, which is the lifeline of poor farmers and their key to survival, as also the survival of the nation's agriculture sector.

**4. Lack of consultation-** Farmers have argued that there is hastily attempt to pass the bills without proper consultation with any major stakeholders, farmer's representatives or any state governments before bringing the ordinances.

**5. Non-Favourable Market Conditions-** While retail prices have remained high; data from the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) suggest a deceleration in farm gate prices for most agricultural produce.

- With rising input costs, farmers do not see the free market based framework providing them remunerative prices.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- These fears gain strength with the experience of States such as Bihar which abolished APMCs in 2006. After the abolition of mandis, farmers in Bihar on average received lower prices compared to the MSP for most crops.

### 6. Food security undermined-

- Easing of regulation of food items would lead to exporters, processors and traders **hoarding farm produce** during the harvest season, when prices are generally lower, and releasing it later when prices increase.
- This could undermine food security since the States would have no information about the availability of stocks within the State.

### 7. Deregulation of food items-

- The Essential Commodities [Amendment] bill removes cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes from the list of essential commodities, which deregulate the production, storage, movement and distribution of these food commodities.

### Way forward-

Centre needs to prevent the farmers from falling into the clutches of the monopolistic big corporates and need to enlarge the market for agriculture produce while preserving the safety net principle through MSP and public procurement. Government must provide MSP not just on wheat and rice but all other crops so that farmers are encouraged to diversify.

## 26. Agriculture sector and the benefits of the farms bills

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- **GS 3-** Transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints

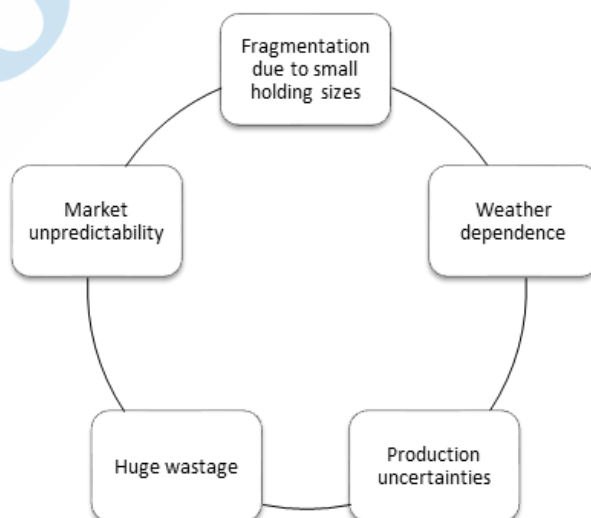
Context- The will to implement the long-pending transformative reforms has been finally demonstrated by the PM.

### How is the agriculture sector working on India's Independence and till present?

- **1947-** Agriculture contributed 50 per cent to the national income and employed more than 70 per cent of the nation's workforce.
- **2019-** Agriculture contributed 16.5 per cent to the national income while the sector still employs more than 42 per cent of the workforce.

### What are the challenges in the Indian Agriculture market and what are the methods to address these challenges?

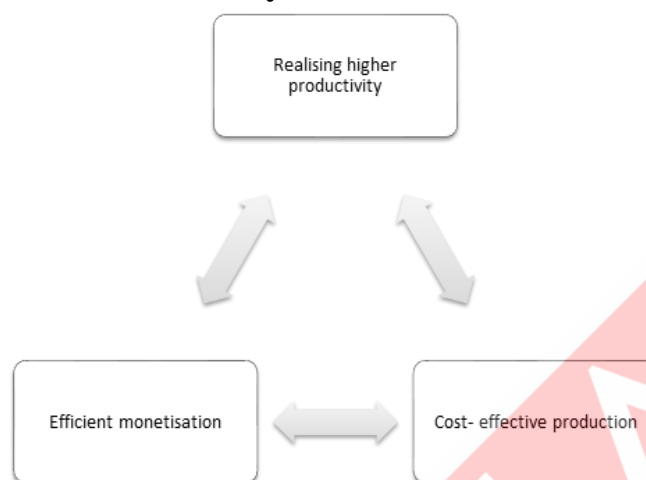
#### The Challenges-



Created with love ❤️ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

Therefore, this makes agriculture risky and inefficient with respect to both input and output management.

**The challenges need to be addressed by-**



**What are the steps taken by the government?**

**1. The government has taken various steps including the implementation of the Swaminathan committee's recommendations, such as-**

- a. Fixing MSP at least 50 per cent profits on the cost of production.
- b. Increasing the agri budget by more than 11 times in the past 10 years.
- c. The establishment of e-NAM mandis.
- d. An Agriculture Infrastructure Fund of Rs 1 lakh crore under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Package.
- e. The scheme for the formation of 10,000 FPOs.
- f. The removal of the mandi tax.
- g. The creation of a single market.
- h. Facilitating contract farming.

**2. Farm bills provides for-**

- a. **Alternative trading channel-** It will create an ecosystem where farmers and traders enjoy the freedom of choice of sale and purchase of farming produce to facilitate remunerative prices to farmers through competitive alternative trading channels.
- b. **Tax free market-** It will promote barrier-free inter-state and intra-state trade and commerce of farming produce outside the physical premises of markets notified under state agricultural produce marketing legislation. Thus, they will facilitate farmers with more buyers for their produce at their doorsteps.
- c. **Transparency in the system-**
  - This framework will facilitate greater certainty in quality and price, adoption of quality and grading standards, linkage of farming agreements with insurance and credit instruments to transfer the risk of market unpredictability from the farmer to the sponsor and also enable the farmer to access modern technology and better inputs.

**What are the precautions which are taken by the government to secure the farmers from fraud?**

In order to ensure that our farmers are not short changed or cheated by anyone, the bills have several safeguards such as-

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

1. **Protection of land-** The prohibition of sale, lease or mortgage of farmers' land and farmers' land is also protected against any recovery.
2. **Farming agreements-** Cannot be entered into, if they are in derogation of the rights of a sharecropper.
3. **Flexible prices-** Farmers will have access to flexible prices subject to a guaranteed price in agreements.
4. **Sponsor's active role-** The sponsor has to ensure the timely acceptance of delivery and payment of produce to farmers and farmers' liability is limited to only the advance received and cost of inputs provided by the sponsor.
5. **In case of any dispute-** It will be resolved through a Conciliation Board, to be constituted by the sub-divisional magistrate (SDM), failing which an aggrieved party may approach the concerned SDM for the settlement of the dispute.
6. **Power of the SDM-** SDM can order the recovery of the amount in dispute, impose penalties and also pass an order restraining the trader for the trade and commerce of scheduled farmers' produce for such a period as deemed fit.

### Way Forward

The people of India must not allow falsehood and political opportunism to overshadow the key measures and mechanisms enunciated through this landmark reform, which finally puts the farmers first. These farm bills will bring transformative changes in our agricultural sector and reduce wastage, increase efficiency, unlock value for our farmers and increase farmers' incomes for the sustainable growth of the farming sector.

### 27. Will the farm bills benefit farmers?

Source: [The Hindu](#)

#### Gs3: Issues related to Direct and Indirect Farm Subsidies and Minimum Support Prices

**Context:** Recently, three farm bills were cleared by Parliament.

1. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill,
2. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill and
3. The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill

### What are the concerns about the bill?

- Lack of regulation may undermine farmers interest.
- Lack of regulatory oversight and reporting.
- Non-transparent and relies too much on private players.
- Devoid of the **State intervention** in agriculture, and agricultural policy.
- The bill assumes that private players don't exist and APMC has monopoly.
- Creating an alternative outside APMC is good measure as there will be no mandi fee. However, APMC continues to set the reference price even for private players.
- In the absence of APMC, there will no alternative for a large market that can actually set price signals.
- No proper grievance redressal mechanism in no APMC era.
- The farm bills aiming to enhance choices for farmers as they will get better prices for their produce. However, **market prices or farmers' incomes are not simply dependent on the market structure.**
- During the pandemic, market prices are sluggish because demand is sluggish. Farmers' incomes are actually seeing a period of stagnation.
- Other concerns of farmers are ignored in the bill such as growing input cost.

- The bills are not clear about the **procurement policy of the government.**

**What are the possible consequences of these farm bills?**

- **Create Monopoly:** Big retail players and corporates could **end up monopolising farm trade** and vitiate farmers' interests. Global experience such as, the French dairy producers and the dairy farmers' co-operatives in the U.S. **Buyer cartels will start fixing the market price.**
- **Create re-intermediaries:** There is unpredictability as farmers bear most of the risk and big players mostly co-opt with them. Co-opting with farmer will create large set of intermediaries because big players will find it expensive to deal with large number of farmers.
- **Big capital moving into the agricultural commodity trade:** The pandemic has caused a massive disruption for capital and profits as well. However, agricultural goods have suffered less because these are necessary items in consumption baskets.

**What needs to be done?**

- **Policy interventions:** In the form of subsidies or procurement. There is MSP and procurement prices but certain policy documents were presented before the government about replacing the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and PDS with cash transfers.
- **Need to regulate FCI:** Since 1990s India is not facing food shortage but problem of hunger still persists. This is because of maladministration.
- **Need to regulate private players:** Post-liberalisation, private players and capital have a much greater role to play in the economy but the concerns regarding the government public procurement system needs to be addressed to quell fears.
- **Bring clarity:** ensuring MSP and creating an alternative outside APMC to encourage private players is self-defeating. Government cannot say they want private players but want to fix MSP also.

**28. Environment and Development**

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Environment

**Context:** Firms should focus on creating green supply chains instead of following a few environmental practices.

**What is environment sustainability?**

- **Environmental sustainability** is understood as buying greener products, avoiding hazardous materials, energy optimisation, and waste reduction.
- **Sustainability, an essential issue of global importance:** It has been recognised by The United Nations Millennium Development Goals and the World Bank Group's global practices.

**What is lacking in the steps towards environment sustainability taken by the firms?**

- **Firms reluctant to engage:** Most of them don't want to compromise on the economic benefits by engaging in environmentally beneficial activities, while
  - Some others have positioned environmental practices at the forefront due to legislation, and industry and government commitments.
- **Fails to see the bigger picture:** Due to compelling regulatory norms in many firms, high importance has been given to environmentalism. However,
  - In this process, organisations and manufacturing sector; get so serious about the waste reduction and energy efficiency improvements that they fail



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

to recognise the **need for restructuring their learning necessities** and see the big picture of environmentalism.

- **Short-term actions:** Government norms, organisational policies and corporate environmental responsibility projects to drive environment-friendly practices are mostly short-term actions towards environmental sustainability.

### What are the long-lasting benefits of environment sustainability?

- **Green supply chain practices:**
  - Green procurement, green manufacturing, green distribution, and reverse logistics are useful.
  - Practices starting from purchase of eco-friendly raw material to disposal/ reuse/ recycle of used products, employees, suppliers, distributors, retailers and customers will be able to join in environmental concerns in the daily operations of a firm.
  - Green supply chain practices enable organisational learning in environmental sustainability.
- **Connections between green supply chain practices, organisational performance and learning:**
  - A survey of 220 respondents across 21 manufacturing units in India was conducted.
  - These inter-linkages not only lead to a long-lasting natural drive towards environmental performance, but also to higher economic performance.
  - The positive impacts of environmentalism can only be felt in the long term when they get rooted into organisational learning systems through green supply chain practices.
  - The resultant learning system eases the knowledge flow in the organisation and help firms to strategize for better performance, bearing in mind the environmental aspects.
  - Environmental sustainability is ensured from the source (willingness) and not through force (regulations).
- **Understanding links:**
  - Drawing connections between green supply chain practices, corporate environmental performance, corporate economic performance and the dimensions of learning organisations in firms is **necessary for an organisation's progress and environmental protection in society**.
  - Understanding of these certain links will allow managers and experts to shape their organisational values, work practices, and performances for the greater good of society.

### Way forward

- When the different manufacturing supply chain realise the essential benefits associated with organisational learning dimensions, their drive towards environmentalism will increase.
- Policymakers should support this thinking by not just imposing environmental practices as regulatory norms but by highlighting on the creation of green supply chain-based learning systems in manufacturing.

## 29. Demand to Rework Inflation Targeting Regime

Source: [Indian Express](#)

**Gs3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.**

**Context:** Recently the monetary policy committee (MPC) concluded that elevated inflation has constrained it from easing policy rates.

**Why there is demand to rework inflation targeting regime?**

- **Economy slowdown:** Since the growth rate is falling that is why question have been raised regarding the inflation targeting framework.
- **Growth-inflation quagmire:** there is demand for the government to relax the inflation targeting framework to spur growth and demand.

**Suggestions:**

- **Greater tolerance for higher levels of inflation** either by adjusting the acceptable range of inflation upwards, or by extending the period over which the MPC has to meet its inflation target.
- **Shift from headline to core-inflation** as the nominal anchor of monetary policy.
- **Incorporate other indicators such as nominal GDP** explicitly into the framework.
- Doing away with the inflation targeting framework altogether.

**What are possible way outs and their implications?**

**Easing policy rate:**

- It will inject a degree of uncertainty and unpredictability in monetary policy.
- Frequent revisions will destabilize household expectations.
- It will signal a lack of commitment to maintaining price stability.

**Shift to a multiple indicator structure:**

- This move harks back to the pre-MPC days when there was **far greater uncertainty** over monetary policy.
- **No clarity over the indicator** that was dictating the stance of the RBI governor.
- Absence of a well-defined anchor will **reduce transparency and accountability** from the central bank.

**Central bank financing the Centre's capital expenditure on a regular basis.**

- **Monetisation should be the last resort:** The perils of falling back on this long-discarded policy need to be guarded against.
- **Tilt the balance of power in favour of the government:** Government owing to its short-term political imperatives will be seduced by the apparent simplicity of this idea without considering its long-term repercussions.
- **Channel funds to revenue expenditure:** It will lead to a situation wherein the entire budgeted capital expenditure is financed by the central bank.
- **Blur the line between fiscal and monetary policy:** Giving a central bank a degree of control over the government's expenditure priorities will allow unelected technocrats to be in charge of determining the expenditure priorities of the government. It will result in the **fiscalisation of monetary policy**.

**Pledge Government shares in companies to avail loans against them:**

- It raises questions whether a sovereign should pledge assets to borrow in the local currency.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2020

- In 1991, India had pledged gold for a foreign currency denominated loan not a local currency loan.
- There is not clarity on what will happen if the value of the shares pledged falls below that of the loan.

### What is the way forward?

- There is need to push for **more external voices in the MPC**. For instance, In the UK, a **non-voting treasury representative** sits with the MPC to discuss policy issues.
- During periods of extreme uncertainty, there is need to adopt some unconventional measures but the principles of **sound public policy** should not be discarded.

### 30. Farmers protesting on Farm bills

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- **GS 3- Transport** and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers

Context- Farmer's organisation across the country gave a call for a bandh on September 25<sup>th</sup> to protest the three bills passed by Parliament.

#### What are the new Farm Bills?

Three Farm Bills that are bond for contention-

1. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 (FPTC).
2. The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 (FAPAFS).
3. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

#### Why are these bills being protested?

These bills have been protested by not only the farmers, even opposition and state legislatures are not supporting these bills due to-

1. **Unconstitutional Procedure-** The manner in which the bills were thrust upon the farming community. Not only the farmers' organisations, but even state governments and allies have not been consulted.
2. **Against the spirit of cooperative federalism -**
  - All the earlier attempts at reforming agricultural marketing respected the constitutional separation of powers. While the Centre proposed the model acts, these were implemented by state governments.

**For instances-** Out of 36 states and union territories-

- a. 18 states have already enacted reforms allowing for establishment of private market yards/private markets.
  - b. 19 states have enacted reforms allowing for direct purchase of agricultural produce from agriculturists by processor/bulk buyer/bulk retailer/exporter.
  - c. 20 states have enacted contract farming acts.
  - d. Kerala and Bihar do not have APMC mandis and Tamil Nadu has a different system.
  - e. Most states have exempted levy of taxes and fees on sale of fruits and vegetables.
- The current reforms completely bypass the state governments and weaken their ability to regulate agricultural markets even though it is a state subject.
3. **Changing objectives of the government-** unlike earlier reforms where the focus was on strengthening the functioning of APMC mandis while allowing for greater

private market access and participation, the current FTPC bill bypasses the APMC altogether, creating a separate structure of trading.

4. **Creation of dual market structure-** The absence of regulation and exemption from mandi fees creates a dual market structure which is not only inefficient but will also encourage unregulated trade detrimental to the primary purpose of providing market access to farmers for better price discovery and assured prices.
5. **Corporate Exploitation-** FTPC Bill is not about delivering on the promise of freedom to farmers but freedom to private capital to purchase agricultural produce at cheaper prices and without any regulation or oversight by the government.
6. **Contract farming bill and amendments in the essential commodities act-** Apart from the fact that the provisions of these bills are highly skewed in favour of private capital, with no limits on stockholding and restrictions of government interventions, there is limited recourse to any independent grievance redressal mechanism.
7. **Government actions-** Agricultural terms of trade have moved against agriculture with rising input prices (with the government increasing diesel prices despite the collapse in international prices) and declining farm gate prices.

### Way Forward

The government should re-consider all the farm bills with the states, farmer's organisations, and their representatives. So, that the farmers will get the opportunity to give their opinions and address their issues regarding the farm bills. Also by this farmers will understand the agenda of the government's view of the bills. This will bring harmony and peace among the protestors.