

**9pm**

# **Compilation**

**October, 2020**

**General Studies - 1**

---

1. A case for older women
2. The legacy of Gandhi
3. The Prime Minister India almost forgot
4. Women in science
5. Women representation and impact - Kenya case study
6. The plight of Sanitation workers
7. Uniform Civil code

**General Studies - 2**

---

1. Changing Health Behaviour
2. QUAD Grouping- India, Japan, US and Australia
3. Need of a Maritime strategy
4. India- China
5. Amnesty halting India operations
6. NCPCR analysis
7. The future of GST hangs in the balance
8. India and QUAD
9. Re-imagining education in 100 years
10. Disintegration of the criminal justice system
11. Garib Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyan (GKRA)
12. Misinformation storm
13. Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2020
14. Violence and justice for women
15. CAG audit- Improvement in disaster management
16. Impacted Mental Health during Pandemic
17. Supreme court verdict on shaheen Bagh protest
18. World Food program
19. TRP (Television Rating Point) scandal
20. Madrid principles
21. Police and criminal justice system
22. Tackling fake news
23. Enhancing tax revenues of local government
24. GST Compensation Issue
25. Federalism
26. QUAD
27. Efficient implementation of the NEP policy
28. Quadrilateral home truths: On QUAD
29. Functioning of the RTI
30. Declining Role of Parliament
31. NGO's Improving education system
32. Civil society gears up for big funds squeeze
33. Issues of education system in India
34. Multilateralism in present world
35. Food security to nutritional security: issues and solutions
36. An opportunity for India
37. Sex ratio and demographic attributes
38. GST Compensation Issue
39. NEP and analysis
40. India's low rank in Global Health Index

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

41. Police Reforms
42. Bangladesh's Economic Success
43. HIV and way forward
44. UN Reforms
45. Implications of Indo - US Defence deals
46. SVAMITVA- Digitization of land records
47. NEP: Computational Thinking
48. Precautions during festive season
49. 2+2 dialogue amid U.S. presidential election
50. UNSC Reforms
51. Importance of Nutri-cereals
52. Hunger and Solutions
53. India's maritime domain
54. India's UN journey and its role
55. India-US Relations
56. Non-alignment in multipolar framework
57. Changing nature of India – US relationship
58. Board exams in education
59. Climate Change and Gendered Vulnerabilities
60. Social and Health Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic
61. Evolving Strategic Autonomy
62. GST Issue
63. India - Myanmar relations
64. Governance reforms for commerce
65. Chinese economic policy
66. Indo Pacific Region
67. India-US 2+2 Dialogue
68. Aser Report Analysis
69. India-US relations

### General Studies - 3

---

1. The end of 'Inspector Raj'- Labour and Farm Bill
2. C&AG's report on GST compensation cess
3. Labour bills
4. Biodiversity and Pandemic
5. India's inflation targeting policy
6. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC 2016)
7. India's inflation targeting policy
8. Power sector in India
9. The non-violent economic model
10. Farms Bills
11. Rainbow new deal - Integrating ecological protection and tackling inequality
12. Labour codes reforms
13. Issues of Indian Sugar Industry
14. Production Linked Incentive Scheme
15. Platform Workers
16. Artificial Intelligence - 'AI for All'
17. Ensemble forecast
18. India's monetary framework and COVID-19

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

19. Manufacturing in India - PLI scheme
20. Redesign policy for private investment
21. CRISPR-Cas9: life sciences into new epoch
22. MPC meeting- shifting focus from containment to revival
23. MPC - Improving rate transmission.
24. New market led system V/s MSP
25. Reviving consumption and investment
26. Gene Editing
27. Air pollution and Delhi
28. Issues plaguing the banking sector
29. Small stimulus package
30. The Domestic Market Economy Mirage
31. PLI - analysis and global value chain
32. Domestic Innovation and Manufacturing of vaccines
33. Bangladesh's per capita income greater than India's
34. MSME Udyam Process
35. Hyderabad urban flooding
36. Governance of Public sector units
37. Hyderabad Floods
38. Nutrient-based subsidy
39. Growth through infrastructure and manufacturing
40. Coal mining reforms
41. Reason for October pollution
42. Security and Terror Outfits
43. It's time to save urban rivers
44. Boundary issues in northeast
45. Offset Policy in Defence
46. India's innovation potential and initiatives
47. Fiscal Expansion Response
48. Digital payment system in India
49. Durga Puja and Economy
50. Fiscal stimulus
51. Air pollution and green recovery
52. Increasing Onion Prices
53. Farmers' Produce Trading and Commerce Act 2020
54. Buffer Stocks
55. Air Pollution in India
56. DISCOMs
57. Punjab Assembly Rejects Centre's Farm Laws
58. DeepFake
59. Urbanpoverty
60. Farm Bill and MSP
61. New ordinance to curb Air Pollution
62. Stubble Burning Issue and Analysis

### General Studies - 4

---

1. Roadmap on vaccine procurement and distribution
2. Dire need of Police reforms

# General Studies Paper - 1

## General Studies - 1

---

### 1. A case for older women

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

**Syllabus:** GS-1- Society

**Context:** Welfare of elderly women.

#### How elderly women are a vulnerable category of people?

- Elderly women in a majority of Asia-Pacific countries are facing major challenges due to a change from **traditional to nuclear family-oriented patterns** which are far more fluid, split structures.
- **Lack of adequate support:** Many older women, with a higher tendency to live alone, **face poverty and are more likely to lack family and other socioeconomic support.**
- **Access to a caregiver:** The majority of older people do not have reliable and sustained access to a caregiver and many have slid into poverty during the pandemic.

#### What are the plans in place for the elderly?

- There is a need for **better policies, more resilient social systems and gender equality** in order to improve the lives of elderly women.
- **2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing:** This agreement mentions the development of evidence-based policies that help create “a society for all ages”.
- Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (**ICPD**) and the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals** underscore the basis of this approach to healthy ageing.
- **The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA):** It is committed to helping governments in full partnership with civil society and communities.
- UNFPA incorporates the need to enable and strengthen the self-reliance of older persons.

#### Way forward

- In order to transform the challenge of population ageing into an opportunity we must collectively prioritise greater action, funding and implementation.
- **Address the complex demographic shift of population ageing**, with strategic solutions:
  - A life cycle approach to healthy ageing, with particular emphasis on girls and women, firmly grounded in gender equality and human rights is required.

### 2. The legacy of Gandhi

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

**Syllabus:** GS-1- History

**Context:** Mahatma Gandhi was an intercultural Indian and his intellectual openness helped him to live up to his ideals.

#### What can one understand by Gandhi and his ideas?

- **Gandhi was an original thinker and an acute political strategist**, who believed profoundly in the possibility of introducing humanity to the principle of non-violence.
- **Gandhi's idea of non-violence was a realistic hope** with a little of practical idealism. He presented himself as an Asian who was influenced by Hinduism,

Jainism and Buddhism, and as a person who was deeply influenced by the teachings of Jesus Christ, Socrates, Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoreau.

- **Intellectual openness:** It helped him to learn from others. He was the founding father of modern non-violence as it has been practised for the past 100 years around the globe.

#### What was ethical mode of conduct?

- **The philosophy of non-violence** turned into an instrument of public dissent and a practical tool of the powerless against the powerful.
- **The “soul force”:** It was an instrument of conflict resolution and universal harmony. Non-violence was also an essentially moral exercise and an ethical mode of conduct.
- The Gandhian philosophy of non-violence assigns a duty to **citizens to be watchful** about the abuses of power by the state and to struggle **against the “Sultanization” of political power** in our contemporary societies.

#### What was Gandhi’s idea of establishing a just society?

- Gandhi’s idea of democracy centres on moral growth in humankind, where an undisciplined and unrestricted **individualism is replaced by empathetic humanism.**
- Gandhi believed that humanity had to **develop certain qualities such as fearlessness, non-possession and humility.**
- The main aim was to **restructure humans** to suit to an inter-cultural and pluri-dimensional democracy.

#### Were his approaches ahead of its time?

- **Non-violent democratic theory** as a philosophy of inter-cultural dialogue is still far ahead of our times, several generations after his death.
- **Pluralistic approach to the dialogue** of cultures and faiths, Gandhi was far ahead of his time.
- His philosophy of democracy remains neither mono-cultural nor essentialist.
- The modes and methods of achieving democracy include **Satyagraha and Swaraj**, which are not theological concepts.
- **Approach to the many-sidedness of truth:** It was an effort to bridge different views of life and this is why he did not reject different traditions of social life.
- He simply stated what he considered to be authentic in them and thought of bringing them together in the realisation of an ethical common ground.

#### What was his idea of ‘Indianness’?

- **Politics- a fragile concept:** he refused to define India in terms of ethnic purity or linguistic unity or some other unifying religious attribute as it is vulnerable to nationalist justifications of violence and war.
- Gandhi’s philosophy of democracy introduced an anti-monistic and **diverse dimension into a mainly territorial rootedness of Indianness.**
- **Gandhi’s appeal to global companionship** was based on an inclusive and dialogical idea of living together which disapproved all forms of national or religious self-centredness.



**Way forward**

- We should ponder upon his saying that “The golden way is to be friends with the world and to regard the whole human family as one. He who distinguishes between the votaries of one’s own religion and those of another miss-educates the members of his own and opens the way for discord and irreligion.”

**3. The Prime Minister India almost forgot**

**Source- The Hindu**

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

**Context-** Lessons from Lal Bahadur Shastri’s political life.

**Who was Lal Bahadur Shastri?**

- He was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1904.
- He resigned twice from the cabinet posts assuming his moral responsibility-
- a. **1956-** For railway accidents in Mahbubnagar, Andhra Pradesh and Ariyalur, Tamil Nadu.
- b. **1963-** To work in the party organisation under the Kamaraj Plan.
- He served as the second Prime Minister of India during 1964-1966.
- Slogan- “Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan”.
- He died under mysterious circumstances on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1966.
- He was posthumously awarded the ‘Bharat Ratna’.

**What were the changes achieved by Lal Bahadur Shastri as a political leader?**

1. **Promote Green Revolution-** His vision for self-sufficiency in food grains led to sowing the seeds of the Green Revolution, and promotion of the White Revolution, a national campaign to increase milk production.
2. **Srimavo-Shastri Pact-** In 1964, he signed an agreement with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, in concern with the status of Indian Tamils in Ceylon.
3. **Anti-corruption-** In 1961, he was appointed as Home Minister, and he appointed the Committee on Prevention of Corruption. He created the famous “Shastri Formula” which consisted of the language agitations in Assam and Punjab.
4. **A Leader-** Shastri’s selection as Prime Minister was itself an affirmation of the party’s organisation and self-correcting mechanism, notwithstanding its moral ambiguities and patronage politics.
5. **1965 War-** His brilliant leadership during 1965 war in countering Pakistan’s aggression and surprise attack helped India in gaining its lost confidence due to the 1962 war and paved way for winning 1971 war. Under his Prime Minister ship India for the first time took the battle to invader’s territory.
6. **As a Diplomat -** He developed close relations with USSR in the aftermath of 1962 war. However, he is criticised for letting USSR dictate terms of Tashkent agreement as an arbitrator and surrendering Haji Pir Pass to Pakistan which India had occupied in the war.

**What were the challenges faced by the Lal Bahardur Shashtri during his office of Prime Minister?**

**In the national arena-**

The Following were some of the question marks at the cross-section of nation, region and institution for the Prime Minister. -

- a. The language violence in Tamil Nadu.



- b. Returning President's rule in Kerala.
- c. Persisting feuds in Uttar Pradesh.
- d. Enduring demand for a Punjabi suba.
- e. Continuing farce in Kashmir.

**In the international arena-**

- a. A subdued Non-Aligned Movement.
- b. Nuclear challenge of China.
- c. A change in the Soviet leadership.
- d. A new leader in Pakistan- President Ayub Khan.
- e. An Anglo-American-Commonwealth combine distracted with varied issues such as Vietnam and Southern Rhodesia.

**Way Forward**

Like most in his time, he rose humbly from the provinces in national politics, and carried his convictions from his faith in people, their constitution and representation. Crucially, he remained modest in both his personal probity and policy making and was not invested solely in his occupancy of his office.

**4. Women in science**

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS-1- Society

**Context:** Rigorous efforts are required to make the workplace inclusive for women scientists in India.

**What is the status of women scientists in India.**

- **The Department of Science and Technology** is reportedly making up a policy where the proportion of women employed will be considered in ranking a scientific institution.
- **National Task Force for Women in Science:** According to their data, Indian scientific institutions collectively employ only 15 per cent women even as women form 37 per cent of PhD holders and accounted for 40 per cent of university enrolment in science subjects in 2001.
- 12 years later the **Indian National Science Academy** had only 5 per cent elected women colleagues in their ranks.

**What are the reasons for drop in number of women in science?**

- **Drop in the number of women in science:** Juggling professional and domestic responsibilities is one of many reasons.
- **Administrative hassles at the workplace, uncertainty** of securing a travel fund for attending research conferences and presenting papers at national and international meetings.
- **Acting as help at the home front caring** for young children or ageing parents often makes the woman scientist focus on publications since they are perceived as the one objective criterion to judge a scientist.
- **Avoid hiring couples:** This has been a major stumbling block for many scientists who found like-minded partners in their own fields.

**What changes can be done to rectify the inequalities during the early stages of a scientific career?**

- **Making creche facilities mandatory at workplaces:** the crèche should be sustainable and affordable for all as it will provide employment opportunities to more women.
- **Safe travel:** Prioritising young families for on-campus housing by revamping the current seniority-based system and providing workplace transport facility.
- **Change in approach to conferences:** Supporting and rewarding organisers who ensure greater participation of women will ensure higher participation and present networking opportunities.
- **Special sessions at conferences** can provide a platform for floating ideas and understanding the needs of the industry.
- **The childcare leave**, if extended to either parent, will prevent women from bearing the brunt of career setbacks.
- The best research institutions **create spaces for mixing and mingling**, ironing out stereotypes and perceptions of being the “other” group.
- **Creating a metric for evaluation of such resources**, and a channel for inter-institutional mobility, cross-fertilisation of ideas, technical expertise and resources can arise.
- **The flexibility to switch career paths** and the opportunity to make a permanent move could prevent stagnation and create a much-needed change between academic institutes-government and private centres of learning, research institutes and even the industry.

**Way forward**

- **The new policy has to be sensitive to ground level realities:** Committees and organisations have to be sensitised and implementation ensured through periodic evaluations of outcomes.
- Making the data regarding publicly funded projects widely available will allow analysis of factors beyond equality in numbers.
- **The goal should be ensuring equality without compromising quality of research.**

**5. Women representation and impact - Kenya case study**

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

**Syllabus:** GS-1- Women

**Context:** Asymmetric political representation between men and women in Kenya and India.

**How was the representation of women in India before 1947?**

- In the making of Indian constitution, **women members of the Constituent Assembly**, though minuscule, made a significant contribution.
- **Women had a large presence in the freedom movement** and their numbers grew, with a significant voice, in Parliament and state legislatures.

**How the constitutional histories and judicial action of Kenya and India vary?**

- **Kenya’s article 27(8)** requires the state to take judicial and other measures to implement the principle that not more than **two-thirds of the members** of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender.
- **33 per cent reservation in Indian Parliament:** The two bills introduced in 1996 and 2010, have been delayed, even when addressed as a “historic step” that will ensure significant representation for the women of India.

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

- **“Quota within a quota”:** The ways should be found to ensure that this reservation should contain 33 per cent reservation within for SC and ST women.
- Some suggested a systemic practice of reservation at the stage of distributing party tickets.
- Some continue to fight for underprivileged and rural women.
- Some maintain that a constitutional convention directing increased representation for women by parties will be more appropriate than a constitutional amendment.
- **Kenya does better than India:** Kenya has secured 76 (or about 22 per cent) women in the present National Assembly comprising 349 members, whereas:
  - India peaked to its highest number in the 2019 elections with 62 women (around 14.58 per cent), out of a total of 542 Lok Sabha seats.
- **In the Kenyan Senate** 21 (or 31 per cent) of the 67-member House are females; **in the Indian Rajya Sabha** women comprise 25 out of 243 elected members.
- For instance, **Marilyn Kamaru** (on behalf of a collective of activists which had petitioned to have parliament dissolved three years ago) said:
  - “Whether the president dissolves parliament or illegally retains it in violation of the Constitution”, a constitutional moment was “made possible by the work of women activists, feminists and the queer community.”
- The learned chief justice memorably outlined the idea of **constitutionally justified elite pain** and social suffering involved in putting constitutions to work in India.

### What are the similarities in both nations?

- **Women’s representation has always been “pyramidal”:** most women remain below the constitutional locator at the bottom, even when a few scale national heights.
- **Women and other sexual minorities,** sacrificial politics continues to prevail, as violence against women and sexual minorities continues to be a sad social display in both societies.
- **Asymmetric representation** in both societies has generated a long and complex debate concerning women’s representation.

### The way forward

- The Indian Constitution is among the world’s leading modern and postcolonial constitutions but more actions are required to reduce asymmetrical representation.

## 6. The plight of Sanitation workers

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

**Syllabus:** GS-1- Society

**Context:** Despite the laws, Sanitation workers still face stigma and are devoid of essential rights.

### What were the demands of civil society? How did the government respond?

- **Civil society started a movement in the 1990s** to eradicate dry latrines, the focus now is on manhole deaths and provision of safety equipment to sanitation workers.
- Several State governments and the previous Central governments have reacted to these civil society demands by **introducing different laws to stop manual scavenging and provide incentives to build toilets.**

**What are the issues with various government and civil society initiatives?**

- **Act barring the construction of unhygienic dry latrines and employing manual scavengers, 1993:** It defined ‘manual scavenger’ as a person engaged in or employed for manually carrying human excreta.
- It defined dry latrine as “latrine other than a water-seal latrine”.
- Manual scavenging was not just a practice related to dry latrines, but also to **unhygienic latrines and open excretion.**
- **The Safai Karamchari Andolan** which was a social movement that campaigned against manual scavenging filed a public interest litigation in the Supreme Court along with other organisations.
- The demand was to direct State governments and Union Territories to strictly enforce the law to stop the practice of manual removal of human excreta.
- **The central government’s survey on manual scavengers (2013):** The survey found that dry latrines and manual removal of human excreta still existed.
- **The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act (2013):** Though the construction of dry latrines has drastically reduced, the number of deaths in manholes, sewers and septic tanks continues to remain high.
- **The issue of labour safety** is not addressed in any amendments.
- **The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**, limits the issue of labour rights and the stigma attached to sanitation. For instance, in Tamil Nadu, all political parties have trade unions for government servants, except for sanitation workers.
- **No permanent job status for sanitation workers:** Most sanitation contracts are given to private contractors or self-help groups, and such staff hardly have ID cards, leave alone the protection of medical insurance policies.
- **Particular caste members approached for hiring:** During the last Chennai floods, sanitation workers from the Nilgiris district were made to travel in garbage trucks to Chennai.
- This situation has continued even during the COVID-19 pandemic as sanitation workers are asked to work in newly formed COVID-19 wards.

**The issue of dignity of workers**

- **Unlike other labour forces, sanitation workers do not have a separate rule-book** that lays down guidelines for their work timings, holidays, a proper place for roll call, removal from duty, etc. This is against the laws and ethics.
- **There are no vehicles for sanitation workers** to travel to their designated workspaces, and they have to either walk for kilometres or use garbage vehicles.
- **This is a forced choice and is connected to the dignity of a worker** as no supervisor would stand and travel with the sanitation workers.

**Way forward**

In India, sanitation work is caste-ridden and hence, there is an urgent need to dissociate caste from labour.

**7. Uniform Civil code**

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS-1- Society

**Context:** All states must be brought into the mainstream of family laws as there is no justification for keeping some chosen groups of Indian citizens always tied down to family laws.



**Does the provision of Article 44 of the Constitution of India only targets inter-personal diversity in family law?**

- **This has always been the general belief** among the custodians of state authority, including the judiciary.
- **Ignoring the words “throughout the territory of India”** at the end of the article, they have always understood it as an order only for the abolishment of the traditional personal laws and their replacement by a common family law Act.
- The preliminary sections in all central family law Acts enacted by Parliament since Independence declare that they will apply to **“the whole of India except the state of Jammu and Kashmir.”**
- **Other exceptions:**
  - A new provision was added in 1968 in all these Acts, stating that **“nothing herein contained shall apply to the Renoncants** in the Union Territory of Pondicherry.”
  - None of these Acts applies in Goa, Daman and Diu.
  - **No parliamentary legislation will replace the customary law** and religion-based system for its administration in Nagaland and Mizoram unless so demanded by the local legislatures under Articles 371A and 371G.
- These exceptions regulate the extent of all central laws from the **Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 up to the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act of 2019.**

**What is the origin of separate personal laws across states?**

- **In Goa, Daman and Diu, the Portuguese rulers had recognised** locally dominant personal laws by the name **“native customs and usages”**, were separately compiled for the three territories and given the force of law by royal verdicts issued from Lisbon.
- **The Portuguese Civil Code of 1867** was extended to these places in 1869, with a clause that native customs and usages will be safeguarded “so far as they are not varying with morality or public order.”
- **The new laws of civil marriages and of canonical marriages** were also extended to the three territories, but with a similar protective **provision for the local customary laws.**
- **After Independence, the Goa, Daman and Diu Administration Act of 1962 maintained the status quo** by laying down that “all laws in force” there earlier shall continue to apply until and unless amended or revoked by a capable authority.
- The exclusionary provision relating to Jammu and Kashmir found in the central family law Acts had **originated from Article 370 of the Constitution.**

**Who were renoncants?**

1. In Puducherry, during the French rule, the native population had been given an option to choose between the personal laws then in force there and the Code Napoleon of 1804, and those who had opted for the latter were called renoncants (renouncers).
2. After independence, the Pondicherry (Laws) Act of 1968 extended all the central family law Acts, but each with a condition that they would not apply to the renoncants.

**Way forward**

- Bringing Jammu and Kashmir into the country's mainstream of family laws is an exercise that needs to be undertaken also for Goa, Daman and Diu, Puducherry, Nagaland and Mizoram, where the present situation is opposite to the constitutional policy of uniformity in family law.
- The citizens' fundamental rights to equality before law and equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Constitution call for a similar action in respect of these territories as well.

ForumIAS



# General Studies Paper - 2

## General Studies - 2

---

### 1. Changing Health Behaviour

**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-** The role of health behaviour in public health practice needs special attention during an epidemic.

**What are the skills required from public health professionals during an epidemic?**

1. **Social Groups-** To identify the social groups which can be at greater risk to disease at any given point of time.
2. **General Population-** To pick up those who are at risk from a general population, even before they know that they are at risk.
3. **Awareness of the people-** To know whether any group is at risk or not is possible only if people have a deep understanding of the society.
4. **Reliance on Laboratory's test-**
  - The overreliance on laboratory tests not only means that people lose the opportunity to detect those who are possibly at high risk of transmission but also the opportunity to look for high risk behaviour among people.
5. **Control on spread of disease-** The primary purpose of public health action during an epidemic is to prevent the spread of a disease in the community.

**Who is more successful in controlling the epidemic- science or people?**

**Success in controlling the epidemic-** The fact that if there is success in controlling an epidemic, the credit goes to science and institutions and the government.

**Failure in controlling the epidemic-**

- If there is a failure to control the epidemic, the blame is placed on the people.
- There is a failure to understand that health behaviour is only a subset of human behaviour and is closely linked to a person's living and working conditions.
- Behavioural change takes place when society is organised in such a way that there is no option to engage in risky/ unhealthy behaviour by virtue of one's occupation or social position.

**Which means are the governments using to ensure that people follow certain health behaviour?**

1. **Disease control models-** They focus on modifying individual risk factors. The role of public health in this case gets largely confined to 'preaching' with very little scope for action. Such as Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897.
2. **The police-**
  - The second approach has been to create fear of punishment as the basis of behavioural change.
  - The police are given the responsibility to fine people when they violate rules.
  - This has serious ethical implications, especially for those who cannot afford certain health behavioural practices.

### Way Forward

Health behaviour plays a critical role in deciding the success of any public health intervention. The real change in health behaviour is possible only when there is

acknowledgement of its societal roots and there are efforts to alter it at multiple levels. Instead of putting the onus of changing or modifying health behaviour onto individuals will only result in 'victim blaming' and create distrust between people and those responsible for epidemic control.

## 2. 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 –** 2<sup>nd</sup> ministerial meeting of the QUAD is going to be held in Japan.

**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.
3. **Formed-** The idea was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. However, the idea couldn't move ahead with Australia pulling out of it.

**What are China's views on the Quad?**

**Asian version of NATO-**The strategic community in China has branded it an emerging "Asian NATO-North Atlantic Treaty Organization".

**China's shrillness**

China was hoping that its naval build-up might slip under the radar because the Americans were distracted by continental challenges including Russia, Afghanistan and Iran, and would not look sea-ward.

**Nine dash line-** Once the idea of Quad 1.0 had died down, China stakes claim to 90% of the South China Sea, and this claim is based on the U-shaped nine-dash line etched on map in the 1940s by a Chinese geographer.

**China's global naval strategy and expansion-**

China undertook the rapid kind of warship building activity reminiscent of Wilhelmine Germany before 1914.

China built its first overseas base in Djibouti.

Started systematically to explore the surface and sub-surface environment in the Indian Ocean beyond the Malacca Straits.

**Beijing rejects tribunal's ruling-** China's dismissal of the Arbitral Award in the dispute with the Philippines on the South China Sea.

**Ruling-**

There was no legal basis for China to claim historic rights to resources within the sea areas falling within "nine-dash line"

- a. China violated its obligations to refrain from aggravating or extending the parties disputes during the pendency of the settlement process

**What is the significance of QUAD 2.0**

China's brazen militarization of the islands after its President had publicly pronounced to the contrary has once again brought the four countries onto the same page and given a second chance to the Quad.

### Plurilateral mechanism –

U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) also suggested that other countries might be invited to join in the future. This too is welcome; India has many other partners in the Indo-Pacific.

A positive agenda built around collective action in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, monitoring shipping for search and rescue or anti-piracy operations, infrastructure assistance to climatically vulnerable states, connectivity initiatives and similar activities, will re-assure the littoral States that the Quad will be a factor for regional benefit, and a far cry from Chinese allegations that it is some sort of a military alliance.

### Way forward

The forthcoming Ministerial meeting will be an opportunity to define the idea and chart a future path. Needless provocation of China should be avoided. The Quad nations need to better explain that the Indo-Pacific Vision is an overarching framework that is being discussed in a transparent manner, with the objective of advancing everyone's economic and security interests.

### 3. Need of a Maritime strategy

**Source:** The Hindu

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

**Context:** India's obsession with continental strategies has produced unfavourable results and it's time to shift focus to the maritime strategy.

#### What is the state of continental strategy?

- **Current state:** Border stalemate with China and Beijing doesn't seem keen on reinstating the *status quo* with India as of March 2020.
- **Aksai Chin: China is pushing back New Delhi's claims** with its slow but aggressive implementation.
- **Ceasefire violations with Pakistan** on the Line of Control (LoC) have spiked since last year as has the infiltration of terrorists across the LoC.
- **India-Pakistan contestation over Kashmir** has become fiercer with the change of the status of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) by New Delhi in 2019, and Pakistan altering its political map a few months ago to include all of J&K.
- **China-Pakistan axis:** There is a **geopolitical conspiracy between Islamabad and Beijing** to contain and pressure New Delhi from both sides.

#### What are the changes in Afghanistan?

- The ongoing **withdrawal of the United States** from Afghanistan and the return of the Taliban. India has very little contact with Taliban which could turn the geopolitical tide against New Delhi.
- **With the withdrawal of forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization from Afghanistan**, the geopolitical interests of Pakistan, China and Russia would broadly converge in the region.
- **India's 'Mission Central Asia':** The change of the geopolitical landscape in Afghanistan and the frictions in Iran-India relations will further dampen the mission.

#### What should India do?

- **Creatively deal with its continental dilemmas:**
- India would need to deal with pressure from the Pakistan front by **addressing the Kashmir question with Islamabad.**

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

- **Activating existing mechanisms** such as the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) hotline.

### What is Maritime strategy?

- India should shift its focus from the continental sphere to the **maritime sphere**.
- **The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** established a new division to deal with the Indo-Pacific in April 2019 and it needs to be fast-tracked to keep pace with the evolving realities.

### State the reasons why a maritime grand strategy would work to India's advantage?

- The maritime sphere is wide open to India to undertake **coalition building, rule setting, and other forms of strategic exploration**.
- **Arrival of the concept of 'Indo-Pacific'**: Great powers remain interested in the maritime sphere and this interest has grown significantly since the arrival of Indo-Pacific.
- Germany recently released its Indo-Pacific guidelines after France brought out its Indo-Pacific strategy last year.
- **Beijing's bullying behaviour in the South China Sea**: This has generated a great deal of willingness among the Euro-American powers and the countries of the region, including Australia and Japan, to push back Chinese unilateralism.
- **The maritime space is more important to China**: The massive Chinese trade that happens via the Oceanic routes and India's maritime strategy can potentially disrupt that trade.

### Way forward

- The MEA's Indo-Pacific Division is a good beginning; so is the decision in 2019 to elevate the Quad meetings among India, Japan, the United States and Australia to the ministerial level.
- India should join its military and non-military tools, engage its strategic partners, and publish a comprehensive vision document on the Indo-Pacific.

## 4. India- China

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

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

**Context:** India should be involved with China economically even as it opposes it militarily.

### Why should India be involved with china economically?

- **Timing of the economic disassociation with China**: India's economy was badly affected by the Covid-19 and attempt to break ties with china economically has a wrong timing.
- **India is dependent on Chinese imports**: Chinese venture capitalists have poured in more than \$8 billion into some of India's most successful start-ups where as a smaller portion of China's imports are from India.

### What are the lessons from China?

- **Relationship of china and Taiwan**: Trade between the China and Taiwan has remained strong over the past four years even though China claims Taiwan as its own territory and sometimes threatens invasion.
- The Taiwanese firm Foxconn makes almost all the iPhones that the world buys from factories in China.



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

- **Relationship of china and US:** China continues to do business with the US despite the tensions between both the nations. The US is the largest trading partner of china.
- U.S. Tesla's massive car and battery plants are coming up in China and American farmers still sell soya to China.
- **Relationship of china and the European Union:** In the first half of 2017 more than 3,000 container trains ran between the two continents, exceeding the total for the previous six years combined and serving 35 cities in China, with 34 destinations in Europe as a part its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- The European Union is China's second largest trading partner.

### Why shouldn't India take knee-jerk reactions?

- **China has consistently increased its trade with South Asia** after 2005 according to the Brookings Policy Brief.
- **Defying the logic of proximity**, most of India's neighbours are now largely reliant on China for their imports.

### Way forward

- India should consider joining the rest of the world in restraining in China and calling it out for its worst extremes.
- India should establish road and rail connectivity with its immediate neighbours and even Southeast Asia.

## 5. Amnesty halting India operations

**Source-** The Hindu

**Syllabus-** **GS 2-** Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

**Context-** Amnesty International has halted its human rights operation in India due to the freezing of its bank accounts by the Government of India.

### What is the case?

Recently, Amnesty International (AI) India had demanded an independent investigation into all allegations of human rights violations by the police during the north-east Delhi riots and the establishment of the National Commission for Human Rights in Jammu and Kashmir.

- **Government's response-** India doesn't allow interference in domestic political debates by entities funded by foreign donations. This law applies equally to all and it shall apply to Amnesty International as well.
- In order to circumvent the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 (FCRA) regulations, Amnesty UK remitted large amounts of money to four entities registered in India, by classifying it as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).
- A significant amount of foreign money was also remitted to Amnesty (India) without approval of the Ministry of Home Affairs under FCRA. This rerouting of money was in contravention of extant legal provisions.

### What are the new rules for NGOs under FCRA amendment 2020?

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2020 was passed by the Parliament amending Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010.



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

- In order to receive foreign funds, an NGO has to register with the Ministry of Home Affairs. It is assigned a unique FCRA registration number, to be renewed every five years.
- The cap on administrative expenses has been lowered from 50% of foreign funds received to 20% to ensure spending on their main objectives.

### What is the impact of this amendment?

- This amendment may be used to suppress the NOGs that dissent against the Government and restrict freedom of expression.
- It prohibits the transfer of foreign grants received by an entity to a partner organization or an associated person, which is a usual practice.

### Way forward

Democratic regimes that are bound by constitutionalism should not consider critical activism by groups such as Amnesty as being adversarial, but instead view it as constructive critique of their functioning. Government needs to allow for a vibrant civil society that has spearheaded several reforms related to accountability (the Right to Information Act), welfare (the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), privacy rights, gender equality and rights of sexual minorities, environmental activism among others. Non-governmental organizations will continue to have a role to play in this.

## 6. NCPCR analysis

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Polity

**Context:** Recent actions of NCPCR suggest a serious parting from its primary duty to ensure the well-being of all children.

### What is NCPCR? What are the concerns related to it?

- **The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** is the top body for upholding, monitoring and facilitating child rights in the country.
- **Directions by NCPCR:** The NCPCR directed District Magistrates in eight States to ensure that all children within CCIs be de-institutionalised, repatriated and rehabilitated within a specified period.
- An instructed repatriation without an adequate case-by-case assessment plan within a short period of time would likely place the children again at **grave risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect.**
- They also point to the absolute **inadequacy of current systems to organise adoption** and foster care.
- **Selective Raids:** Disturbing report of raids being undertaken by the NCPCR in select NGO-run CCIs, in order to establish whether foreign funds have been misused in any manner.
- **Monitoring of the FCRA regulations is outside of the mandate of the NCPCR.**
- The raids also targeted individuals who have been outspoken in the criticism of the Central government on issues such as the **National Register of Citizens and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.**
- **Communal overtones:** An enquiry led by the Chairperson enquired into whether the previously homeless children in the CCIs belonged to a particular community (Rohingya), even as the institutions are known to be secular.
- **Increase in problems due to pandemic:** Existing issues of child malnutrition, child labour, child abuse, child marriage and mental illness have increased.

### Way Forward

- The NCPCR could have used its authority and **power to issue recommendations to relieve** these grave conditions by strengthening child-related institutions through adequate funds, and appreciating the relief measures that many civil society organisations were engaged in.
- The NCPCR was expected to take a stand on the rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl in Bhadoli in Uttar Pradesh, to make a test case of the lack of **systems to fight crimes against children**.
- **CCIs need monitoring and reforms:** The Commission should be on the front to ensure the support that would necessarily be required to implement these reforms.

### 7. The future of GST hangs in the balance

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** Gs2: Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure, Devolution of Powers and Finances up to Local Levels and Challenges Therein.

**Context:** The Centre needs to raise additional resources to bridge the GST compensation gap.

#### What is the GST compensation issue?

- In 2017, the Centre made a promise to the States that a certain minimum amount of GST revenues will be guaranteed to every State for every year until 2022.
- It was hailed as a harbinger of 'cooperative federalism'.
- However, there is not enough money in the GST kitty for the Centre to honour this obligation.

#### What is proposed by the centre to bridge the gap?

- The Centre has proposed that the States should borrow money.
- Centre will act as a guarantor to facilitate this borrowing.
- Many States have accepted this proposal while many others have rejected it and implored the Centre to borrow.

#### How States have responded?

- Gujarat and Karnataka support the Centre's proposal while Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have opposed it.
- GST compensation constitutes a significant share of the revenues of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, yet Himachal Pradesh supports the Centre's plan while Punjab is against it.
- Rajasthan and Haryana have similar sized fiscal deficits. Rajasthan is apprehensive but Haryana is ready to indulge in more borrowing.

#### What are the implications of GST compensation issue?

- **Erosion of credibility:** There is a bitter stand-off between the Centre and these protesting States.
- **Widening trust deficit:** Recently Comptroller and Auditor General revealed that in the last few years the Centre mis-allocated nearly Rs. 3 lakh crore. It was collected through various cesses to reduce the States' share of tax revenues.
- **Politicisation of the GST Council:** Twenty members of the GST Council that have agreed to the Centre's proposal are governed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or a BJP alliance. The 11 States that have opposed the Centre's plan are all governed by the Opposition.

- **Against cooperative federalism:** The 11 opposing States account for a greater share of overall GST revenues than the 20 supporting States. However, it does not matter since every State, large or small, has equal weight in the GST Council.

#### How Centre can increase tax revenue?

- Centre can Increase taxation of capital market transactions.
- Between April and June, India's stock markets experienced its highest activity levels in its history, with a 75% increase in transactions vis-a-vis last year.
- The stock market rose 30% in this period and a minority few profited.
- The Centre can levy a **higher tax on such speculative stock market** trading to earn additional revenues during these difficult times, which will also not hurt the economy like an increase in GST rates or cess will do.
- Also 15 years of data show there is no evidence that in India raising securities transaction taxes adversely impacts stock market activity or the overall economy.

GST compensation is an **economic issue** and should be settled based on what makes the most economic sense for each State and for the nation overall.

#### 8. India and QUAD

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

**Syllabus: Gs2:** Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

**Context:** Confusion on what the Quad is and its future in India's international relations

#### Is quad a military alliance?

- Quad is multilateral framework that brings India together with the US and its Asian allies, Japan and Australia.
- It is a platform for building issue-based coalitions in pursuit of shared interests.
- It is a critical element not only for India's foreign and security policy but also a definitive moment in the evolution of post-War Asian economic and security architectures.

#### What is military alliance?

- They are a means to enhance countries military power. Alliances are made to deter or defeat one's enemies.
- The alliance treaty usually involves written commitments to come to the defence of the other against a third party.

#### Why military alliances are not favoured in India's foreign policy?

- In India, Alliances have a negative connotation in our foreign policy discourse, In India's foreign policy, alliances are seen as a taboo.
- India's Non-Alignment policy is seen as central to Indian worldview.
- India's negative view towards alliances was shaped when the Western powers the US, UK, and France that joined Soviet Russia to defeat fascist Germany turned against Moscow after the Second World War.

#### Does India Forge alliances?

- India does do alliances but on necessary conditions and on selective terms when the need arises.
- **During national movement:** During second world war, Subhas Chandra Bose joined forces with Imperial Japan to set up a provisional government in Port Blair, Andaman Islands.

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

- **Jawaharlal Nehru's Period:** Though he actively opposed US alliances in Asia, but turned to cope with the Chinese aggression in 1962 he sought the US for military support
- **Indira Gandhi's Period:** During 1971 to cope with the crisis in East Pakistan she signed a security cooperation agreement with the Soviet Union

### Why alliances are not reliable?

- Pakistan, signing the 1954 bilateral security agreement with the US Could not prevent Pakistan division by India in 1971.
- Also, agreements for security cooperation are made in a specific context and against a particular threat. When those circumstances change, security treaties will also become meaningless
- For example, the 1950 Treaty with Nepal was to protect them against the Chinese threat. But now Nepal no longer see a danger from china.
- Similarly, during 1970's Russia was willing to support India against the China's aggression. But today, Beijing is Moscow's strongest international partner.

**QUAD & Way forward:** India's foreign policy aligned towards the non-alignment confronts our need to rapidly expand our national capabilities in partnership with like-minded partners. The New India should find coalitions like the Quad critical for its international prospects.

## 9. Re-imagining education in 100 years

**Source-** The Hindu

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

**Context-** There is a need to explore the contours of national education practices leading to 2047 when politically independent India becomes 100 years old.

### What are the critical design principles for transformation of the educational sector in India and what are the efforts made in this direction?

From a teacher's perspective, the next education practices can be viewed through the following five design principles-

#### 1. Autonomy- To excel is the key

##### a. Aspects of autonomy-

- Greater autonomy for the educational institutes would entail greater leeway for the institutes in terms of regulations imposed by regulators in **Academic, Organizational, Financial and Staffing dimensions.**
- **Autonomy of customization-** There would be autonomy of the learner in creating his/her own curriculum at his/her own pace and capabilities. This could play a critical role in improving learning outcomes as well.

**b. Efforts being made in autonomy direction-** Premier institutes like the IITs and IIMs have been granted autonomy in their day to day functioning.

##### c. Concern-

- Despite the best intentions of granting autonomy to the higher educational institutes, these efforts have yielded limited returns due to practical limitations.
- The granting of autonomy to the premier institutes (IITs, IIMs) in India has resulted in no dramatic variation in the nature of autonomy of these institutes.

#### 2. Learning-Technology followed education

- a. There needs to be a greater emphasis on technology-driven education.



**b. Technology embedded way of learning-**

- Teachers will raise awareness rather than delivering content.
- Smart schools and smart classes may soon morph to smart chairs and smart desks, which may have sensors to map the flow of attention in the classroom.
- Learning will be about propagation of crucial questions rather than pre-determined answers.

**c. Concern-** In 2047, six billion people in the world would constitute the middle class. The needs of affordable education to a larger number of students spread across a larger area while also ensure better learning outcomes.

**3. Trans-disciplinary education- Coherence across fields**

Trans-disciplinarily is about creating a coherent intellectual framework beyond the disciplinary perspectives.

**a. Multidisciplinary-** It involves experts from different disciplines working together, each drawing on their unique disciplinary knowledge.

- It would help to construct an understanding of the real-life problems.
- For instance, tackling the pandemic required medical scientists, economists, health workers and political scientists and more experts to bring their disciplinary depth to the table.

**b. Efforts being made in autonomy direction-** The NEP 2020 roots for multi-disciplinary institutions rather than standalone schools.

**4. Technology- innovation-** Technology-led innovation will take learning from cognition to immersion. The content of knowledge has evolved from text that had to be cognized to include visual, audio and tactile immersive experiences.

**5. Value based education-** By 2047, Indian teachers will be engaged in nurturing global mindsets based on three classical values which are-Satyam (Authenticity), Nityam (Sustainability) and Purnam (Wholeness).

**Way forward**

In 2047, a teacher's role, based on five principles, will be to oversee the transformative re-birth of citizens. The most valuable outcome of education is the becoming of a competent and compassionate human being. Education is finally about creating and sustaining wholesome cultures rather than serving the templates of outmoded civilizations.

**10. Disintegration of the criminal justice system**

**Source-** The Hindu

**Syllabus-** **GS 2- Structure**, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

**Context-** A majority government can also selectively pursue only those crimes which it cares about.

**What is happening to the criminal justice system in India?**

1. There is a synergy between the crimes, its pursuit by an investigation and the calling to account of those found guilty which is unofficially referred to as a criminal justice system.
2. However in India, it is in disarray such as-
  - a. There was a crime, several crimes in fact. The State police decided to pursue it.
  - b. However, there was no waiting for a trial to condemn the accused and sentence him; punishment was swiftly meted out by the police itself.

- c. So much so, that an erstwhile Supreme Court Judge felt that the State's version of events made it appear as if it did not even care whether the encounter story was believed or not.

**For Example-** The encounter of the Vikas Dubey in the State of Uttar Pradesh.

### **How is executive ruling the State of Uttar Pradesh instead of Judiciary?**

The power to condemn was sourced not from a judicial order but from the power to level allegations, which is wholly an act of executive in scope. This way the police became judge, jury and executioner.

- 1. Encounter without trial-** This State has always demonstrated willingness to punish without condemning an accused through a trial.
- 2. Publishing massive hoardings-** It has passed a law enabling the publishing of massive hoardings with the names and personal details of persons allegedly involved in the destruction of property caused in riots following the Anti- Citizenship Act protests. All of this is done before a court convicted those people for these acts.
- 3. Refuse to register FIR-**
  - Even when there was a serious offence and there were major injuries. The police did not register a case for hours.
  - However, where the police was not willing to register the rape case, it has swiftly registered at least 19 cases regarding an alleged conspiracy to use the incident for political purposes to show the State in a bad light.

**For Example-** The recent rape case of a young girl in the village Hathras, Uttar Pradesh.

### **What are the issues in Criminal Justice System in India?**

- 1. Growing disconnect between the Government and judiciary-** The bolstering of executive power as a result of this growing disconnect and the unsurprising imitation of executive-mindedness by the judiciary.
- 2. Criminal Justice is suffering from Inertia-**
  - a. Ineffectiveness-** The purpose of the criminal justice system was to protect the rights of the innocents and punish the guilty, but now-a-days system has become a tool of harassment of common people.
  - b. Pendency of Cases-** In India police is seemingly super-efficient, but judiciary system is super slow.
    - According to Economic Survey 2018-19, there are about 3.5 crore cases pending in the judicial system, especially in district and subordinate courts, which leads to actualization of the maxim "Justice delayed is justice denied."
  - c. Huge under trials-** India has one of the world's largest numbers of under trial prisoners.
    - According to NCRB -Prison Statistics India (2015), 67.2% of our total prison population comprises of under trial prisoners.
  - d. Investigation-** Police is being a front line of the criminal judiciary system, which played a vital role in the administration of justice. Corruption, huge workload and accountability of police are a major hurdle in speedy and transparent delivery of justice.

### **Way forward-**

Indian criminal justice mechanism suffers from lack of judiciary's accountability and cooperation between its investigation and prosecution wings, allowing criminals go scot free. India need to have a more effective and professional investigation system, better management of court procedures



### 11. Garib Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyan (GKRA)

**Source:** Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS-2 Policy

**Context:** The central government launched the **Garib Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyan (GKRA)** to reduce the hardship of migrant workers.

**What are the features of Garib Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyan?**

- Objective is to provide employment and benefits to villages through the development of rural infrastructure using returning migrants' skills.
- The scheme only applies to districts which had at least 25,000 returning migrants.
- It is an umbrella scheme of 25 different government schemes under 12 ministries under Ministry of Rural Development.
- It covers 116 districts in six states for 125 days, that have large concentration of returning migrant workers with a financial outlay of Rs 50,000 crore.

**Why selected districts are chosen for this programme?**

- **Only certain districts have higher number of out migrants:** For example, states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar account for a large part of the out migration and the GKRA has 63 out of 116 districts in UP and Bihar.
- **Low capacity:** The poorest districts with the largest number of migrant workers are precisely the ones that need to generate employment, but have the least capacity to deliver.
- **Relative poorness:** GKRA districts are on average has low literacy rates and the proportion of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes population is high, and hence the emphasis on these districts seems justified.
- **Inefficient Public delivery programmes:** GKRA districts fare worse on average on an overall composite index of coverage and intensity than the other districts. For example, benefits of MGNREGA are highly concentrated on some selected beneficiaries.

### 12. Misinformation storm

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Policy

**Context:** Those who use social media platforms must pull in another direction to maintain access to a range of sources and views.

**How did the advent of internet changed the way news was presented and consumed?**

▪ **The US experience:**

- **In the 1980s** hundreds of news organisations existed to serve these sorts of towns, much like they still do in multilingual India today.
- Contrary to the expectations of more media centres propping up with the advent of Internet, fewer news outlets with the advent of internet.
- Most Americans now get their news from dubious Internet sources.
- **Political polarisation:** The hardening of political stances on both sides of the divide is plain to see, and the acute polarisation of the average American's viewpoint.

**What are possible effects of news delivery through the internet?**

- **No journalistic norms:** Anyone can say anything at any time about any topic with slight respect for the truth as everything is an opinion generated on such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter.

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

- **The spread of false and malicious news** can stoke violence at short notice. For example: WhatsApp came under Indian regulatory scrutiny after a doctored video that originated as an innocent advertisement in Pakistan spread on that medium and stoked violence.

### How is this worrisome for India?

- **Polarisation of viewpoint:** India could be going through the same political polarisation like the US in 4-5 years.
- **Highly targeted algorithms:** The algorithms were built around making users stay online longer and click through to advertisements.
  - They are likely to bombard users with information that serves to reinforce what the algorithm thinks the searcher needs to know.
  - For instance, if I show a preference for right-wing leaning posts, for instance, the algorithms are likely to provide me with ever more right-wing posts from people and organisations.
- Newly online Indians are bound to fall prey to **the echo chamber algorithms** and become easy marks for targeted advertising, both for products and of political viewpoints.

### What is the way forward?

- India might need to chart its own path by **keeping tech firms under check** before they proliferate unlike the US.
- New Indian legislation needs to preserve free speech while still applying pressure to make sure that **Internet content is filtered for accuracy, and plain decency.**
- **Corporate responsibility:** regulatory attempts to influence the transparency of information that members of the public see are instead being converted into secret corporate processes and so strong intervention is required.
- Else, in addition to the media, which has largely been the responsible fourth estate, we may well witness the creation of **an unmanageable fifth estate in the form of Big Tech.**

## 13. Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2020

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

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

**Context:** Recently, the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2020 was introduced in the lok sabha by the Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan.

### What are its objectives?

- It was introduced to supplement the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019 which awaits consideration by the Rajya Sabha.
- The main objectives of the bill are (1) to regulate ART banks and clinics, (2) allow safe and ethical practice of ARTs and (3) protect women and children from exploitation.

### What are the concerns associated with the bill?

#### Concerns on who can access ART:

- The Bill allows for a married heterosexual couple and a woman above the age of marriage to use ARTs.
- It excludes single men, cohabiting heterosexual couples and LGBTQI individuals and couples from accessing ARTs.

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

- This is a violation of Article 14 of the Constitution and the right to privacy enshrined in Puttaswamy case.
- It also violates Supreme Court directive in **Navtej Johar case** where the court insisted the state to take positive steps for equal protection for same-sex couples.
- It also fails to reflect the true spirit of the Constitution as there is no prohibition on foreign citizens accessing ART while Indian citizens in loving relationships cannot.

### **No holistic protection for the Egg donor**

- Harvesting of eggs, if performed incorrectly, can result in death.
- The Bill fails to provide for the counselling of egg donor or the ability to withdraw her consent before or during the procedure.
- Fails to pay for bodily services as there is no compensation or reimbursement are provided for the expenses on loss of salary, time and effort.
- Only an insurance policy needs to be obtained by the commissioning parties in her name for medical complications or death; no amount or duration is specified.
- Unfree labour is prohibited by Article 23 of the Constitution.

### **Embryo donation for research purposes**

- The Bill requires pre-implantation genetic testing to identify whether the embryo is healthy or diseased.
- If the embryo obtained suffers from pre-existing, heritable, life-threatening or genetic diseases, the embryo can be donated for research with the commissioning parties' permission.
- This provision of donating embryo with the commissioning parties' permission can promote an unregulated programme of eugenics.

### **Inconsistencies between Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill (SRB) and Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2020 (ART).**

- There is considerable overlap between both sectors, Yet the Bills do not work in common. For example, While Core ART processes are left undefined in ART bill, few of these are defined in the SRB.
- A single woman cannot commission surrogacy but can access ART.
- Both the Bills speak on setting up multiple bodies for registration which will result in duplication or worse, lack of regulation (e.g. surrogacy clinic is not required to report surrogacy to National Registry).
- Also, the same offending behaviours are punished differently under both Bills. For example, punishments under the SRB are greater than ART.
- Finally, the ART bill stipulates to maintain records for 10 years while under SRB it is for 25 years.

### **Other concerns associated with the bill**

- The SRB and the Bill impose high sentences (8-12 years) and hefty fines. However, the poor enforcement of the PCPNDT Act, 1994, demonstrates that enhanced punishments do not secure compliance.
- Gamete shortage is likely as the gamete donation is not compensated.
- Further, the Bill's prohibition on the sale, transfer, or use of gametes and embryos is poorly worded and will confuse foreign and domestic parents relying on donated gametes.
- The bill fails to provide ethics committee in clinics rather it requires clinics and banks to maintain a grievance cell.

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

The Bill must be thoroughly reviewed before passage as it raises several constitutional, medico-legal, ethical and regulatory concerns, affecting millions.

#### 14. Violence and justice for women

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Polity

**Context:** Crime against women needs a more firm response after the brutal murder of a young Dalit woman in Hathras.

##### What are the problems related to crime against women?

- **Quick justice missing:** National Crime Records Bureau statistics show that in 2019, 1,62,741 cases were pending for trial with an increase of about 17,000 from 2017.
- **Rate of conviction:** 18,333 cases were disposed of, out of which 5,822 resulted in conviction and 45,536 cases were pending for investigation. The rate of conviction is about 27 per cent.
- In 2017, **331 cases were of rape**, gang rape and murder but didn't make it to the headlines.
- **Many cases are not reported** in this country because of various reasons:
  - victim shaming
  - Concern about law enforcement
  - fear of revenges
  - Rape is a social stigma and the legal procedures are very lengthy, costly, and time intensive.

##### What are the issues with fast track dispensation of justice?

- **Poor implementation** on setting up of fast track courts, irregularities and shortages in both creation of infrastructure and staff as well as funds.
  - Poor or no availability of forensic labs.
- **Limited number of police personnel:** Investigation becomes difficult with such a large number of cases given and the same police personnel will serve these courts as well.
- **There is no examination** of what is needed to ensure proper and timely investigation of rape cases and the same investigation and judicial procedures will apply in these courts.
- Delays in dispensation of justice were said to have contributed to the Hyderabad Police shooting down four accused last year.

##### What is the way forward?

- **Delayed matters should be brought to a lawful end quickly.**
- There is need for **clear allotting of fast track procedures** for investigation and trial which include the presence of witnesses, examination of police personnel, issues of fixing dates/adjournments/cross-examination etc.
- **Social reform is necessary** and we have to collectively strengthen all the ways in which the position of women in society can be improved.
  - In majority of the cases, the victim is attacked by known persons and in India, the position is made worse when the victim belongs to the SC/ST group, like in the Hathras case.
- **Ability to identify more serious cases:** Where witnesses are available, conviction appears likely. Such cases, possibly 30-40 per cent of the cases, should be especially fast tracked.



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

- **The ministries of home and law and justice should monitor**, through a special template, on a weekly basis, the cases which have been prioritised.
- The chief ministers of states, chief justices of high courts, chief secretary, **DG Police should be given the feedback** so that they can take steps, or issue instructions, to advance investigation/trials.
- **The Chief Justice could head a committee in the state** to review regularly. This will take some of their time but will send a strong message to all concerned.

### 15. CAG audit- Improvement in disaster management

**Source- The Hindu**

**Syllabus - GS 2-** Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

**Context-** The Public Account Committee (PAC) directed the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) to conduct a special audit into purchase of COVID-19 equipment.

#### **What are the directions given by PAC?**

Former Congress Minister and PAC chairman H.K. Patil has chaired a meeting of the panel and instructed the CAG to constitute a special team of its employees to get the audit.

1. The State Legislature's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) directed the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) to conduct a special audit into the purchase of COVID-19 equipment within 15 days.
2. The panel has also asked the CAG to conduct audit of expenditure incurred by the State government under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). The government had used the SDRF amount for purchase of equipment in various districts of the State.

#### **Why there is need to conduct a special audit?**

**Political allegation-** The congress has alleged a scam to the tune of ₹2000 crore were siphoned off to purchase inferior quality of personal protective equipment kits, sanitizers, ventilator, masks and other equipment at prices higher than those prevailing in the market.

**Efficiency** – A beneficiary survey will become part of the audit process to bring out efficacy of service delivery and the availability and quality of drugs.

However, emergency procurement to save lives and reduce sufferings are a chance to confuse rules and procedures in procurement.

#### **What is the objective of CAG auditing?**

##### **1. Improvement in disaster management-**

- Audit recommendations can contribute improvement in various aspects of disaster preparedness, management and mitigation.
- It will usher in better transparency, integrity, honesty, effective service delivery and compliance with rules and procedure and governance.
- The audit will focus on expense tracking and achievement of outputs and outcome, in qualitative and quantitative terms.
- The audit objectives may include the procurement of equipment and drugs for CGHS wellness centers and polyclinic, laboratories and hospitals.

##### **2. Public assurance-** The audit will provide assurance to people's representatives, tax payers and public at large that government resources are being used prudentially, economically efficiently and effectively as per law and regulation.

**Way forward-**

With corruption likely in pandemic management, the CAG's audit can ensure checks and balance in the health sector. There is a substantial need of improvement in disaster management and preparedness. The internal audit must also ensure compliance with applicable procedures even in disaster related disbursements and procurement process and provide valuable inputs to the external audit conducted by the CAG.

**16. Impacted Mental Health during Pandemic**

**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-** The fear of being infected and anxiety about an uncertain present and future have impacted mental health of vulnerable communities during the pandemic.

**How the Covid- 19 pandemic has impacted population around the world?**

**1. Change in daily lives-**

- Before the pandemic, India's progress as one of the fastest growing economies led to large paradigm shifts in the daily lives of its citizens.
- Major lifestyle shifts led to the rise of many lifestyle disorders.
- The pandemic has completely changed the way people live.

**2. New Normal-** Necessary precautions such as social distancing, limited interactions and mask usage have become the new normal, with huge social, physical, economic and mental consequences.

**3. Dire socio-economic conditions arise-** Mass migration, unemployment and economic distress — make at-risk groups even more vulnerable during such times.

**4. Rising stress-**

- While progress on a COVID-19 vaccine is promising, uncertainty as a result of the pandemic is here to stay for the foreseeable future.
- The fear of getting infected, coupled with a lack of knowledge, isolation from the community and the economic fallout has created a new level of stress.

**5. Vulnerable Population-** The most who are susceptible to greater risks of infections are- Health-care workers, infected people, the elderly, migrant workers, those from resource-poor backgrounds, women facing domestic violence, individuals with compromised immunity, and those suffering from physical or psychological problems.

**What are the reasons behind the increase in suicides during pandemic?**

- 1. Lack of care in the treatment institution-** The findings reveal that one in four of these deaths occurred among hospitalised patients, demonstrating the need for extra care and vigilance during institutional treatment for either COVID-19 or any other illness.
- 2. Alcohol or drug addiction-** The sudden closure of alcohol/liquor outlets resulted in an increase in alcohol-related suicides.
- 3. Ignorance of early signs of poor mental health-** Such as a sudden change in behaviour, substance use, anxiety, disturbed sleep and difficulty in communication.

**What are the necessary steps to prevent suicide?**

- 1. Avoid distressing information-** While the feeling of uncertainty during this pandemic is normal, being informed and limiting ourselves to authentic sources of information and reducing exposure to distressing news is a good mechanism.
- 2. Educate people for their health-** Any sudden change in health should not be ignored.



3. **Creation of national suicide prevention strategy-** The plan incorporates the three universal strategies-
  - A ban or reduction in access to highly hazardous pesticides.
  - Reduction in consumption and availability of alcohol.
  - A non-sensationalised and responsible portrayal of suicide by the media.
4. **Media role in awareness-** The media would need to follow Press Council of India's guidelines on reportage of suicide and also create awareness about suicide prevention.
5. **Destigmatising suicide-** There is urgent need for Destigmatising suicide as a phenomenon and encourage in large platform to seek help from the counsellor.
6. **Regular Contact support-** It is to ensure there is an increase in the number of functional and accessible helplines and training of gatekeepers. If suicide has been attempted the individual has the required intervention and regular contact support.

### Way Forward

The need is of understanding, compassion and support at both an individual and systemic levels. As we continue to fight the novel coronavirus, there is a growing need to make mental health and suicide prevention a priority. A majority of individuals who are suicidal do not really want to die but find living difficult. Support at the right moment can change one's life decision.

### 17. Supreme court verdict on shaheen Bagh protest

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

**Syllabus: Gs2:** Development Processes and the Development Industry — the Role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations

**Context:** Analysing the Supreme Court verdict on shaheen Bagh protest.

#### What did the court say?

- The Court observed that the administration neither negotiated with the protesters in Shaheen Bagh nor tried to clear the scene.
- It appreciated the existence of the right to peaceful protest against a legislation.
- The Supreme Court stated that public places cannot be occupied indefinitely and protests must be allowed only in designated areas.
- It has directed the government to take necessary action to remove encroachments and obstructions placed during such protests.
- The Court's view is of balancing the two contrasting rights, the right to protest and the right to free movement.

#### Are protests legal?

- Protests, derive legitimacy from the rightness of the underlying cause and the extent of public support and doesn't confirm to legality always.
- In many cases, they are against laws and regulations perceived as unjust. For example, flash strike, spontaneous road block, a call for a complete shutdown, or a campaign to fill up jails by defying prohibitory orders.
- Though they are not strictly legal they are inevitable part of the culture of protest in a democracy.

#### What would be the implication of Supreme Court ruling?

- The administration could delegitimise protest and restrict freedom of assembly by stating any of the reasons, that the peaceful protest had continued too long, or in a place inconvenient to others.

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

- For example, the earlier ruling by the courts, that any 'bandh' is illegal, led to routine stay on sector-wide strikes.
- It will undermine the larger democratic need for public expression of dissent in a manner and place that would be most effective.
- Both principles, the need for balance between the right to protest and the right to free movement, and the rule that protests should take place at designated areas are only beneficial from an administrative perspective.

### What is the way forward?

- The ruling should not form the basis for suppression of such protests by the force of the state.
- Sudden, democratic resistance should not automatically invite the state's actions

### 18. World Food program

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Syllabus;** GS-2- International Relations

**Context:** The winner of Nobel peace prize 2020 is the UN agency World Food Programme (WFP) which has fought hunger around the world.

#### What is the WFP?

- Then US President Dwight Eisenhower had suggested **the idea of providing food aid through the UN system.**
- It was established in 1961.
- The WFP is **headquartered in Rome, Italy.** It is governed by an Executive Board, which consists of 36 member states.
- **It is headed by an Executive Director,** who is appointed jointly by the UN Secretary-General and the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for a fixed five-year terms.
- **Humanitarian crisis:** More than 12,000 people died in an earthquake in Boein Zahra in northern Iran. The WFP sent tonnes of wheat, sugar and tea.
- It played an important role in providing food aid in Thailand and Algeria.

#### What is the scale of its work?

- The WFP is **the world's largest humanitarian agency** battling hunger. In 2019, it assisted 97 million people in 88 countries, which is the largest number since 2012.
- **It delivered about 4.4 million tonnes of food,** purchased \$1.7 billion worth of food from 91 countries, and \$762 million worth of goods and services from 156 countries.
- WFP has **5,600 trucks, 30 ships and nearly 100 planes** on the move, delivering food and other assistance to those in most need
- WFP has unmatched **reputation as an emergency responder,** one that gets the job done quickly at scale in the most difficult environments.
- WFP has been a **constant presence for the poor and the needy,** refugees and the homeless all over the globe irrespective of how difficult the situation is.

#### Why does the world need a food programme?

- **The WFP is the UN's primary agency that works towards eradicating hunger** which is one of UN's Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030.
- **Hungry people:** According to the WFP, there are 690 million hungry people around the world and around 60% of them live in countries affected by conflict. The number of hungry people is expected to increase further due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

- The WFP estimates suggest that by 2030, nearly half of the global poor will be living in fragile and conflict-affected situations.
- People living in countries with long-running crises are more than **twice as likely to be undernourished** than people elsewhere (2.5 times as much).

### What is WFP's role in India?

- **It provides policy inputs, advocacy, technical assistance** for improving access to food and focuses on reforms in the **Targeted Public Distribution System**.
- **Unique initiatives:** The WFP has proposed initiatives like Automatic Grain Dispensing Machine (Annapurta) and Mobile Storage Units for the effective implementation of TPDS.
- **Annapurta** allows beneficiaries to withdraw their foodgrain quota accurately and at a time of their choice.
- It can dispense two commodities at a speed of 25 kg per 1.3 minutes and has a storage capacity of 200 kg to 500 kg.
- WFP India has completed a pilot on **rice fortification used in the government's Mid-day Meals scheme in Varanasi**.
- 4,145 tonnes of fortified rice has been produced and fed to 300,000 schoolchildren since 2018.
- WFP will provide technical assistance for **setting up supplementary nutrition production units** in 18 districts for supply of quality food to about 33 lakh beneficiaries of the Anganwadi scheme (Integrated Child Development Services).

### What has the Nobel Committee said while declaring the award?

- **The Norwegian Nobel Committee** highlighted the work done by the WFP to eradicate hunger and underlined its role in the wake of the Covid-19 outbreak.
- The World Food Programme has demonstrated an impressive ability to **intensify its efforts during the pandemic**.

### Way forward

- WFP continues to work to provide food to the hungry and homeless amid a pandemic as the organisation believes that food is the best vaccine against chaos.

## 19. TRP (Television Rating Point) scandal

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

**Syllabus:** Gs2: Statutory, Regulatory and various Quasi-judicial Bodies

**Context:** Recently the Mumbai police unearthed the TRP (Television Rating Point) scandal.

**How the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) came in to being?**

### The TAM controversy

- Initially, there were two rating agencies — Television Audience Measurement (TAM) and INTAM in India.
- However, the data produced by them were contradicting each other, causing great confusion.
- Also, during 2002-03, declaring a private channel as number one channel, which had just 4 per cent share by TAM brought suspicion because 35 out of the top 50 programmes in all TV homes were of Door darshan channel.

**Revelation through investigation:** The following irregularities were found out

- The poors were paid as little as 400 rupees per month to keep the bribing channel open, throughout the day.

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

- There were only about 2,000 meters measuring the audience, and this figure was being deduced for the country's one-billion population.
- Also, there was an issue of conflict of interest. A top international TV network famous for its highly-viewed serials had common ownership with the grand (parent) organisation of the research agency.

### **The Exit of TAM and the birth of Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC)**

- In 2008, The TAM Controversy was raised in the Parliament. TAM was accused for not having adequate "people meter" (instrument used for measuring the audience) and corruption.
- Later, NDTV sued TAM and Nielsen, a global TV rating agency for allegedly manipulating viewership data in India.
- Followed by this, the then IB minister Ranjan Dasmunshi also voiced her concern regarding TAM.
- Finally, in 2008, The Ministry of Information and broadcasting (MIB) asked the Telecom Regulatory Authority (TRAI) to frame policy guidelines for rating agencies.
- TRAI recommended an approach of self-regulation through the setting up of the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC), an industry-led body.
- On July 2015, The MIB, accredited BARC to carry out the television ratings in India.
- Following this, TAM exited TV viewership measurement. Since then, BARC is the sole provider of TV rating services on a commercial basis.

### **What is the current Issue?**

- A similar issue that took place during the TAM years has now taken place under the BARC regime.
- Around 2,000 barometers installed in Mumbai were being used to manipulate TRPs.

### **What is the way forward?**

- With a huge penetration of Direct to Home (DTH) television, the set-top box can now be tweaked to record which channel is being actually watched.
- Even if a fraction of these are adapted as audience monitors, it will be a huge number and provide fool proof data better than the small sample of 40 thousand people-meters with a history of manipulation.

Manipulation of TRP's is not only a financial fraud but a fraud on the people's right to know the truth, which the media is morally and legally bound to provide.

## **20. Madrid principles**

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

**Syllabus: Gs2:** Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.

**Context:** Madrid principle could be applied to end the hostility between Armenia and Azerbaijan

### **How Madrid principles can be used in the present conflict?**

- Armenia and Azerbaijan are located in the main corridor of oil and gas supplies to Europe.
- The two states had a long pending dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh's region.
  - Nagorno-Karabakh's region is located in Azerbaijan but consists of Majority Armenian population.
- In 2007, The Minsk Group came up with the Madrid Principles as the basis for the formulation of a peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.

Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.



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

- Madrid principles which were drawn from the Helsinki Final Act, provides for the prohibition on the use of force, respect for territorial integrity, and recognition of the equal right to self-determination.
- The recent military confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, reflects the failure of the **Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**.

### What are the key guidelines stated in Madrid principles?

- The Madrid Principles envisaged the **demilitarisation of Nagorno-Karabakh** (the Armenian majority region)
- It calls for the unconditional withdrawal of Armenian occupying forces from Azerbaijan.
- It also warrants the need to deploy international peacekeeping forces to monitor the Armenian redeployment, immediately after the Peace Agreement came into force.
- It assures, “**Right to return**” for internally displaced persons and refugees to their original place of residence.

### What’s behind the Armenia-Azerbaijan clashes?

- The two states identified more guidelines to work towards peaceful resolutions. Accordingly, the following agreements were made:
  - it was agreed that Nagorno-Karabakh’s will be provided with right to self-governance
  - It will also have the right to conduct election of officials with legislative and executive powers during the interim period preceding a plebiscite.
  - It is allowed to establish judicial institutions, conduct external relations in certain areas, have representation on OSCE forums relevant to bilateral matters and, crucially, be accorded representation in international organisations where statehood was not a constraint.
- However, Azerbaijan, seeing itself as the aggrieved party over the years, has resorted to violence and use of force to settle the dispute.
- Recently, The President of Azerbaijan, has asserted the country’s long-standing claim over the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, ruling out any dialogue with Armenia until the government there offered an apology.

### What is the role of external players in this dispute?

- Azerbaijan is backed by Turkey, owing to the deep cultural ties between the two countries.
- Turkey was also accused by French government for sending Syrian rebel forces to fight in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.
- Russia, despite having a military base and a mutual defence agreement with Armenia has so far remained as a mute spectator.
- Whereas the U.S. has not made themselves involved in this.

Armenia and Azerbaijan need to strike a practical compromise to promote their own mutual interest. For this to happen, principles outlined in the Madrid framework will serve as the starting point to endure peace between the conflicting nations.

## 21. Police and criminal justice system

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

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Governance

**Context:** Accountability of police is required for honest implementation of existing laws.

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



**What was observed in the hathras rape case and what is the reason behind this?**

- **The Hathras rape** shows that it has a lot to do with hate and caste-related issues as we get to see **upper-caste mobilisation** in favour of the accused.
- **The National Crime Records Bureau** does not compile crimes within categories of hate crimes, lynching, khap-related issues, etc.
- A report by **Amnesty International** pointed out that: “It is essential for the country’s penal laws to first recognise the bias behind the commission of such crimes and document the occurrence of such incidents; both of which remain clearly absent currently”.

**How does the government uses the police?**

- **Transferring officials:** It is misleading for the public, and frustrating for the concerned officers because they do not have any effect in ensuring the rule of law.
- **Illogical action through the police:** Invoking the most stringent laws on citizens by the authorities.
  - It has been reported that of the 139 people were booked under national security laws in 2020. Out of them, 76 were for cow slaughter, 13 for anti-CAA protests and only 37 for heinous crimes.
- **Harsh laws are misused** because the state is mixing up “national security” with general issues of “maintenance of public order” through statutory provisions, contrary to constitutional norms.
- **Not obeying Court’s direction:** The government’s control on the police is such that even the Supreme Court’s direction for the registration of FIRs for cognizable offences is not obeyed by the police system.

**What are the Supreme Court judgements related to this issue?**

- In 2003, **the Justice Malimath Committee recommended** that the registration of FIRs should be the compulsory duty of the police officer. Failure of this duty should become an offence punishable in law to prevent the misuse of power by the officer.
- **Supreme Court judgment stated** that if the information given clearly mentions the commission of a cognizable offence, there is no other option but to register FIR directly.
  - One has to approach the courts of magistrates for non-registration of complaints and the cases remain pending for months.
- **Action and non-action are more influenced by politics** than the motivation to ensure the rule of law.
  - Reports on police reforms and criminal law reforms, including the 14-year-old Supreme Court judgment in Prakash Singh, have been ignored by the political powers.

**What was the idea behind our constitution?**

- In 1886, **the US Supreme Court in Yick Wo v Hopkins** stated that “the law itself be fair on its face, and impartial in appearance. Yet, if it is applied and administered by public authority with an evil eye and an unequal hand by making unjust and illegal discriminations between persons in similar circumstances, material to their rights, the denial of equal justice is still within the prohibition of the constitution”.
  - B R Ambedkar spoke on the same lines while framing our Constitution.

**Way forward** - There is a committee working on reforms in criminal laws and hopefully it also suggests ways to make the police accountable, and free them from the influence of politics. This is necessary to save the system from embarrassments like the Hathras case.

## 22. Tackling fake news

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Governance

**Context:** Rise in the instances of fake schemes.

### How do the fake schemes work? What are its effects?

- **Case of fake employment and loan schemes:** people receive a personal or general message informing them that they have been selected for a government scheme. They are further asked to pay a certain amount as processing charges to avail the benefits.
  - The fraudsters are available for contact till the processing charge is paid, but disappear once they receive the money.
- **Some fake schemes do not leave any digital trace on the Internet** such as the Gram Vikas Rozgar Yojana, a fake employment scheme.
- **Political leaders have had to come on television to clarify** that there are no such schemes, as in the case of the **PM Scooty Yojana**.
- **Fake schemes mostly get shared through fake website** links on social media platforms, WhatsApp messages and YouTube videos.
  - A simple search with the name of these schemes on platforms like YouTube shows us how deep rooted and successful the fake schemes ecosystem is.
- **Money and privacy in danger:** individuals have left their personal details like phone numbers, Aadhaar numbers and bank account details in the comments section on the internet.
- There is also the **danger that they won't apply for genuine schemes** when they constantly come across fake ones.

### What are the ways to tackle the problem?

- The need of the hour is an **integrated and rigorous effort** by all stakeholders to tackle the threat of fake schemes.
- **There is need for a centralised government portal** with a toll-free number where people can inquire about the messages and file complaints, like they do in the case of cybercrimes.
  - The portal should direct the complaints of people who get duped to the relevant State Police, who should be equipped to deal with the fraudulent practices in a swift manner.
- **Social media and technology companies should design dedicated policies:** Policies through which they take action against individuals/groups posting such content intended to cheat the public.
- **Websites that have names similar to government schemes need to be monitored**, and necessary active action should be initiated if they resort to malpractices.
  - The same can be done with bank account names that sound similar to real government schemes.
- The government should not only print and broadcast advertisements about genuine schemes, but also **alert people about fake schemes** so that people are able to differentiate between what's genuine and what's fake.
- **One single website** would also help where people can access all the information they need about various government schemes at both the Central and State levels.

**Way forward** - Tackling fake news requires a determined effort and coordination between multiple stakeholders such as governments, the media, fact-checkers, NGOs and the civil society.

### 23. Enhancing tax revenues of local government

Source- Live Mint

**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** - Tax collection in India at local self-government level is comparatively less than in developing countries.

**What is new system implemented by Bengaluru municipal corporation to earn tax revenue?**

- Brihat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Municipal Corporation had implemented a modern paid parking system.
- The system allows you to discover available parking lots on your smartphone and pay the fees online.
- The BBMP expects this system, implemented as a public-private partnership, to earn an annual income of ₹31.56 crore for the next ten years.

**How government can generate revenues from unused or under-used public assets?**

1. **Empowering local bodies**- To increase the tax collection at the panchayat and municipal level union government and state government must empower the lower level of governments to collect taxes.
  - When the government fails to extract economic value, other actors must step in.
2. **Efficiency**- The public finances of states and local governments show a shocking level of inefficiency and wastefulness in terms of meeting their revenue potential, this need to be addressed.
  - **For example**- Bengaluru collects only 20 percent of its property tax potential.
3. **Tax collection**- High-income states such as Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra and Karnataka have a lot of scope for improvement" in terms of own revenues as a percentage of gross state domestic product.
  - Maharashtra raises 70 percent of its revenue requirement from taxes, five states in India are not able to raise even 30 percent.
4. **More attention**- Governments must pay more attention to non-tax revenues by making better use of public assets. Land is perhaps the most ubiquitous asset in the hands of any government.
5. **Innovative thinking**- Unused land or building could be used as car parking area or office space. It is this kind of thinking that municipalities must adopt: public assets must not be allowed to idle.
  - **For example**- the public transport company in Bengaluru built multistorey office buildings over its bus stands in prime commercial locations in the city, it has been earning a steady rental income from them.
  - Parking fees alone have the potential to be a significant part of the corporation's budget.
6. **Political economy** is one of the chief reasons why state and local governments are unable to put public assets to better use. Lack of expertise and political direction are some others.

**Way forward**- The current fiscal crisis presents an opportunity for states, municipalities and panchayats to shake up the status quo and get their public finances in better shape. It will require chief ministers to initiate the process.

## 24. GST Compensation Issue

**Source:** Indian Express

**Syllabus: Gs2:** Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure, Devolution of Powers and Finances up to Local Levels and Challenges Therein.

**Context:** Issue of compensating states for the loss of their GST revenues

### What is the background of the issue?

- Creation of the GST Council in 2017, to levy GST (unified domestic consumption tax) was hailed as a great example of cooperative federalism.
- Concerned with loss of revenue due to the new GST regime, states wanted a firm assurance from the Centre to compensate for their revenue shortfall.
- Accordingly, States were guaranteed compensation for any revenue shortfall below 14% growth (base year 2015-16) for the first five years ending 2022.
- It was agreed that, the GST compensation will be paid out of Compensation Cess for every two months by the Centre to states
- In case the amount in the GST compensation fund falls short of the compensation payable in any bi-monthly period, the GST Council shall decide the mode of raising additional resources including borrowing from the market which could be repaid by collection of cess in the sixth year or further subsequent years.
- Due to the pandemic, the revenue collected through cess by the centre is not sufficient to compensate for states GST losses.
- So, the centre has come up with two options for the states to settle the issue.

### What were the options provided for the states?

- According to the Centre the estimated states' total loss of GST revenue is Rs 3 lakh crore. Out of which, Rs 65,000 crore was expected to accrue from the compensation cess.
- To compensate the remaining Rs 2.35 lakh crore, the centre came up with two options.
  - **Special window to borrow:** First option was to provide states a special window to borrow Rs 1.1 lakh crore from the RBI. Under this option, both the interest payments and the repayments would be made from future collections of the compensation cess.
  - **States to borrow entirely:** As per the second option, the states can borrow the entire shortfall of Rs 2.35 lakh crore from the market. Unlike the first option, the states have to bear the interest costs and the repayments would be adjusted against future collections of the cess.
- While few states are willing to abide by first option, some states have rejected both the options and have stated that it is the Centre's responsibility to compensate the states, and therefore, centre should borrow.

### Why it concerns cooperative federalism?

- The two options were presented without any discussion in the council and mandated the states to choose one of the options within a week.
- States are being pressurised to accept any of the two option. For example, Recently, there was a statement that those states which do not exercise their option within a week have to wait until 2022.

### What is the way forward?

- It is the Centre's commitment to find the compensation mechanism.



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

- Given the relative fiscal strength of the Centre and the states and as the interest rate of the Centre's borrowing is lower than that of the states, the Centre should take the responsibility to borrow.
- Further, interest payments and repayment of the principal liability can be met from future collections from the cess.

This is not merely a matter related to compensation for the loss of revenue, but has to do with the credibility of honouring the agreement. Pressuring states will have adverse consequences for the country's federal structure.

### 25. Federalism

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

**Gs2:** Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure

**Context:** Cooperative Federalism demands collaborative approach.

#### What are the structural issues in Federalism?

- The word Federalism is nowhere mentioned in the constitution.
- Without explicit recognition of federalism as a governing principle, the distribution of powers and responsibilities between various tiers of the governmental system were made.

#### What are the recent Issues affecting Federalism in India?

- **Misuse of Cess:** The Comptroller and Auditor-General of India (CAG) recently revealed that, the cess meant to remedy shortfalls in GST yields, was retained in central government revenues, in violation of all applicable norms.
- **Shifting the borrowing burden on States:** It is the priority of centre to compensate for the revenue loss of states in GST regime. But, with centre facing shortfall in Cess collection, has asked the states to borrow from the market whereas many states believe that the onus of borrowing should rest with the central government owing to its absolute sovereign nature and enjoys vastly greater taxation rights.
- **Big brother attitude:** To meet the unforeseen expense due to the covid 19 pandemic, States were given unconditional access to borrowings but with two conditions, (1) progress in implementing the "one nation, one ration card" scheme, (2) improvements in the "ease of doing business".
- **Agrarian Reforms:** Agriculture is a state subject. Recently, three agriculture bills passed by the centre is seen as an encroachment on the functions of the States, and against the spirit of cooperative federalism.

### 26. QUAD

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

**Gs2:** Important International Institutions, agencies and fora - their Structure, Mandate.

**Context:** QUAD and India's role

#### What is QUAD?

- **Objective:** To check Beijing's ambition to exercise regional hegemony and to defend and strengthen a liberal international order while focusing on building an Indo-Pacific narrative.
- **QUAD Members:** The quadrilateral security dialogue (Quad) consists of India, US, Japan and Australia.
- **Quad Plus:** Expansion of QUAD that includes South Korea, Vietnam and New Zealand



**What are the efforts taken by India to tackle china?**

**Economic decoupling from China:** For example, withdrawal from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership in 2019, its opposition to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

- **Economic measures:** As a response to Ladakh aggression, India has taken up active economic measures against China to limit trade and investment links.
- **Strategic:** Has taken part in the economic initiatives of the Quad and its extended format.

**What are the challenges in future vis-a-vis QUAD and global economy?**

- **New America first policy under Biden:** Where he has promised not to sign any new free trade agreements without first investing in American workers.
- **Marginalising WTO:** With a vision to rebuild American industry and regain American technological leadership its expected that Biden's industrial policy will run counter to the rules of the World Trading Organisation.

**What is the way forward?**

- With America's inward-looking policy, India can benefit from "Atmanirbhar America" that will create pro domestic industrial policy in a reformed trading order.
- Quad's diplomatic consultations on reorienting supply chains, gives India an opportunity to be a key player in reforming the global trading rules, to utilise this India must be ready to reform its own economic policies.

Engaging the Quad partners on reforming the China-centred economic globalisation is a rare geo-economic opportunity for India. But it is also a big challenge, as it involves making much internal change to India's economic policy.

**27. Efficient implementation of the NEP policy**

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

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Education

**Context:** The successful functioning of NEP 2020 requires a five-point implementation plan to help it in working.

**What are the contributors to policy failure and how it can be avoided?**

- Bob Hudson, David Hunter and Stephen Peckham had identified **four contributors to policy failure:**
  - Overly optimistic expectations
  - Implementation in dispersed governance
  - Inadequate collaborative policymaking
  - Impulses of the political cycle
- A better understanding of the processes is needed through which policy moves and how, at each of these points, policy can best be supported. Four sequential points can be identified: **Preparation; tracking; support; and review.**

**What is the five-point implementation plan to help implement NEP?**

- A vision to **build intellectual and social capital for developing collective consciousness** for implementing the NEP.
  - **Interventions:** It includes coordination and cooperation between the Centre and states; legislative interventions, including passing new laws and/or amendments to existing laws.
  - **Finance:** An increase in the budgetary framework and rise of financial resources with involvement of inter-ministerial discussions along with regulatory reforms.

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

- **Advisory body:** The PM's Task Force on Higher Education Reforms can be an advisory body including experts from public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to ensure time-bound implementation with fixed accountability.
- **There is a need to establish a National NEP Implementation Standing Committee** with select vice-chancellors / directors of universities/ institutes.
  - It will create and monitor the NEP Implementation Plan in a time-bound manner; and will have specific powers and functions, including thematic sub-committees and regional committees.
- **The National Education Ministers' Council with Education Ministers of all states and UTs needs to be constituted.**
  - The Council will be an important institutional mechanism to monitor the implementation of NEP in states and UTs, and will also serve as a forum to discuss and address implementation issues.
  - It will navigate through the diverse perspectives of state governments.
- **The idea of Institutions of Eminence (IoE)** spoken by the Prime Minister contains the vision to develop world-class universities in India.
  - In 2016 then Finance Minister promised to provide "an enabling regulatory architecture" so that "10 public and 10 private institutions" would emerge "as world-class teaching and research institutions" which led to the establishment of IoEs.
  - The vision of IoE needs to be integrated with the NEP implementation plan, and IoEs need to be empowered with more freedom, flexibility, autonomy and resources.
- **The National Higher Education Philanthropy Council needs to be constituted** which will be headed by the Education Minister with private sector participation.
  - Nearly 70 per cent of Indian HEIs are private, and more than 70 per cent of Indian students study in private HEIs. Thus, financial resources need to be raised that are critical for the establishment of more private HEIs.
  - This will require new and innovative institutional mechanisms, tax incentives, donation frameworks to incentivise the Indian corporate sector to contribute in the form of individual and corporate philanthropy.
  - The Philanthropy Council could help promote potential donors for establishing three new endowment funds:
    - Higher Education Infrastructure Development Endowment Fund
    - Higher Education Student Scholarship Endowment Fund
    - Higher Education Research Grants Endowment Fund

### Way forward

We will need to create stakeholder incentives; formulate instruments in the form of legal, policy, regulatory and institutional mechanisms; build reliable information sources; develop adaptability across HEIs; develop credibility through transparent actions and participation of all stakeholders; and develop s

### 28. Quadrilateral home truths: On QUAD

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

**Syllabus:** GS-2-Important International Institutions, agencies and fora – their Structure, Mandate.

**Context:** On October 6th, the foreign ministers of Australia, India, Japan and the U.S. held a standalone meeting in Tokyo.

### What is QUAD?

- The grouping of four democracies –India, Australia, US and Japan is known as the quadrilateral security dialogue or QUAD. It was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007.
- Objective: To check China's ambition to exercise regional hegemony and to defend and strengthen a liberal international order while focusing on building an Indo-Pacific narrative.
- Quad Plus: Expansion of QUAD that includes South Korea, Vietnam and New Zealand.

### What is the way forward for QUAD?

For QUAD to be successful as a geopolitical construct, it needs to learn four lessons drawn from the Asia's history and geopolitics. These are:

- **Firstly**, there is no such thing as an 'Indo-Pacific system'. Instead, historically, there were two Asian systems- a) an Indian Ocean system and b) an East Asian system.
- **Secondly**, the Indo-Pacific region do not have any prior experience of long-lasting peace, prosperity and stability.
- **Thirdly**, the sea lines of communication acts like a connective tissue that links the Indian Ocean to the Western Pacific. It is also an important arena of leverage vis-à-vis Chinese shipping and resource flows. This leverage should be used appropriately on India's terms.
- **Finally**, the Quad has an important role to play to check China's expansion in the Indian Ocean. India should focus on interoperable cooperation with its Quad partners to address the naval challenges posed by China in the Indian Ocean Region.

## 29. Functioning of the RTI

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Policy

**Context:** Government determining the tenure and salaries of all Information Commissioners is an attack on the transparency and a blow to the right to information regime.

### What is RTI?

- The right to information was **upheld by the Supreme Court as a fundamental right** under Article 19 of the Constitution, which guarantees every citizen the right to free speech and expression.
- The RTI Act was enacted in 2005 to provide an institutional regime of right to information for citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities, in order to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority.
- **The RTI law has been used by people to seek information** to actively participate in decision-making processes and hold governments accountable.

### What is the potential of the law?

- RTI is the **most widely used transparency legislation in the world** as nearly six million applications are filed under the act every year.
- A large proportion of these are filed by the poorest and the most marginalised who have understood the **great potential of the law to empower them to access their basic rights.**

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

- **It gives citizens a power to hold government departments accountable** for delivery of food grains and social security benefits meant for those in distress, including migrant workers.
- The RTI Act has also been put to effective use by citizens to **shed light on corruption and illogical abuse of power by the state.**

### Examples: RTI used to promote Transparency

- Information has been accessed about the anonymous electoral bonds through which thousands of crores have been channeled into political parties.
- The law has been **widely used to seek information about availability of medical facilities**, like ventilators and ICU beds during the Covid-19 crisis.
- **The Prime Minister's Office has been queried** about the expenditure of the PM CARES Fund set up to provide relief during disasters like the current pandemic.

### How is there an attack on the transparency watchdogs?

- Information Commissions at the Centre and in the States are the final judges empowered to act against violations of the legislation.
  - **Amendments were made to the RTI Act** which removed legal protection of fixed tenure and high status advised on the commissioners in 2019.
- The government pushed the RTI (Amendment) Act which allows the **Central government to determine the tenure and salaries of all Information Commissioners.** It is an indicator that directions to disclose inconvenient information could invite adverse consequences.
- **Information Commissioners are not appointed in a timely manner** by the government which has severely hindered the functioning of commissions.
  - Since May 2014, not a single commissioner of the Central Information Commission (CIC) has been appointed without citizens having to approach courts.
- **Vacancies in Information Commissions lead to large backlogs** of appeals/complaints and long delays in the disposal of cases.
  - Six out of 11 posts of commissioners are currently vacant in the CIC, including that of the chief despite the orders of Supreme Court to fill all the vacancies.
- **The CIC is headless for the fifth time in the last six years** and eight State Information Commissions are functioning without a chief.

### Way forward

As the RTI law completes 15 years, it is again time for those whom it empowers; the citizens to state themselves and protect their fundamental right to information, which they achieved after a long struggle.

### 30. Declining Role of Parliament

**Source-** The Indian Express

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

**Context-** The role of Parliament as a platform for ensuring accountability of the executive and use of its instruments for ensuring criticism, deliberation and even consensus-making has declined in the past few years.



**What are the current issues and relevance in Indian democracy?**

1. **Role of parliamentary committees** - 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 number of bills referred to parliamentary committees has declined drastically, from 71 percent in 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha to 25 percent in the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha, including zero bill referred in 2020.
  - 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.
  - 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.
  - **Ordinance route**- Despite having majority in the Lok Sabha, average number of ordinances jumped from six a year under Manmohan Singh to 11 a year under Modi.
  - **Cancel Question Hour** - The Opposition isn't given a chance to hold the government accountable. Slash Zero Hour time by half, from 60 minutes to 30 minutes, to deprive the Opposition of raising issues of importance. Misuse a constitutional tool such as an ordinance to mock Parliament, in a way it hasn't been done in 70 years.
  - **Money bill scam**- several key pieces of legislation that did not properly fit in the category, were passed as Money Bills. The Aadhar Bill is a case in point. The Speaker of the Lok Sabha certified that it was a Money Bill and all the amendments proposed by the Rajya Sabha were rejected.
3. **Mode of Public address by the PM** - Prime Minister Modi who prefers to communicate directly with the people, either on the radio or via social media, which obviate the risk of contradiction, and questioning by the receiver, due to one-way communication.
  - PM Modi on an average has spoken 3.6 times a year in Parliament i.e. 22 times in times in six years. In contrast, Atal ji spoke 77 times in six year and Manmohan Singh spoke 48 times in parliament during his 10 years in office.
4. **Speaker's traditional non-partisan role**- Very few Speakers, with exceptions such as G.V. Mavalankar, P.A. Sangma and Somnath Chatterjee, have gone against 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.
- The recent survey showed that, more than half of the respondents wants to get rid of election and parliaments and have expert make decision on behalf of them.



### 31. NGO's Improving education system

Source - The Hindu

**Syllabus – GS 2-** Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

**Context** – A strong programme for capacity building of NGO workers engaged in educational improvement becomes an urgent need.

#### **What is the role of NGO's in elementary education in India?**

- NGO'S are intensively engaged in the task of improving elementary education.
- There are more than 12 lakh NGO workers engaged in direct teaching in classrooms, demonstrating various activities and methods to teachers, conducting teacher workshops and so on.
- NGO workers are supposed to be more effective than regular employees in the government system.

Therefore, these workers must have some idea of what education quality happen to be and are required to adequately prepare for this difficult task.

#### **What are the provisions in the India Constitution related to education?**

The four documents providing during a framework of principles, guidelines and legal stipulation to deal with such question are-

1. National Curriculum Framework 2005.
2. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009.
3. National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2009.
4. National Education Policy 2020.

#### **Provisions in the India Constitution related to improving education system are-**

- **Regarding Pedagogy-** the RTE, in Section 29(e), recommends that learning through activities, discovery and exploration in a child friendly and child-centered manner.
- **Regarding Curriculum-** NEP 2020, paragraph 4.23 says that certain subjects, skills, and capacities should be learned by all students to become good, successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings in today's rapidly changing world.
- The NCFTE (page 23), says that the need teachers who promote values of peace, democratic way of life, equality, justice, liberty, fraternity, secularism and zeal for social reconstruction.

#### **What are the concerns in current education system?**

1. **Quality of education-** The quality of education or school in today's society is based on a high score in the board examinations rather than actual meaningful learning.
2. **Carelessness-** NGOs do not seem to be paying adequate attention to the programme such as capacity building of their workers nor do universities and teacher education colleges seem to be offering any short term and/or distance learning courses for this sector.
3. These NGO workers have a significant part in the CPDT, for example, in annual in-service training and pedagogy improvement workshops. People should be asking themselves whether these workers are adequately prepared for this difficult task or not.

**Way forward-**

- If government wants to implement NEP 2020 and really want to see improvement in the quality of education available to the children then it required to pay very close attention to capacity building of this vast workforce engaged in the field.
- Without adequate preparation, the assumption that the mere appointment of a person in an NGO and being placed in the field will automatically develop the capabilities of these workers is incorrect.

**32. Civil society gears up for big funds squeeze**

**Source:** Live Mint

**Syllabus:** GS2: Development Processes and the Development Industry — the Role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

**Context:** New norms on foreign donations and covid-19 could end up shrinking the money pool for philanthropy and CSR.

**Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA): Background**

- The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) Act was first brought in by the Indira Gandhi government during the Emergency in 1976.
- Its aim was to protect the 'sovereignty' of India from 'foreign hands' at a time when global powers were engaged in a cold war.
- The law prohibited political parties, electoral candidates and even cartoonists from accepting foreign contributions.
- Through FCRA 2010, government made the renewal of registrations mandatory every five years and placed a 50% limit on administrative expenses.

**What the Key changes introduced to FCRA, 2010?**

- **Prohibition to accept foreign contribution:** These include: election candidates, editor or publisher of a newspaper, judges, government servants, members of any legislature, and political parties.
- **Transfer of foreign contribution:**
  - Under the Act, foreign contribution cannot be transferred to any other person unless such person is also registered to accept foreign contribution.
  - FCRA registered organisations are barred from transferring foreign donations to smaller non-profits (a practice known as sub-granting) who often find it difficult to access donors on their own.
- **Aadhaar for registration:** The Act states that a person may accept foreign contribution if they have obtained a certificate of registration from central government or obtained prior permission from the government to accept foreign contribution. The bill makes Aadhaar mandatory for registration.
- **Reduction in use of foreign contribution for administrative purposes:** The bill decreases administrative expenses through foreign funds by an organisation to 20% from 50% earlier.
- **More power to government:** FCRA registration can be suspended now after a summary enquiry and the period of suspension can extend up to a year (from 180 days earlier).

**What are the various concerns associated with the amendments?**

- **Reduce availability of funds:** The crunch is also because a chunk of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds which NGOs depend on went to the PM-Cares fund.

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

- **Reduce a number of philanthropic initiatives:** Civil society organisations will be overburdened as they are already affected by COVID-19. For Example, cancellation of FCRA registration (in 2015) forced the environmental rights watchdog Greenpeace to halt its India operations
- **Affect COVID-19 relief activities:** the FCRA amendments could squeeze the once-vibrant not-for-profit sector of funds.
- **Reduce accountability:** the changes will push NGOs to become mere government contractors rather than raise questions on policy matters or defend the rights of tribal communities
- **Reduce political empowerment of people:** The FCRA amendments will halt the emergence of local leadership from marginalised communities. For example, crowdfunding platforms like **Our Democracy** have raised funds for committed individuals helping them contest elections.

India's vast civil society network could still perhaps maintain its vibrancy but only if Indian donors are willing to step up.

### 33. Issues of education system in India

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Education

**Context:** Delhi University's high cut-offs in admissions is not a reflection of standards as there is no connection between one's intellectual ability and performance in examinations.

**Comment on the current education system.**

- **Rote learning and exaggerated marks** point out the lack of pedagogic imagination and shows a highly mechanised process of entering the higher education.
- **This trend for marks converts a learner into a smart consumer** and the only skill she/he acquires is the ability to memorise associated bullet points as emphasised by exam-oriented teachers and coaching centre gurus.
- **The path of success is causing the stigma of failure** as the "fact-centric"/"objective"/short questions become the new normal, it becomes very difficult not to get at least 80 per cent in the board examination.
- **Social Darwinism is normalised** and hyper-competitiveness becomes the philosophy of the age as schools become highly-oppressive institutions.

### Do the students find enough guidance?

Young students hardly find any guidance as they choose their subjects and enter colleges.

- Academic disciplines are ranked through the market rationality and **young students are regularly pressured by the anxiety-ridden parents.**
- **They are driven by the peer culture** as a result they tend to prefer "prestigious" subjects like Physics, Economics, Commerce, English literature and Psychology, even if they are not naturally inclined to these subjects.
- "Ranking" colleges and universities are hierarchized. The students select the college keeping in mind the **"brand consciousness" instead of the subject of their liking**

### Way forward

We should acquire the courage to accept that one's curiosity, aptitude and awakened intelligence cannot be measured through a pattern of examination that compels one to be a robotic performer rather than a creative wanderer.

Present hierarchised system of higher education in India is creating robotic performers rather than a creative wanderer. Comment.

### 34. Multilateralism in present world

**Source-** The Hindu

**Syllabus- GS 2-** Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

**Context** - Global integration with solidarity among nations is necessary to tackle global challenges.

#### Why multilateralism is necessary?

- Multilateralism enables governance in areas which require coordination among nation states either under UN system or through intergovernmental organizations like G20.
- Multilateralism set norms to regulate the behavior of states so as to avoid conflict and to ensure both equitable burdens sharing and, equally, a fair distribution of benefits.
- This network continues to function and deliver benefits to participating states despite the less than propitious international environment.

#### Are multilateral institutions on decline?

1. The powerful member countries are posing major challenge to multilateralism in following ways:
    - They have deprived the UN of resources.
    - They have resisted efforts to institute long overdue reforms in UN.
- Yet, such institutions are working to tackle global challenges.

#### Example

- a. World Food Programme (WFP), combats hunger and preventing the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict.
  - b. Multilateral negotiations on climate change to mitigate and adapt to global challenges induced by global warming.
2. Multilateral institutions have become platforms for contestations among their member states. For example, USA stalled election of jurists in trade appellate body of WTO.
  3. In the contemporary world, the line separating the domestic from the external has become increasingly blurred. In tackling domestic challenges deeper, external engagement is often indispensable which is facilitated by multilateral institutions.
  4. Globalization in the age of digital economy is giving thrust to multilateralism, which is further boosted by pandemic induced after-effects.

#### Way forward-

India firmly believes that the path to achieve sustainable peace and prosperity is through multilateralism. As children of Planet Earth we must join hands to address our common challenges and achieve our common goals.

### 35. Food security to nutritional security: issues and solutions

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Policy

**Context:** Strong food systems will have to be built back as the world is not on track to achieve global targets by 2030.

#### What is a food system?

- **It is a framework that includes every aspect of feeding** and nourishing people: from growing, harvesting and processing to packaging, transporting, marketing and consuming food.



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

- **A food system must provide enough nutritious food** for all without compromising feeding future generations and would be called sustainable food system.

### How has the food system of the country performed during pandemic?

- **Central and State governments were able to distribute around 23 million tonnes** from India's large domestic food grain reserves in three months through the **Public Distribution System**. It helped in providing much-needed emergency assistance to families around the country.
- **The government successfully mobilised food rations for 820 million people from April to November 2020**, including finding alternate solutions to provide food rations to 90 million school children.
- **Agriculture grew at 3.4% during the first quarter this financial year** and the area cultivated this *kharif* exceeded 110 million hectares.

### What are the issues faced by India?

- **The Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey 2016-18** revealed that over 40 million children are chronically malnourished, and more than half of Indian women aged 15-49 years are anaemic.
- **Climate change continues to be a real and potent threat** to agro-biodiversity like pest and locust attacks, as well as floods and cyclone, which will impact everything from productivity to livelihoods across food and farm systems.
- **Intensified food production systems with excessive use of chemicals** and unsustainable farming practices cause soil degradation, fast depletion of groundwater table and rapid loss of agro-biodiversity.
- **In India, more than 86% farmers have less than two hectares of land** contributing around 60% of the total food grain production and over half the country's fruits and vegetables.

### What are the steps taken to counter the challenges?

- **The FAO, IFAD and the WFP worked in close coordination to support the Government of India's Empowered Group 5** to facilitate supply chain and logistics management, so necessary items such as food and medicines were available.
- The agencies provided daily updates on the real-time situation on the ground, checking challenges/red flags, dynamic subjective data and good practices from their sources in the field.
- **The Integrated Child Development Services** which provides cooked meals and take-home rations to 100 million children under the age of six, as well as to pregnant and lactating mothers.
  - **The mid-day meal programme**, are however some examples of how the government is working to fix these challenges.
- **India is dealing innovatively with climate change**. For example, through the development of drought and flood tolerant seed varieties, weather-based agricultural advisories, promotion of millets, and small-scale irrigation.
- **The way we produce food must change through agro-ecology** and sustainable production practices in agriculture and allied sectors.
- **Stop the waste as one-third of the food we produce is wasted**. That is why the UN, and our three agencies ; the FAO (The Food and Agriculture Organisation), IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) and WFP (The World Food Programme) are committed to working with government, civil society, farmers' organisations and the private sector to build sustainable food systems.



### Way forward

Everybody has a role to play in transforming our food systems so they can withstand increasing volatility and climate shocks, deliver affordable and sustainable healthy diets for all, and provide decent livelihoods for food chain workers.

### 36. An opportunity for India

**Source-** The Hindu

**Syllabus-** GS 2- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

**Context-** It's an opportune time for India to push for institutional changes and reformed multilateralism in the global system.

#### How India can revive Multilateralism?

- 1. Leadership opportunity** - Since US and West have adopted nationalistic leaning, India should step into the leadership role by advocating the multilateral approach of tackling the pandemic, climate change and terrorism.
  - In 2021, India will join the UN Security Council (non-permanent seat) and chair the BRICS Summit, and in 2022 will host the G-20 summit, which is a great opportunity for agenda-setting.
- 2. Increase India's share in UN Budget-** India also needs to invest in the UN with increased financial contribution in line with its share of the world economy and by placing its people in key multilateral positions.
  - India's share in the UN budget stands at 0.7 per cent. The shares of China, Japan and the US are at 8, 10 and 22 per cent respectively. Raising India's contribution to at least one per cent might convince its partners that India is serious about pursuing a more vigorous multilateralism.
- 3. Window opens for India-** Three defeats in election to key UN bodies and the negative reaction to its threat of veto to forestall a discussion on the pandemic in the UNSC clearly point to a disenchantment with China in the globe and is a thumbs down for them.
  - a. India beat China to win a four-year term on UN's Commission on the status of Women [CWS].
  - b. India also won a seat each, through endorsements, to two other ECOSOC bodies-
    - The Committee for Programme and Coordination [CPC].
    - The Commission on Population and Development [CPD].
- 4. Shift from Non Alignment to Multi Alignment-** Multi-alignment is the very essence of India's foreign policy and the economic policy of India today. This presents an opportunity for India to become a global mediator and help in developing a framework on global Issues.

#### Way forward-

- India needs to support reform not only to expand the permanent members' category of the Security Council but also to revitalize the role of the General Assembly.
- India, Germany, Japan and Brazil [G-4] have sought to refocus the UN on UNSC reform, they must remain focused and determines even if these changes do not happen easily.

### 37. Sex ratio and demographic attributes

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Policy

**Context:** Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report (2018) and global population projections made by the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), US show that fertility has been declining in India for some time now.

### What were the findings of the report?

- **SRS report estimated the Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** as 2.2 in the year 2018, which is the number of children a mother would have at the current pattern of fertility during her lifetime.
- It is estimated that **replacement TFR of 2.1 and fertility is likely to continue to decline.**
- This report estimated the **natural annual population growth rate to be 1.38 per cent in 2018** because along with fertility rate, the population growth rate also declines.
- A comparison of 2011 and 2018 SRS statistical reports shows that **TFR declined from 2.4 to 2.2** during this period and annual natural **population growth rate also declined from 1.47 to 1.38** per cent during this period.
- **Population would not stabilise or begin to reduce** in a few years once replacement fertility is reached because of the population momentum effect.
  - For instance, the replacement fertility level was reached in Kerala around 1990, but its annual population growth rate was 0.7 per cent in 2018, nearly 30 years later.
- **The UN Population Division** has estimated that India's population would possibly peak at 161 crore around 2061 at the medium-fertility variant, and will be lower by about 10 per cent at the low fertility variant. It will peak at 160 crore in 2048 according to IHME.
- **The six states with higher than national fertility rate** (and their TFR) in 2018 are Bihar (3.2), Uttar Pradesh (2.9) Madhya Pradesh (2.7), Rajasthan (2.5), Jharkhand (2.5) and Chhattisgarh (2.4).

### What does the fertility rate depends on?

- **Fertility largely depends upon social setting and female education** is a key indicator for social setting. So, higher the female education level, lower the fertility.
  - For instance, illiterate women in the reproductive age group of 15-49 years have higher fertility than literate women in almost all states.
  - The percentage of illiterate women in this age group was higher than 15 per cent in all the high-fertility states, which include nearly 40 per cent of India's population.
- **Programme strength is indicated by the unmet need for contraception**, which has several components.
  - The proportion of married women who are neither pregnant nor amenorrhoeic and do not desire a child in the next two years or ever but are not practising contraception.
- **The National Family Health Survey (2015-16)** provides estimates for the unmet need at 12.9 per cent and contraceptive prevalence of 53.5 per cent for India. This makes the total demand for contraception at 66.4 per cent.
- **Programme's ability to reach younger people** and provide them with good quality reproductive health education and services needs to be urgently strengthened in states like UP and Bihar.

- Bihar has the highest fertility rate along with the highest unmet need at 21.1 per cent and the lowest contraceptive prevalence rate of 24.1 per cent among all the major states.

**What is the state of sex ratio? What can be done to reduce the difference?**

- **Sex ratio at birth:** Biologically normal sex ratio at birth is 1,050 males to 1,000 females or 950 females to 1,000 males but the SRS reports shows that the number of females per 1,000 males, declined marginally from 906 in 2011 to 899 in 2018.
- **This adverse ratio results in a gross imbalance** in the number of men and women and its inevitable impact on marriage systems as well as other harms to women.
- **Increasing female education** and economic prosperity help to improve the ratio.
- **Government actions need to be supplemented** by improving women's status in the society.

**Way forward**

There is an urgent need to reach young people both for reproductive health education and services as well as to cultivate gender equity norms. This could reduce the effect of population momentum and accelerate progress towards reaching a more normal sex-ratio at birth.

**38. GST Compensation Issue**

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

**Syllabus:** **Gs2:** Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure

**Context:** Recently, the Centre has acceded to the states' request, that it will borrow Rs 1.1 lakh crore to compensate them for the shortfall in their GST revenues.

**What is the Background?**

- For bringing the states in to GST ambit, The Centre assured the states of a 14 per cent growth in their GST revenues.
- It also agreed to compensate states for shortfall in GST revenue collection for 5 years.
- GST compensation was decided to pay out of Compensation Cess every two months by the Centre.
- Now, the pandemic impact has resulted in low Cess collection that has constrained Compensation to states.
- With expected revenue shortfall of Rs 3 lakh crore, the collections through the compensation cess stand at Rs 65,000 crore.
- Now, out of the shortfall of Rs 2.35 lakh crore the state governments are being compensated only for losses arising on account of implementation issues that is Rs 1.1 lakh crore.
- The states were asked to forgo the remaining loss in GST revenues (1.34 lakh crore) as it has arised out of an "act of god".

**Why Centre has to borrow not the states?**

- The Centre's borrowing attracts a lower interest rate as compared to that of states.
- Also, the loans to the states will be at a uniform rate that will help them to avoid interest rate differentials across states.
- This mechanism is more preferable and convenient rather than all the states rushing to the bond market.

**What are the unresolved issues?**

- **Increased debt:** The mode of the transaction has not yet clearly defined. Irrespective of the mode of transaction, centres borrowing will lead to a rise in general government debt.
- **Centres reluctance to borrow entire amount:** The repayment of the loan is not an obligation of the Centre, and will be met from proceeds from future compensation cess collections still centre is reluctant to borrow the entire expected shortfall of Rs 2.35 lakh crore

The Centre's decision to borrow Rs 1.1 lakh crore is in the spirit of cooperative federalism. Given the huge distress in the economy even the states should show some flexibility, in the spirit of cooperation. The GST Council should approach the issue of compensating states for their remaining losses in a conciliatory manner.

**39. NEP and analysis**

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Education

**Context:** NEP focuses on equity and critical learning as it also addresses present and future challenges.

**Explain the changes introduced by the NEP in an elaborate manner?**

- **NEP is only the third education policy propagated by the Centre;** the other two being the policies vocalized by Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi in 1968 and Rajiv Gandhi in 1986.
- **The NEP is important for several quantitative and qualitative changes** across the development band. These range from pre-school to higher education :
  - Emphasis on practicality and skill development.
  - Breaking the stereotypical divide of arts, commerce and science streams in high school.
  - Reorganising schooling years.
  - Making the education system more inclusive.
  - Permission to foreign universities to establish branches in India.
  - Thrust on Indian and ancient languages.
- **There is an uplifting move from periodic “inspections” to self-assessment** and voluntary declaration with transparency, quality standards and positive public perception being the keywords.
- **A single, lean structure with four verticals for standards-setting,** funding, accreditation and regulation will provide “light but tight” oversight.
- **Other transformative changes include:**
  - Education in the local language or mother tongue at least up to the fifth grade
  - Universal access and early childhood education
  - Curriculum change leading to learning outcomes (LOs) and skills.
  - Stress on equity, gender, special needs and promotion of multilingualism.
- **There is a focus on early child development,** the effort to reduce the dropout rate, putting in place different forms of valuation, the emphasis on essential learning and critical thinking and the centrality of the teacher and teacher education.
- **The policy aims at a 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** in school education by 2030 and 50 GER in higher education by 2025.



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

- **NEP suggests some elements of the main universal Access to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) framework** relate to the NCERT's National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Education (NCPFCE).
- **The integration of vocational education with basic education** in all institutions by identifying focus areas based on skills gap analysis and mapping of local opportunities will develop entrepreneurial abilities.
- **Innovations in the higher education ecosystem** include:
  - Extension of the graduate course from three to four years
  - Multiple entry and exit points
  - College teachers' education
  - Replacement of the UGC, AICTE and NAAC
  - Providing the MPhil programme and the proposed National Research Foundation.
- **NEP attempts to bridge the digital divide** by upgrading the digital infrastructure, emphasising on learning at your own pace and underlining the importance of online courses.
- **There is a provision to teach coding at the middle-school level** and an emphasis on mainstreaming Sanskrit to increase "knowledge of ancient India and its contributions to modern India".

### What are the steps required to be taken?

- The shift from printed content-oriented teaching to experimental learning and concept-oriented teaching **requires the implementation of NITI Aayog's School Education Quality Index (SEQI's) vision for teacher adequacy.**
- **It also requires transparent systems for merit-based selection** and deployment of teachers and online systems for teacher transfers.
- **The philosophy of access, equity, infrastructure, governance and learning** has ultimately to be grounded in action to drive India's growth, modernisation and structural transformation.

### Way forward

The policy's success will also depend on its integration with the government's other policies such as the New Industrial Policy, Digital India, Skill India, Atmanirbhar Bharat and the "vocal for local" programme. Addressing the necessities of the present and expectations of the future will depend on the policy's success.

### 40. India's low rank in Global Health Index

**Source-** The Hindu

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

**Context-** India has been ranked at 94 among 107 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020.

#### How Global Hunger Index [GHI] scores are calculated?

The GHI scores are calculated each year to assess progress and setbacks in combating hunger. It is calculated on the basis of four indicators-

1. **Undernourishment:** Share of the population with insufficient caloric intake.
2. **Child Wasting:** Share of children under age five who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute under nutrition.
3. **Child Stunting:** Share of children under age five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic under nutrition.
4. **Child Mortality:** The mortality rate of children under the age of five.



**What are the key findings?**

**Alarming situation for India-**

- The country's score of 27.2 is the worst among BRICS countries, and inferior to Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal.
- India's child wasting rate was extremely high at 20.8% – the highest.
- The child stunting rate in India was 37.4 %,
- The child wasting was at 17.3 %.
- The undernourishment rate of India was at 14% and child mortality at 3.7 %.

**What are the reasons for low scores and its possible solution?**

**1. The national policy-**

- Has no appetite for a radical transformation in the delivery of adequate nutrition especially to women and children.
- Has paid inadequate attention to achieving diet diversity through the PDS.

**2. Inequality-** There is huge inequality because the fruits of growth are enjoyed by selected sections of society.

- Stunting prevalence is 10.1% higher in rural areas compared to urban areas.

**3. Anaemia-** One in two women of reproductive age is anaemic.

**4. COVID-19-** The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic downturn are exacerbating food and nutrition insecurity for millions of people.

**Possible solution-**

1. **Diverse diet-** Nourishment through a diverse diet that includes fat, protein and micronutrients.
2. Strengthening the Public distribution system, with a focus on women's health, would lead to healthier pregnancies, and stronger supplemental nutrition under the ICDS scheme would give children a better chance at all-round development.

**Way forward-**

- Food should be priced not only by its weight or volume but also by its nutrient density, its freedom from contamination, and its contribution to ecosystem services and social justice.
- The benefits can reach more people if the government spends more to improve public education, health care, nutrition, social security and gender empowerment.

**41. Police Reforms**

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

**Syllabus:** Gs2: Role of Civil Services in a Democracy

**Context:** To improve the functioning of the police force, the Supreme Court has spelt out various directives which are not been implemented yet.

**Recent examples on police brutality?**

- The thrashing of a Dalit Ahirwar couple by the police in Guna district of Madhya Pradesh.
- The brutal torture of J. Benicks and his father P. Jayaraj in Sattankulam town in Thoothkudi district of Tamil Nadu
- Encounter of Vikas Dube by the Uttar Pradesh police in Kanpur looked like the law had been subverted.

### What is Prakash Singh case?

- The first serious attempt to reform the police forces was made when the **National Police Commission (NPC)** was set up in 1977.
- The NPC submitted its recommendation in eight reports to the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- None of the recommendations were implemented by states as they felt that the report was unduly critical of the political system and the functioning of the police force.
- In 1996, demand for the implementation of the NPC's recommendations came through a retired IPS officer, **Prakash Singh** who filed a PIL in court.
- The landmark verdict of PIL came in 2006, the Supreme Court issued a slew of directives on police reform. (**Prakash Singh Case**)

### Status on Implementation of Supreme Court directives?

- One of the recommendations was to set up a State Security Commission (SSC) in each State to arrest the political leader's access to unbridled power.
- According to the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, of the States that constituted an SSC, only Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have made SSC recommendations binding on the State government.
- Only six States provided a minimum tenure of two years to the Director General of Police (DGP).
- Many States have not implemented a single directive of the Supreme Court.

### What is the reason for the poor implementation of police reforms?

- **Politicians-criminals-police nexus:** According to a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (2018), there were 1,580 MPs and MLAs facing criminal charges.

With fourteen years passed by, the Court has to take strict actions on the States and the Centre to ensure that its directives are implemented effectively else the country will witness an upheaval of the kind that the U.S. saw following the death of George Floyd.

## 42. Bangladesh's Economic Success

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

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

**Context:** Regional implications of Bangladesh's economic success

### Background:

- The International Monetary Fund's latest World Economic Outlook has predicted that Bangladesh's per capita GDP will overtake that of India this year.
- International development institutions have asked the rest of the subcontinent and developing countries around the world to learn much from Dhaka's experience or the Bangladesh model.

### What are the regional implications of Bangladesh's economic success?

- **Rise of Bangladesh:** Over the last five decades, South Asia, for most purposes, has meant India and Pakistan. Now, the economic rise of Bangladesh is changing world's South Asian perspective.
- **Fall of Pakistan as a power in south Asia:** With the rise of Bangladesh GDP over Pakistan's GDP, the Bangladesh will gain geopolitical importance steadily in coming years whereas the Geopolitical weight of Pakistan will continue to fall negative.

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

- **Promotion of regional integration:** Bangladesh's economic growth can accelerate regional integration in the eastern subcontinent. The BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal) sub-regional forum will have more significance for India.
- **Increasing role of Bangladesh in Indo pacific:** With economic success of Bangladesh drawing attention from countries in East Asia, including China, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore and also the US, the status of Bangladesh as global power is going to intensify in the new geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific.
- **Enhanced opportunities for Eastern India:** The economic rise of Bangladesh could boost India's national plans to accelerate the development of its eastern and north-eastern states through connectivity and Integration.

### What hinders India's Cooperation with Bangladesh?

#### Progress in India- Bangla relations

- Parliamentary approval of the boundary settlement in 2015.
- India accepted the 2014 international arbitration award on the maritime boundary dispute between India and Bangladesh.
- Progress in strengthening economic ties and connectivity between eastern India and Bangladesh in recent years

#### Hindrance to India-Bangla relations

- Though India and Bangladesh are eager to promote greater cooperation between West Bengal and Bangladesh there has been little political will in Kolkata.
- In case of Assam, the issue of migration continues to impose major political constraints.
- Also, recent Citizenship Amendment Act has strained India-Bangla relations.

### What is the way forward?

- India should jointly develop and pursue with Dhaka an ambitious framework for shared prosperity that would help India consolidate the golden chapter in India-Bangla relations.
- For this, India has to shift the focus from legacy issues to future possibilities.

### 43. HIV and way forward

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

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Health

**Context:** There is a reduction in new HIV infections among children and in AIDS-related deaths in India.

#### Discuss the developments made by India in tackling HIV-related infections and AIDS.

- **According to the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO)/Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with the technical support of UNAIDS** show that there has been a 66.1% reduction in new HIV infections among children and a 65.3% reduction in AIDS-related deaths in India over a nine-year period.
  - **The number of pregnant women living with HIV has reduced** from 31,000 in 2010 to 20,000 in 2019.
- **HIV testing has increased over time** and within target range and treatment coverage has also expanded.
- **Under the leadership of NACO, a 'Fast-Tracking of EMTCT (elimination of mother-to-child transmission) strategy-cum-action plan'** was drawn by June 2019, in the run towards December 2020: the deadline to achieve EMTCT.

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

- **The plan involved mobilisation and reinforcement of all national, State and partners' collective efforts** in a strategic manner, with district-level focus, and considering latest evidence so that the States/Union Territories and the country as a whole achieve the EMTCT goal.
- India made important progress in reducing the HIV impact on children **through prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV from 2010 to 2019.**
  - This was done through education and communication programmes
  - Increased access to HIV services with innovative delivery mechanisms for HIV testing
  - Counselling and care
  - Treatment and follow-ups
- **India made HIV testing for all pregnant women free** and HIV treatment is offered the same way countrywide without cost to pregnant mothers living with HIV through **the national 'treat all' policy.**
- **UNICEF has worked with the World Health Organization and NACO** to find high burden districts (in terms of density of pregnant women living with HIV) for 2 years.
- It is a challenge to diagnose 20,000 pregnant women living with HIV in an estimated 30 million pregnancies annually in India.
  - Since 2002 a series of implementation strategies were rolled out so that all pregnant women can access free HIV testing along with other services at pregnancy clinics, and **free treatment routines for life to prevent HIV transmission from mothers to babies.**
- **National Health Mission** made this possible in government health centres and grass-root level workers through village health and nutrition days and other grass-roots events.
  - **Using data-driven and decision-making approaches,** we are certain that AIDS will no longer be a public health threat for children in India by the end 2030, if not before.

### 44. UN Reforms

**Source-** Live Mint

**Syllabus-** GS 2- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

**Context-** India's absence from UN decision-making structures and lack of genuine reforms might force India to look for alternatives.

#### What are the current issues of UN?

1. **Ineffectiveness of UN-**The UN has been unable to respond effectively to the once-in-a-century global crisis triggered by the coronavirus.
  - A global health pandemic should have been the high point of the multilateral search for a collective solution. Instead, it has turned out to be its nadir.
2. **Challenge to multilateralism-** The rift between the permanent members of the Security Council has already started affecting the work of the UN Security Council.
  - China has stepped in to take advantage of the West's retreat from multilateralism.
  - The U.S. withdrawing from multilateralism.
  - Brexit has shown that nationalism remains strong in Europe.

#### What steps should India take in future with regard to UN?

1. **Reforming UNSC** - Equitable representation as well as expansion of the UNSC is the desired reform that India envisages.

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 October, 2020

- It is not readily evident if the global multilateral order will be able to reform itself and cope with rising geopolitical tensions and new security challenges.
- 2. Looking for Alternatives-** If the extant multilateral order will not work to secure Indian interests, then India will have to look for alternatives.
- Today, the Indo-Pacific is driving the global economic and political agenda. Global institutional frameworks should reflect this shift.
- Reforming UN multilateralism is wishful thinking and countries like India should embrace plurilateral setups, where like-minded nations come together on common interests.

### Way forward-

- India called for a new template of multilateralism that reflects today's reality, gives voice to all stakeholders, addresses contemporary challenges, and focuses on human welfare.
- For India, the status quo is no longer a viable option. If UN reforms fail, New Delhi's approach to the United Nations could significantly alter in the coming years as India would feel it necessary to look elsewhere for solutions.

### 45. Implications of Indo - US Defence deals

**Source:** The Indian Express

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

**Context:** India and the US are preparing for the third 2+2 ministerial meeting between External Affairs Minister and Defence Minister, and US Secretary of State and Defense Secretary in New Delhi.

#### More on news:

- In the last two meetings, agreements known as LEMOA and COMCASA were signed. Next item on the agenda is the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) which is a pact with deep military implications.

#### What is BECA?

- **The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement** mainly refers to an agreement on the sharing of geospatial intelligence, information on maps and satellite images for defence.
  - According to officials, anyone who sails a ship, flies an aircraft, fights wars, locates targets, responds to natural disasters, or even navigates with a cellphone relies on geospatial intelligence.
- **Signing BECA will allow India to use the US's advanced geospatial intelligence** and enhance the accuracy of automated systems and weapons like missiles and armed drones.
- **BECA will provide Indian military systems with a high-quality GPS** to navigate and missiles with real-time intelligence to precisely target the enemy.
- **This could be a key for Air Force-to-Air Force cooperation** as India and the US have stepped up efforts to sign the pact during the upcoming 2+2.

#### What are the other two agreements about?

- **LEMOA:** The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement was signed between India and the US in August 2016 and it allows the military of each country to restock from the other's bases:
  - Access supplies, spare parts and services from the other country's land facilities, air bases, and ports, which can then be compensated.



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

- This is extremely useful for Navy-to-Navy cooperation, since the US and India are cooperating closely in the Indo-Pacific.
- **COMCASA:** The Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement was signed in September 2018, after the first 2+2 dialogue in the US.
  - It allows the US to provide India with its encrypted communications equipment and systems so that Indian and US military commanders, aircraft and ships can communicate through secure networks in peace and war.
  - COMCASA paved the way for transfer of communication security equipment from the US to India to enable interaction between their forces and potentially with other militaries that use US-origin systems for secure data links.

### What do these three pacts put together mean?

- **LEMOA means one partner trusts the other enough** to expose its valuable assets.
- **COMCASA means one is confident that it can rely on encrypted systems** to connect the two militaries.
- **BECA means it can share highly classified information** in real time without fear of being compromised.
- **All this signals the level of trust that has developed** between the two countries and their militaries.

### What is the significance of the India-USA pacts?

- Amid the stand-off, India and the US have **increased under-the-radar intelligence** and military cooperation at an extraordinary level, since June.
- **The cooperation includes sharing of high-end satellite images**, telephone intercepts, and data sharing of Chinese troops and weapons deployment along the 3,488 km Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- **The armed forces have used at least five American platforms** at the LAC which are:
  - C-17 Globemaster III for military transport
  - Boeing's Chinook CH-47 as heavy-lift helicopters
  - Boeing's Apache as tank-killers
  - P-8I Poseidon for overland reconnaissance
  - Lockheed Martin's C-130J for airlifting troops
- **The US wants India to move away from Russian equipment** and platforms, as it feels this may expose its technology and information to Moscow.
- India is going ahead with the purchase of the S-400 air defence missile system from Russia, and this has been a spiking point for American panellists.
  - **India is cautious of Pakistan's deep-rooted ties with Pentagon**, and Washington's dependence on Rawalpindi for access to Afghanistan as well as its exit strategy.

**Way forward** - Every administration in the last 20 years have left the Indo-US relationship in a better shape than how they inherited it and efforts should be made to continue this.

## 46. SVAMITVA- Digitization of land records

**Source-** The Hindu Business Line

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

**Context** - Importance of SVAMITVA scheme in agriculture and non-farm rural activities.

**What is SVAMITVA scheme?**

SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) scheme is a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Panchayati Raj Departments, State Revenue Departments and Survey of India.

**Aim** - To provide an integrated property validation solution for rural India for setting the boundaries of the rural lands and also provides the record of right to village household owners.

1. It is a scheme for mapping the land parcels in rural inhabited areas using drone technology and Continuously Operating Reference Station (CORS) and prepares GIS based maps for each village.
2. **Implementation**- The mapping will be done across the country in a phase-wise manner over a period of four years - from 2020 to 2024.
3. After physical verification and dispute resolution, property cards or Sampatti patrak will be made available on digital platforms or as hard copies to the village household owners.

**Technology used**- The Survey of India will use technology for topographical mapping, including satellite imageries and drone platforms.

**What are the advantages of digital mapping?**

Digital mapping will help raise rural productivity and incomes in various ways-

- a) **Smoother implication**- The digitization of agricultural land records has contributed to the smooth implementation of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, Fasal Bima Yojana and Rythu Bnadhu.
- b) **Tax collection**- The database will help in determination of property tax, which would accrue to the Gram Panchayats directly in states where they are empowered to collect such taxes.
  - o The scheme will help in streamlining planning and revenue collection in rural areas and ensuring clarity on property rights.
- c) Digitization of personal identity and agriculture land, and now residential property in rural areas through SVAMITVA, will facilitate transparent transactions in land parcels
- d) **Non-farm related activity**- This will benefit from clear title and the removal of land supply constraints. Clear title records, accompanied by legalization of land leasing, will improve their access to credit, insurance and support services.
- e) **Enhances Liquidity of assets**- The cards will help increase liquidity of land parcels in the market and increase the financial credit availability to the village.
- f) **Creation of better GPDPs**- The scheme will enable creation of better-quality Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs), using the maps created under this programme.

**Way forward-**

SVAMITVA scheme is a welcome step for transparency and accountability. By proper co-ordination between Centre and state, smooth working of dispute settlement systems and training the youth for proper implication is required.

**47. NEP: Computational Thinking**

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Education

**Context:** The NEP 2020 must take a larger view of computational thinking and move beyond just data science and AI.

**What is algorithms? How does it translate in the NEP?**

- **The notions of calculation and algorithms are as old as mathematics** and date back to the early stages of representing numbers and geometrical figures and manipulating them for various uses.
- **All early learning of counting and arithmetic is method-based**, and hence algorithmic in nature, and all calculations involve computational processes encoded in algorithms.
- The framing in the NEP appears to put algorithms at the same level as instrumental ‘coding’. It is considered as a **towards the functional goals of artificial intelligence (AI)** and data science.

**How is coding and algorithm different?**

- **The form of expressions of algorithms and the coding** have been different however the fundamental principles of classical algorithm design have remained same.
- **The use of algorithmic ideas is not limited only to calculations** with numbers, or even to digitisation, communication or AI and data science in the modern world. It is used in:
  - They play a **crucial role in modelling and expressing ideas** in diverse areas of human thinking including the basic sciences of biology, physics and chemistry, all branches of engineering.
  - In **understanding disease spread**.
  - In modelling social interactions and social graphs.
  - In transportation networks, supply chains, commerce, banking and other business processes.
  - In economic and political strategies and design of social processes.
- **Coding is merely the act of encoding an algorithmic method** in a particular programming language, which provides an interface such that the computational process can be raised in a modern digital computer. Thus, it is less fundamental.
- Coding certainly can provide excellent opportunities for experimentation with algorithmic ideas, **they are not central or essential to algorithmic thinking**.

**Why is it important to learn the fundamentals?**

- It is important at an early stage of education to develop **an understanding of the basic algorithmic processes** behind manipulating geometric figures, computing with numbers, solving systems of equations, modelling road networks and social graphs, and applying algorithmic ideas to everyday problems.
- **An overemphasis on learning of specific programming** languages prematurely may distract from focusing on the development of algorithmic creativity.

**Way forward**

- While the NEP guideline of introducing algorithmic thinking early is a welcome step, it must be ensured that it does not degenerate and get bogged down with mundane coding tricks at a budding stage in the education process.

**48. Precautions during festive season**

**Source- The Hindu**

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

**Context** - Necessary to take extra precautions during upcoming festive season, amid COVID- 19 Pandemic.

**What are the views of experts amid festive season?**

- 1. Committee warning** - A government-appointed committee of doctors and scientists warned of a rapid surge of 26 lakh Coronavirus cases within a month if people show laxity in following COVID-19 protocol during the upcoming festive season and winter days.
  - **Kerala festive example-** The epidemic curve of Kerala changed completely due to Onam festivities, when there were huge congregations of people convened in large numbers didn't take precautions.
- 2. States highlight recoveries over risk-** States, anxious to present a picture of near-normality to boost economic activity, highlight recoveries over risk, which may lead the people to lower their guard.
  - However, there are five States (Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal) and 3-4 Union Territories (UTs), where there is still a rising trend in daily cases.

**What are the possible measures required to control the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of COVID-19?**

- 1. Commercialized health system-** The Centre should launch policy reform to transform a predominantly commercialized health system into one providing universal coverage.
- 2. Self-discipline** - If precautions are not taken, the situation can go out of hand with sudden rise of Covid-19 cases. Besides, people need to be extra cautious during the festival season and practice social distancing.
- 3.** Action against those found without masks at all public places.

**Way forward-**

- With loss of income and steep rise in health insurance premium, the cheapest protection against disease and financial loss is prevention.
- Government needs to make proper market arrangement for residents during the festival season and issue guidelines for social distancing and safety protocol.

**49. 2+2 dialogue amid U.S. presidential election**

**Source-** The Hindu

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

**Context** - With 2+2 dialogue this close to the U.S. elections, India has taken a calculated and bold gamble.

**What is 2+2 Dialogue?**

It is a format of dialogue where the defense and foreign ministers or secretaries meet with their counterparts from another country. 2+2 Ministerial is the highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries.

- India holds such talks with Australia, at the foreign secretary and defense secretary level but with Japan and the US at the ministerial level.
- First was held in New Delhi in September 2018.

**Why 2+2 dialogue amid US presidential election be called as gamble?**

- 1. Paris Climate Change Agreement-** 2016, Just month before US presidential election- U.S. urging India to sign this agreement at the earliest.



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

- U.S.'s commitment to mobilize \$100 billion per year by 2020 as part of a Green Climate Fund (GCF) to help developing countries such as India with climate adaptation methods and renewable technologies.
  - However, newly elected President, Trump, announced that the U.S. would exit the Paris agreement, and also revoked U.S. promises towards the GCF, calling it "very unfair".
- 2. Un-cleared election result-** All presidential polls and predictions for the US Electoral College points to a probable win for Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden.
- In the event Mr. Biden wins the election, India will hardly have endeared itself to the incoming administration by making strong statements of solidarity with Trump policy, strategic or otherwise.

### Why the upcoming 2+2 dialogue is important to India?

#### Significance of 2+2 dialogue-

- 1. Indo-Pacific-** On the maritime sphere, discussions will include strengthening ties in the Indo-Pacific region and also include discussions on how free nations can work together to thwart the threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party.
  - **BECA Agreement** - The U.S. wants India to sign the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA), at the India-U.S. 2+2 ministerial dialogue.
    - This agreement would facilitate exchange of geospatial information between India and United States for both military and civilian use.
- 2. LAC front-** US could promise to keep the pressure on Pakistan on terrorism, despite the US need for Pakistan's assistance in Afghan-Taliban talks.
- 3. Trade issues-** U.S. should be pushed on resolving trade issues with India and perhaps commit to restoring India's Generalized System of Preferences status for exporters.
  - The government could press for more cooperation on 5G technology sharing, or an assurance that its S-400 missile system purchase from Russia will receive an exemption from the U.S.'s Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (**CAATSA**) sanctions.

#### Way forward-

- The third edition of the two-plus-two dialogue between India and the US will entail a comprehensive discussion on cross-cutting bilateral issues as well as deliberations on regional and global developments. Unlike the experience of 2016, government must drive a harder bargain to consolidate the pay-offs from the visit.

### 50. UNSC Reforms

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

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

**Context:** Year 2020, marks the diamond jubilee (75 years) of the United Nations.

#### How UN performed all these years?

- **During cold war years:** The UN had little room to implement noble visions of peace, development and human rights.
- **Post-Cold War years:** Regarded as the golden age of the UN. It was actively involved in peacekeeping missions, nation-building interventions and promotion of universal human rights.



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

- **New Cold War years:** It represents present increase in geopolitical tensions between U.S and China. This period again witnesses very low activities of UN similar to the cold war period.

### Why veto power was deemed necessary?

- If such VIP status have not been given, UN would have seen the same fate like the League of Nations.
- Collective command model (Use of Veto Power) of big powers was seen as a pragmatic step needed to avoid another world war.

### What were the negative consequences of Veto power?

- **Rule of the few over the many:** It gives privilege to the most powerful states of the post-World War II by granting them great command over international politics via the undemocratic instruments of veto power.
- **Failed in its objectives:** Competitive vetoing by P-5 countries has prevented the UNSC from fulfilling its collective security mandate. For example, failure to cooperate against the immediate global threat of the pandemic.
- **Obstacle to reforms:** It has also resulted in P-5 countries blocking reforms

### What is the way forward?

- Outmoded procedures based on the discriminatory prerogatives to P-5 countries have to be discarded.
- The obstacles to UNSC reforms would reduce by replacing the P-5 consensus method to the simple majority voting method.

To ensure a renaissance of the UN, there must be a global push against discriminatory rules which have privileged 'rule' of the few over the many.

## 51. Importance of Nutri-cereals

**Source-** The Indian Express

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

**Context-** The promotion of the production and consumption of nutri-cereals seems to be a policy shift in the right direction.

### What are Millets and its benefits?

Millet is a common term to categorize small-seeded grasses that are often termed nutri-cereals or dryland-cereals. It includes jowar (sorghum), bajra (pearl millet) and ragi (finger millet), small millet, foxtail millet, proso millet, barnyard millet, kodo millet and other millets.

### Benefits of millets-

1. **Nutrition-** High in dietary fibre, nutri-cereals are a powerhouse of nutrients including iron, folate, calcium, zinc, magnesium, phosphorous, copper, vitamins and antioxidants.
  - Millets can provide nutritional security and act as a shield against nutritional deficiency, especially among children and women.
  - Reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes in adults.
2. **Photo-insensitive & resilient to climate change-** millets are hardy, resilient crops that have a low carbon and water footprint, can withstand high temperatures and grow on poor soils with little or no external inputs.

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

- Adapted to low or no purchased inputs and to harsh environment of the semi-arid tropics, they are the backbone for dry land agriculture.
- These unique features make millets suited for and resilient to India's varied agro-climatic conditions.

### What are the reasons for decline in the production of millets?

1. **Green revolution-** The focus was on food security and high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice. An unintended consequence of this policy was the gradual decline in the production of millets.
2. **Change in consumer demand-** Due to change in consumption pattern, dietary habits, unavailability of millets, low yield, less demand and conversion of irrigated area for cultivation of rice and wheat.<sup>4</sup>

### What are steps taken to address this situation?

To address this situation, a multi-pronged strategy has been adopted for the promotion of nutri-cereals by the current government-

1. **Rebranding-** In order to promote 'millets', India had on its part notified these climate resilient crops as Nutri-Cereals.
2. **Increment in MSP-** The government hiked the MSP of nutri-cereals so that more and more farmers may opt for cultivation of these less water consuming crops.
  - MSPs have been calculated so that the farmer is ensured at least a 50 per cent return on their cost of production.
3. **Marketplace-** To provide a steady market for the produce, the government included millets in the public distribution system for improving nutritional support.
4. **Farmer friendly schemes-** the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare is running a Rs 600-crore scheme to increase the area, production and yield of nutri-cereals.
  - With a goal to match the cultivation of nutri-cereals with local topography and natural resources.
  - The government is encouraging farmers to align their local cropping patterns to India's diverse 127 agro-climatic zones.
  - Provision of seed kits and inputs to farmers, building value chains FPO and supporting the marketability of nutri-cereals.
5. **Generate demand-** The Ministry of Women and Child Development has been working at the intersection of agriculture and nutrition by setting up nutri-gardens, promoting research on the interlinkages between crop diversity and dietary diversity and running a behaviour change campaign to generate consumer demand for nutri-cereals.

### Way forward-

- The multi-ministerial policy framework is a strategic move towards building an Atmanirbhar Bharat which resonates with the global call for self-sufficiency and sustainable development.
- People should take small steps towards choosing healthier foods, which are good for the environment and bring economic prosperity to farmers.
- Partially processed millet products can be made available in the market to promote its consumption and thus, create a demand for these nutritious grains and simultaneously reduce the reliance on staples like rice and wheat.

## 52. Hunger and Solutions

**Source:** Down To Earth

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Health

**Context:** India ranked 94 in global hunger index 2020 among 107 countries.

### What are the indicators of GHI? Where does India stand?

- **The GHI 2020 report has placed India 94<sup>th</sup> position** among 107 countries, much behind Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal.
- **GHI is based on four indicators:**
  - The proportion of undernourished in a population
  - The proportion of children under the age of five suffering from wasting (less weight in proportion to their height)
  - The proportion of children under five suffering from stunting (low height in proportion to their age)
  - The mortality rate of children under five
- **Countries with score within the range 20-34.9 are considered to be dealing with acute hunger.** High-income countries and those with very low populations were excluded from evaluation.

### What is the need to battle hunger?

- **Exchange entitlement decline:** It means the occupation a section of people are engaged in is not financially rewarding enough to buy adequate food.
- The starvation is result of decline in four categories of entitlement:
  - 'Production-based entitlement' (growing food)
  - 'trade-based entitlement' (buying food)
  - 'own-labour entitlement' (working for food)
  - 'inheritance and transfer entitlement' (being given food by others)
- The agriculture output from small and marginal holdings are either stationary or declining due to reasons such as reduced soil fertility, fragmented lands or fluctuating market price of farm produce.
- Almost 50 million households in India are dependent on these small and marginal holdings.
- Relative income of one section of people has been on the decline. This has adverse effects on their capacity to buy adequate food, especially when food prices have been on the rise.
- The public distribution system (PDS) of the state is not functioning well or is not accessible to everyone.
- Lack of income opportunities other than farm sector has contributed heavily to the growing joblessness in rural areas. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18 revealed that rural unemployment stood at a concerning 6.1 per cent, which was the highest since 1972-73.
- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA) had been weakened over the years through great delays in payments and non-payments, low wages and a reduced scope of employment due to high bureaucratic control.

### What can be done?

- **A renewed focus on small and marginal farmers** with support from the Union government to grow more crops.
- **The government may create provisions to supply cooked nutritious food** to the vulnerable section of the society. Jadavpur Jyotidevi Shramajeevi Canteen, for example, has been running for more than 200 days.

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

- **Rural employment schemes** such as MGNREGA should be given a boost to increase employment and wages.
- Several organisations and individuals working under the scheme have suggested that the guaranteed work-days be increased to 200 and that equal wages be given in accordance with the minimum agricultural wages of the states.
- **Access to food grains under the PDS** needs to be streamlined by simplifying technical processes and reducing Aadhaar-related glitches.
- **One Nation One Ration Card scheme:** After the point-of-sale machines are made available at all the public distribution system (PDS) shops across the country, the scheme will be launched.
- It will help people, especially migrant workers, who can avail the benefits of this scheme.
- **The National Food Security Act, 2013** is in place to ensure food security for the most vulnerable communities.
- Ration distribution through fair price shops, mid-day meal programmes at schools, nutrition and maternity benefit programmes for children and pregnant mothers at *anganwadis* fall within the Act.

### Way forward

- The Union government should ensure that if One Nation One Ration card scheme is brought into effect; is operationalised through proper preparations such as proper grain allotments to shops, identification procedures and proper issuance of ration cards to individuals seeking food grain.

### 53. India's maritime domain

**Source-** The Indian Express

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

**Context-** It is time for India to seek external balancing, best done via the maritime domain.

### What are the significance and issues of QUAD and Malabar Exercise?

1. **Malabar Exercise** - It is an annual trilateral naval exercise between the navies of India, Japan, and the USA which is held alternately in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
  - **Aim-** it aimed at interoperability with an emphasis on humanitarian assistance, anti-submarines warfare, counter-terror operations, gunnery training and aerial surveillance.
  - **Australia inclusion-** The move will bolster the ability of India, Australia, Japan and the United States to work together to uphold peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific region.
2. **QUAD grouping-** the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad has its roots in the Core Group of four senior diplomats representing the USA, Japan and Australia with a shared objective to ensure and support a free, open and prosperous" Indo-Pacific region.

### Issues-

**Undefined vision-** Despite the potential for cooperation, the Quad remains a mechanism without a defined strategic mission.

- Its members have neither created a charter nor invested it with any substance.
- **China's view to QUAD-** China to describe it as a "headline grabbing idea which will dissipate like sea-foam.



**What measures can be opt to tackle China?**

In order to rein in China's hegemonic urges, there is need for affected nations to come together to show their solidarity and determination in a common cause.

- 1. Indo-Pacific Concord-** There is need to create a broad-based "Indo-Pacific Concord", of like-minded regional democracies as an organization with a maritime security charter, which has no offensive or provocative connotations.
  - The Concord could also designate forces to uphold maritime security or "good order at sea".
- 2. Multinational naval exercise-** A shore-based secretariat can be established in a central location like Port Blair, in the Andaman Islands, which would schedule and conduct periodic multinational naval exercises. The exercises could be structured to hone the skills of participating navies in specializations like-
  - Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
  - Countering non-traditional threats.
  - Undertaking search-and-rescue operations.
  - Establishing networked maritime domain awareness.

**What are the concerns for India in context of QUAD?**

- 1. India-Australia relations-**
  - Australia's past political ambivalence towards India, its trenchant criticism of our naval expansion and its vociferous condemnation of the 1998 nuclear tests.
  - Beijing's recent influence on Australia's foreign policy, which prompted its flip-flops over the sale of uranium to India as well as its peremptory withdrawal from the Quad in 2008.
- 2. BECA Agreement-** There is need to pay heed to valid concerns, regarding the possible compromise of information impinging on India's security and whether these agreements will barter away the last vestiges of India's strategic autonomy.

**Way forward-**

- India should never lose sight of the truism in international relations, that it is the unerring pursuit of national interests that guides the actions and policies of every nation.
- India needs to understand the salience of maritime power

**54. India's UN journey and its role**

**Source-** The Hindu

**Syllabus-** **GS 2-** Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

**Context-** The 75th anniversary of UN is an opportunity to look at the major trends, patterns and future challenges as far as India is concerned in terms of safeguarding its interests and promoting common good.

**What are the different phases of India's journey in UN?**

**1. Phase 1- Before the end of the Cold War in 1989-**

- The Indian leadership learned that the UN could not be relied upon to impartially resolve vital security disputes.
- The UN only to focus on common causes such as anti-colonialism, anti-racism, nuclear disarmament, environment conservation and equitable economic development.



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

- In 1988- India claims the moral high ground by proposing, three-phase plan to eliminate nuclear weapons from the surface of earth.
- 2. Phase 2- The demanding decade from 1990-2000-**
- There was a **change in India's foreign policy** which was reflected in voting patterns at the UN.  
**For example-** India showed pragmatism in enabling the toughest terms on Iraq even after eviction from occupied Kuwait, or in reversing the hitherto stated position on Zionism as racism
  - India's diplomatic difficulties were exposed when it suffered a **humiliating defeat in the hands of Japan in the 1996 contest for a non-permanent seat in the UNSC.**
  - India stood against indefinite extension of the **Non-Proliferation Treaty** in 1995, and rejected the backdoor introduction for adoption of the **Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty** in 1996.
- 3. Phase 3- Wind of changes – 21st century.**
- **India strengthened its profile-** The economic liberalization and globalization policies, helped India to strengthening its profile.
    - a. The reliable and substantial troop contributions to several peacekeeping operations in African conflict theatres.
    - b. India has emerged as a responsible stakeholder in non-traditional security issue areas such as the spread of small and light weapons, the threat of non-state actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and the impact of climate change.

### What will be the role of India as a non-permanent UNSC member?

India's areas of priority will continue to be-

- The upholding of Charter principles in the backdrop of a turbulent world..
- Mounting effective punitive measures against those who support, finance and sponsor terrorists.
- Striving for securing due say to the troop contributing countries in the management of peace operations.

### Challenge for India-

1. In the midst of multilateralism and, and China's aggressive territorial forays India may face challenges and opportunities in the UNSC.
2. **Voting scenario-** China might succeeding in convening a formal meeting on Kashmir, India may have to choose either to abstain in the vote since it is a party to the dispute or vote against any unfavorable proposal that might be tabled.
  - The growing proximity with the US may prompt India not to stay neutral in order to counter balance China.

### Way forward-

- India's future role will probably depend on its ability to weather the impact of the multiple crises it now faces on account of an unabated economic slowdown and a troubled relationship with China.

## 55. India-US Relations

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

**Syllabus: Gs2:** Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora

**Context:** A look at how India-U. S bilateral relationship has evolved during the tenure of different U.S Presidents and its highs and lows.

### More in News

- The Indian diaspora being one of the most successful expatriate communities in U.S wants a closer bonding between India and U.S
- In 2020, India-U. S bilateral ties have grown in recent years on account of China's aggressive behaviour.

### How India-U. S relation evolved over the years?

**India-U. S relations were at all-time high during John F Kennedy and George W Bush administration:**

#### John F Kennedy, in the 1960s:

- Kennedy was a firm supporter of India in positioning India as a democratic counterweight to a totalitarian China in Asia in the 1960s
- Even Kennedy had proposed an equivalent of a "Marshall Plan" for India funded by NATO allies and Japan to help India win the race against China.
- During his tenure, India received unprecedented economic assistance, and military aid during the 1962 Sino-India war
- Kennedy also played a role, in restraining President Ayub Khan of Pakistan from opening a second front against India during the Sino-Indian war
- The US-India relationship may have taken a different course during the difficult 1960s and 1970s had Kennedy not been assassinated in 1963, and Nehru not died in 1964.

#### George W Bush, in the 2000s

- He ensured the success of the nuclear deal between India and the United States. The agreement mainstreamed India's nuclear programme.

**Worst phase of India's relations with the US was during Richard Nixon and Clinton administration**

#### Richard Nixon in the 1970s:

- Nixon administration was well known for the pro-Pakistan tilt in the 1970s.
- During this period India departed from its Non-Aligned posture, signed the 1971 Indo-Soviet treaty as a response to the continuing US tilt towards Pakistan and the beginnings of a Washington-Beijing alliance

#### Clinton years in the 1990s:

- The Clinton years witnessed dip in India and the US bilateral relations.
- India was pressurised to "freeze, rollback and eliminate" its nuclear programme and to settle Kashmir dispute with Pakistan.
- The U.S administration, even questioned Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India.

American Presidents can make a real difference to bilateral ties, including on trade, on immigration policies, and larger strategic issues. The upcoming US Presidential election (Biden vs. Trump) has enormous significance to India.

### 56. Non-alignment in multipolar framework

**Source-** The Indian Express

**Syllabus-** GS 2 - Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

**Context-** India can play a constructive role in evolving a multipolar and just world order

### What are the different phases of world order?

India's advocacy for autonomy (& non-alignment) in making foreign policy choices in world order over decades.

1. **Bipolar** (1947 to 1991) - Era of Cold War where world was divided in two camps one headed by USA and other headed by erstwhile USSR.
  - During this phase India adhered to the principle of Non Alignment.
2. **Unipolar** (1991 to 2008) - With disintegration of USSR, USA became the sole super power.
  - In this phase India reached out to engage with US, Israel and ASEAN countries more intensively.
3. **Multipolar** at present times where there are big powers and several middle powers.
  - In this phase of transitional geopolitics, India's policy of Non-Alignment has turned into Multi Alignment.

### What are the reasons for India to rethink its approach to Strategic autonomy?

1. **Rise of China-**
  - China as the workshop of the world made many established western powers insecure of their status.
  - **Trade war-** This has resulted in a trade and strategic war between China and the US, without caring for the real interests of the people and environment, which will tend to have disastrous consequences for most of the world and global population.
2. **Indo-China conflict-** The tension at the Western Sector of the India-China border claimed lives from both sides and exposed the unresolved conflicts between the two neighboring Asian giants.
3. **Annexation of West Bank** - Donald Trump backed Israel's plan at annexing the West Bank is the newest in a long series of forcing dispossession and stateless on Palestinians.

These issues have brought the discussion around global power dynamics to the fore even when the world population is gripped with disease, sorrow, trauma and mass unemployment.

### What is the significance of Indian foreign policy?

- India's priorities have tilted towards the US and the neoliberal framework.
  - **Increasing risk-** The US is trying to drag India into its conflict with China to protect the US interests in the Asia-Pacific region.
  - **Impact other interests-** The trade deals done to please the US have resulted in the loss of livelihood, agricultural land, opportunities and hard-won labor rights of Indian working classes.

### What are the needs of current situation?

1. **Global need-**
  - The world needs today are international relations based on the principles of mutual respect, concern and cooperation and population involvement.
  - To come together to build public health and education infrastructure.
2. **Revival of Non-alignment-**
  - India should reject both the unipolarity of the 1990s and the bipolarity of the current system dominated by the US and China.
  - India should live up to its independent non-aligned credentials and play a constructive role in evolving a more inclusive, multipolar and just world order.

- 3. India as a Non-permanent UNSC member-** India should use its UNSC chair to represent nations hitherto unrepresented or underrepresented at the high table and continues the tradition of speaking for the marginalized.

**Way forward-**

- India and China should engage in a meaningful dialogue to resolve the border dispute.
- India should strive to make the world more inclusive, just and sensitive to the environment.
- India pursuing an independent foreign policy is not only essential for the country or the South Asian region, it can have a bearing on deprived populations of the world.

**57. Changing nature of India – US relationship**

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

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

**Context-** The 2+2 dialogue between India-US comes in the backdrop of a structural shift and turbulence in the global economic order.

**What is 2+2 Dialogue?**

It is a format of dialogue where the defense and foreign ministers or secretaries meet with their counterparts from another country. 2+2 Ministerial is the highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries.

- **Main focus-** Countering China's aggression on LAC front, improving bilateral relations and Shift in great power politics as well as turbulence in the international economic order intensified by the coronavirus pandemic.
- First US-India 2+2 dialogue was held in New Delhi in September 2018.

**India's recent global meetings**

- 1. QUAD grouping** -The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue has its roots in the Core Group of four senior diplomats representing the USA, Japan and Australia with a shared objective to ensure and support a free, open and prosperous" Indo-Pacific region.
  - 2. Five eye grouping-** India's first-ever participation, in a meeting of the exclusive Five Eyes grouping that facilitates intelligence-sharing among the US, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand.
  - 3. Malabar exercise-** It is an annual trilateral naval exercise between the navies of India, Japan, and the US which is held alternately in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- **Australia inclusion-** The move will bolster the ability of India, Australia, Japan and the United States to work together to uphold peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific region.

**What are the differences with current India-US relation than that during UPA years?**

- 1. India-china relations-** Huge military crisis on the northern borders with China. During initial years of India-US relations, Delhi avoided closer security ties with the US in deference to Beijing's sensitivities.
  - 2. COVID-19 Pandemic-** The coronavirus has sharpened the US debate on the dangers of excessive economic interdependence on China.
- India has begun to reduce its commercial ties to Beijing in response to the PLA's Ladakh aggression.



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

- This has created a new conversation between India and the US on rearranging global supply chains away from China.
- 3. **Sharing technology**- The focus on critical technologies like artificial intelligence that promise to transform most aspects of modern life including security, political economy and social order.
- Two decades ago, both India and US focused on resolving the legacy issues surrounding the technologies relating to nuclear weapons and missiles.

### What is the significance of 2+2 dialogue?

1. **Trade issues**- Delhi and Washington continue to have many differences over bilateral trade. U.S. should be pushed on resolving trade issues with India and perhaps commit to restoring India's Generalized System of Preferences status for exporters.
2. **Indo-Pacific**- On the maritime sphere, discussions will include strengthening ties in the Indo-Pacific region and also include discussions on how free nations can work together to thwart the threats posed by the People's Liberation Army.

### Way forward-

The overarching framework that has emerged across different US administrations in the last two decades helps India to manage potential difficulties and take advantage of new opportunities.

As the regional and global order faces multiple transitions, the incentives for Delhi and Washington to sustain and advance India-US partnership are stronger than ever before and will continue into the next administration.

### 58. Board exams in education

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

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Education

**Context:** Delhi University announced the first list of admission into undergraduate programmes earlier this month and the cut-offs reached 100 per cent mark in some courses offered by a few colleges.

### What is the state of higher education in India?

- **According to the most recent All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE 2018-19)**, Delhi's gross enrolment ratio (GER) is 46.3 per cent, this means that almost every second youth in Delhi between the age of 18 and 23 is enrolled in a higher education programme.
- **According to India's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for 2030** and the National Education Policy 2020 target, we are aiming to ensure 100 per cent enrollment across our school stages, from pre-primary to the secondary stage.
- **There will be a further rise in applications for higher education programmes** for which the NEP 2020 has set a target of 50 per cent by 2035 which would mean an additional 35 million seats to be created in HEIs across the country.
- Rise in unemployed graduates due to poor education quality and absence of skills in youth.
- There is a mismatch in the ratio of colleges and regulating universities leading to regulator challenges. For ex- 40000 colleges being regulated under by 1000 universities.

**How will multidiscipline HEI improve Higher education ecosystem?**

- NEP 2020 recommends moving into a multi-disciplinary HEIs. This would improve the education ecosystem in the following way:
- This will offer undergraduate and **graduate programmes in every district of the country.**
- Each such institute will aim to have 3,000 or more students.
- Improve access to higher education and will also make HEIs viable.
- Provide access to 70 million students when the GER of Higher education reaches 50 per cent.
- This will also allow for closing down of thousands of poor quality HEIs, which trap unsuspecting students, leading to a large number of non-entrepreneurial, unskilled and unemployable graduates.

**What is the alternative to cut-offs?**

- School leaving marks have been inefficient in assessing the overall performance of a student. An alternative system should include:
- School-leaving certificates should contain a collection of assessments, including a student's performance across the secondary level (Classes IX to XII).
- Inclusion of class assignments and tests in the assessments will ensure development of students' portfolios.
- The process of admission to higher education should also assess whether the prospective student has developed the attributes for pursuing higher education.

**Way forward**

- NEP 2020 envisages assessment reform at the school level, which would make the board exams redundant, and also a common entrance for the liberal arts-based higher education system, which only assesses an applicant's preparedness to pursue a university education. We need to go with these reforms at the earliest.

**59. Climate Change and Gendered Vulnerabilities**

**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-** Due to the pandemic, India has an opportunity to build climate resilience and address gender equality issues.

**How India can tackle widening inequalities?**

The recovery is offering India two golden opportunities:

- To build climate resilience for the most vulnerable by ensuring that stimulus measures are green.
- To meaningfully address long-standing gender equality issues.

**What are effects of pandemic on vulnerable groups?**

- Most affected groups- Overburdened healthcare systems and frontline health workers lives and livelihoods impacted. The poor, Adivasis, migrants, informal workers, sexual minorities, people with disabilities and women all face a greater brunt than most.
- Vulnerable groups, especially women bear a heavier burden of climate change, due to social inequalities that limit them.

- Climate change, in turn, widens socio-economic gaps, trapping communities in a vicious cycle.

### What are the measures needed to tackle climate change?

Women and marginalized groups, by virtue of their position and roles, are a fountain of solutions to tackle climate change.

1. **Green investment**- The Indian government has invested huge amount in COVID-19 recovery. These recovery packages in green jobs will improve lives and environment.
  - These green investments ought to be reflected across agriculture, urban planning, energy and the health sectors and in climate-resilient civil works, including under MGNREGA.
2. **Equipping women with skills**- It is critical to leverage women knowledge, capacities and skills towards adapting to and mitigating climate change.
  - The initiative like Disha, a UNDP supported by the IKEA Foundation energize local economies, reduce carbon emissions, enhance climate resilience and disrupt social norms and behaviors that restrict women's participation in the workforce.
  - **For Example**- By training young rural women for the maintenance of solar pumps will introduce clean energy and reduce production cost.
  - Accelerating the transition to renewable energy will lower carbon footprints and provide sustainable livelihoods to poor women.

### Way forward-

- Recognizing the important contributions of women as decision makers, stakeholders, educators, careers and experts across sectors and at all levels can lead to successful, long-term solutions to climate change.
- Women have proven to be leading the way towards more equitable and sustainable solutions to climate change. Across sectors, women's innovations and expertise have transformed lives and livelihoods, and increased climate resilience and overall well-being.

## 60. Social and Health Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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

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

**Context:** Lessons learnt from Covid19 and measures to counter its impact.

### What is the Social and Health Impact of the Pandemic?

- **Wasting:** A recent modelling study showed that, the prevalence of wasting in children can increase by 10% to 50% due to the reduction in coverage of essential services.
- **Maternal death:** There can be 60% increase in maternal deaths due to the non-availability of interventions like the administration of uterotonics and antibiotics, and clean birth environments.
- **Nutrition:** With a huge number of children depend on school meals the pandemic has adversely affected access to nutritious food.
- **Increase in Domestic Violence:** In India, a third of women reported that they had experienced domestic violence but less than 1% sought help from the police.
- **Women:** Work and livelihood of women is much affected than men as more women work in informal economy than men. It has resulted in decreased income by over 60%, thereby pushing a greater number of women into extreme poverty.

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

- **Disruption of services:** Important services such diagnosis and treatment of non-communicable diseases, cancer diagnosis and treatment, TB case detection etc have been disrupted.

### What needs to be done?

- **The package of essential services:** Governments should provide essential services that include response to violence against women.
- **Gender analysis and gender-responsive public health policies:** We need to work on the availability of data that is disaggregated by sex and age.
- **Ensure financial protection:** Out-of-pocket expenditure forces 100 million people to fall into extreme poverty every year. A health coverage scheme, like Ayushman Bharat, or through private health insurance can ensure financial stability.
- **Emphasis on digital technology:** using digital platforms to provide telemedicine for example, government's e-Sanjeevani platform or to train healthcare workers for example ECHO.
- **Move towards electronic and portable health records.** We need to invest in new ways of collecting, using and sharing data, enabling local, contextualised decision-making.
- **Ensure access to Nutrition:** we need to further integrate social protection systems, food systems and health systems to have an impact on nutrition.
- **Effective infodemic management:** Since, it is linked to people's beliefs and behaviour we need a dedicated behavioural insights group to provide advice on behaviour change.
- **Empowering our frontline health workers:** We need to invest in them to ensure that they have the tools they need, receive regular training and mentoring, and are well paid.
- **Improving health literacy:** The fear, stigma and discrimination circulated on social media can be countered by health literacy.
- **Investment:** We need to invest in strong institutional mechanisms and capacities in our regulatory bodies, research centres and public health institutions.

A health system is not only about the supply side. It should actively involve citizens and the people in developing the services that we are bringing to them. For this, we need investment in human resources and to engage and empower communities.

### 61. Evolving Strategic Autonomy

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

**Syllabus: Gs2:** Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

**Context:** The engagement of India and China in the West Asia region is a good example of their evolving strategic autonomy.

### What is strategic autonomy and How the concept is evolving?

- Strategic autonomy is the ability of a state to pursue its national interests and adopt its preferred foreign policy without being constrained in any manner by other states.
- The concept of 'strategic autonomy' is much different from the Nehruvian era thinking of 'non-alignment'.
- Now The alignment is issue based, and not ideological. For example, India's equitable engagement with Saudi Arabia, Iran and Israel, without entering into the region's multi-layered conflicts and political fissures.



### How China's relation with West Asia is evolving?

- With the West Asian countries started thinking over the need to invest more in others countries as the American security safety net is not absolute, China is trying to capitalise this.
- China is now ready to offer an alternative model for “investment and influence” and wants to play much active role in West Asia through concepts such as “negative peace” and “peace through development.”
- The fact that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) obtained Chinese Wing Loong drones in 2016 a copy of U.S.'s infamous armed MQ-9 ‘Reaper’ drone that U.S refused to sell is a good example of the Gulf's resolve of attaining military capabilities from wherever possible.
- Also, the Gulf economies such as Saudi Arabia need growing markets of China and India to sell oil in the coming decade.
- According to a report, the China is also taking advantage of U.S. abandonment of the Iran nuclear deal by signing \$400 billion, 25-year understanding agreement between Iran and China.
- To address the region's tensions, China is pursuing to establish an alternative forum to the West-led ecosystems.

### How India's relation with West Asia is evolving?

- India's outreach to West Asia has increased since 2014.
- India, by giving open economic and political preference to the larger Gulf region it increased its cooperation with Abu Dhabi and Riyadh.
- India has realised the economic realities of this region with, Saudi Arabia and the UAE announcing multi-billion-dollar investments on Indian shores.
- Even, there has been a steady development with Israel but the relation with Iran has lagged behind due to U.S sanctions.
- The Israel's recent peace accords with the UAE and Bahrain signifies a more stable gulf region which opens up tremendous opportunities for India's engagement with West Asia.

From the perspectives of both the India and China, the theory of interests superseding ideology in foreign policy is fast disappearing, It signifies the departure from ideological based cooperation to issue based alignment.

## 62. GST Issue

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

**Syllabus:** GS2: Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure,

**Context:** Centres unilateral decisions on the issue of GST compensation to states without having consensus of GST council is threatening the federal architecture.

### What is GST?

- The GST is a **single destination-based tax** that replaced numerous central and State taxes with States giving up almost all their powers to tax.
- In exchange for this bargain, the Centre assured them full compensation, for five years, for all losses arising due to the transition to the GST.
- Followingly, a GST Council was established, consisting of the Central and State Finance Ministers who are empowered to make recommendations about various issues related to the GST.
- Benefits of GST includes efficiency, equity, stabilisation, economic growth, and balanced development, among others.

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

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

- GST is hailed as one of the most significant **fiscal reforms** since Independence.

### What is the background of the issue?

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic induced disruption, Tax collections were low leading to a massive revenue shortfall.
- This has also reduced the available resources in the compensation fund.
- The centre with limited abilities to raise revenues was initially not committed to the agreement on full compensation to states for five years, for all losses arising due to the transition to the GST.
- Though, the centre was not committed at first to compensate states for GST losses claiming the pandemic as an 'act of God', later it came up with other options to meet the states shortfall in tax revenue collection.
- The Centre allowed states to increase its fiscal deficit from 2% to 3% and asked the states to borrow from the market to meet their shortfall.

### How Centre's decision is affecting Co-operative federalism?

- **Borrowing on Conditional basis:** The states were allowed to borrow on conditional basis that states need to bring reforms in four areas including universalisation of a 'One Nation-One Ration Card', electricity distribution, ease of doing business, and urban local body revenues.
- **Shifting the fiscal burden to the states:** While most of the States preferred that the Centre should borrow the entire shortfall the responsibility to borrow was transferred on to the states.
- **Unilateral decisions:** there was a deliberate attempt to prevent "unionised bargaining" by the States as the decisions were not being made in the GST Council but announced in press meetings.

### What is the way forward? Co-operative federalism-----Case of VAT (Value added tax)

- It has to be noted that, it was the empowered group of State Finance Ministers who helped to bring fiscal reforms earlier namely, VAT the precursor to GST.
- This consensus based decision-making process gave States both the confidence and ownership of reforms and the new institutions being put in place.
- It assured that, authority migration towards the Centre might not make a difference to States as their interests are being taken care of by the Centre.
- Such collective decision-making process will guarantee the continuity of federal institutions.

The recent Centre's actions on GST compensation issue undermine the federal architecture. If this happens consistently over time, it will threaten the very existence of GST as a federal institution.

## 63. India - Myanmar relations

**Source:** The Hindu

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

**Context:** The recent visit of Foreign Secretary and Chief of the Army Staff Gen. to Myanmar revealed India's multidimensional interests in the country and the deepening of ties between Delhi and Naypyidaw.

### More on news:

- **The visit featured two lines of thinking that drive India's Myanmar policy:** engagement with key political actors and balancing neighbours.

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

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

- **For Myanmar**, the visit would be viewed as India's support for its efforts in strengthening democratisation amidst criticisms by rights groups over the credibility of its upcoming election.

### What has India's policy for Myanmar been?

- **India's policy to support democratisation** driven from within the country has had following outcomes:
  - This has allowed Delhi to engage with the military that played a key role in Myanmar's political transition and is still an important political actor.
  - It has enabled Delhi to work with the party in power, whether the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party or the pro-democracy National League for Democracy.
  - India is aware of the geopolitical dimension of Myanmar's democratisation.
- **Policy of diversifying its foreign engagements:** India and a few Asian countries have engaged Myanmar keeping in mind the need to reintegrate it with the region and world.
- Reason for military regime in Myanmar was to reduce dependence on china. By engaging Myanmar, **Delhi provides alternative options to Naypyidaw.**
- This driver in India's Myanmar policy has possibly gained greater importance in the rapidly changing regional geopolitics.

### What are the recent initiatives taken?

- Some initiatives announced during the joint visit suggest Delhi is taking steps to influence its political, diplomatic, and security ties with Myanmar:
  - **The inauguration of the liaison office** of the Embassy of India in Naypyidaw.
  - **India has proposed to build a petroleum refinery** in Myanmar that would involve an investment of \$6 billion.
  - **Another area of cooperation that has expanded involves the border areas.** The joint visit restated the "mutual commitment not to allow respective territories to be used for activities inimical to each other."
- **The balancing act between Bangladesh and Myanmar** remains one of the keys to its overall approach to the **Rohingya issue.**
- Delhi has retold its support for "ensuring safe, sustainable and speedy return of displaced persons" to Myanmar.
- India has made it clear that it supports Myanmar's efforts and also understands Bangladesh's burden.

### Way forward

- These initiatives could be the beginning of change on the ground by establishing India's presence in sectors where it ought to be more pronounced.
- For India, Myanmar is key in linking South Asia to Southeast Asia and the eastern periphery becomes the focal point for New Delhi's regional outreach.

## 64. Governance reforms for commerce

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

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Polity

**Context:** A Commerce Ministry for the 21st century with specialised departments for trade policy, negotiations and industrial development are of vital importance.

**How the commerce ministry can be revamped to serve the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is tasked with navigating the complex web of issues to support India's industrial development and competitiveness, and its engagement with the global economy.
- This task requires institutional depth and high levels of capability and domain expertise.

**Competent trade negotiators**

- The first suggestion is to create a specialised department focussed only on trade policy and negotiations headed by a Secretary.
- This department would be responsible for all negotiations for the WTO, FTAs, and other trade and investment related agreements.
- Senior officers including Joint and Additional Secretaries should have contracts of minimum five years, and should be individuals with major trade policy related experience because longer tenures would ensure institutional memory.

**Competitiveness & value-chains**

- The second suggestion is to create a single department responsible for the country's industrial development and competitiveness.
- This would require bringing together of the mandates of the Director-General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) would also be under this department's realm.
- Department of Industrial Development and Competitiveness, would lead to streamlining of the overall policy making and involvements required to address issues of industrial development, sectoral strategies and incentives, and export promotion.

**Export discounts, trade promotion**

- Export incentives should be replaced by schemes that reward firms for new product development, expanding into new markets, for job creation, or for significant achievements in value-addition.
- The digital information available with GSTN, Customs ICEGATE, the RBI, Unique LIN linked to EPFO and ESIC, and the JAM trinity has made this very easy.
- Dynamic MSMEs would be the biggest beneficiaries of trade facilitation schemes.
- EPCs should be made responsible for systemically collecting data and commercial intelligence in their sector, mapping global market opportunities and potential sources of competition.
- An anonymous committee drawn from industry members in EPCs should be made responsible for an independent inspection.
- EPCs should be made responsible for actual buyer-seller matching, and successful conclusion of deals achieved due to their efforts. They should be formally certified by beneficiary member firms.
- A grievance redress mechanism for members who have not received sufficient level of support from their EPCs should be set up, headed by the Secretary of the department.

**Logistics Division**

- Another suggestion is that the Logistics Division should become a full-fledged department headed by a Secretary.



- It should also be made responsible for Trade Facilitation along with providing holistic institutional basis to coordinate logistics infrastructure development, master-planning, and policy development.
- The Logistics Division should become the secretariat for the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC), and be made responsible for framing the National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP) and its implementation.

#### Way forward

- In order to impart Customs related domain expertise, officers from Customs could be supported to the Logistics Division to support the NTFC related activities.

#### 65. Chinese economic policy

Source- [Live Mint](#)

Syllabus- **GS 2-** Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Context - Importance of China's economic strategy for India.

#### What is the significance of china's 14<sup>th</sup> five year plan?

The Five-Year Plan (FYP) is China's top-level policy blueprint created every five years since 1953, the 14th is in development and will cover 2021–25. There are two new growth model based on economic self-reliance-

1. **Made in China programme-** To ensure that china dominates production in 10 select sectors, such as artificial intelligence, robotics, new materials, electric vehicles, high-end medical equipment and next-generation transport technologies.
- China plans to use credit subsidies, public sector enterprises and intellectual property acquisitions to ensure that it achieves 70% self-sufficiency by 2025, and global dominance by 2049.
2. **China's dual circulation strategy-** The two circulations are economic exchange within China and economic exchange with the rest of the world.

#### Aim-

- a. Moving bank lending from services to high-end manufacturing, as well as restricting funds to real estate.
- b. Cutting dependence on food and energy imported from the rest of the world.

In short, China will rely mainly on internal circulation i.e., the domestic cycle of production, distribution, and consumption for its development, supported by innovation and upgrades in the economy.

#### What are important lessons from the expected shifts in Chinese economic strategy?

There are three important lessons from the expected shifts in Chinese economic strategy-

1. **Driver of Economic growth-** China has been trying to increase domestic demand as a driver of economic growth rather than exporting goods in international market.
2. **Technology war with USA** – China is building capabilities in emerging industries through domestic industrial policy which indicates not only trade war but also technology war with USA in international market.
3. **Increase the share of wages-** Any country aiming for a higher reliance on its domestic market necessarily needs to increase the share of wages in its economy. The ability to build a mass consumption base is crucially dependent on higher wages across the economy.

**Way forward-** India has been a laggard in attracting manufacturing industries, but shift of supply chains out of China provides the opportunity to India to become global manufacturing hub and increase its global export.

## 66. Indo-Pacific region

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

**Syllabus-** GS 2 -

**Context-** Both India and the US will look to deepen bilateral defence consultation and collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region.

**What are the similarities and differences between Indo-pacific and QUAD?**

**Similarity-**

- The QUAD members are also major States in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Both the Quad and the Indo-Pacific constructs are focused on China.
- And also they are centered around India's geographic location and its policies, without India's presence their ability to sustain geopolitical constructs might diminish.

On the flip side, the Indo-Pacific is a grand politico-economic vision while the Quad is a forum for strategic and military consultations.

**Is Indo-Pacific will be an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative BRI?**

The BRI and free and open Indo-Pacific are competing initiatives but, it is too early to compare both because-

- The BRI is far more advanced, much more thought-out, and has the economic might of the Chinese state behind it.
- Several Indo-Pacific countries are already members of the BRI.
- China's BRI is a unilateral project that advances the interests of one country. The Indo-Pacific strategy meanwhile is inclusive by definition. It must accommodate the interests of all states that are willing to participate in the initiative.

However, the BRI is a 'Chinese' project and is already under immense stress from its inherent weaknesses, such as China's unilateral pursuit of the BRI and the associated economic burdens on the States that sign up to it.

**What are the challenges in India's strategy for the survival of Indo-Pacific?**

**Economic hurdles-**

**1. RCEP** - India's determination to not be a part of the Regional Complete Financial Partnership (RCEP) might probably complicate the nation's future engagements within the Indo-Pacific region.

- **Trade gap-** there is a trade gap between Indian and Chinese trade with Indo-Pacific countries and QUAD states which will be a major determining factor in shaping the region's strategic realities.
- **Free trade agreement-** India does not have FTA s with Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., Bangladesh and the Maldives. While china has FTAs with all these countries barring the U.S.

**2. India's limited reach in Indo-Pacific** - The economic slowdown in India in the wake of pandemic and the lack of political consensus about regional economic agreements such as the RCEP, India's ability to economically engage with the region remains limited.

**Military hurdle -**

1. **Chinese dominance-** China is a major defence exporter to several countries in the Indo-Pacific region, dwarfing India's minimal sales, defence dialogues and occasional joint military exercises in the region.

**Way forward-**

India needs to rethink its strategic posture, and the recognition of its material inability to counter Chinese aggression. The only choice for now is to structured regional strategic alliance with the U.S. and its allies in the broader Indo-Pacific region.

**67. India-US 2+2 Dialogue**

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

**Gs2:** Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**Context:** Third meeting of India-US 2+2 dialogue was held in New Delhi recently.

**More in news:**

- India-U. S signed the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA).
- The joint statement on the need to “enhance supply chain resilience and to seek alternatives to the current paradigm” reflects the oneness of India-US interests regarding Chinese trade practices.
- Jointly, called for observance of international norms in the Indo-Pacific region.

**What are the Opportunities in India -US bilateral relations?**

- India's health, education and science and technology can benefit positively from India-U. S bilateral partnership.
- India should push for a full defence engagement with the US and develop closer ties in defence industries without constraining the development of indigenous capacity.
- Closer association with US will enable India to reduce its dependence on Chinese manufactures by giving flip to economic and commercial ties with china.
- India's decision to go along with QUAD group including through its maritime exercises, is in line with India's interests.

India's should rely on its own strengths in matters of national security and should not lose its autonomy in the hope that an outside power would provide useful inputs. India should collaborate with caution and prudence.

**68. ASER report analysis**

**Source:** The Hindu, The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Education

**Context:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students in rural areas have received only marginal assistance in the form of structured learning materials from teachers.

**What are the findings of the Annual Status of Education Report 2020?**

- **The ASER 2020 survey covering 26 States and four Union Territories** found that there is a shift in enrolments from private schools to government institutions, of about five per cent over 2018, ranging from class one to higher secondary levels.
- **There is a marked rise in students not being enrolled**, either because they dropped out, or because it was not possible to get admitted.
- The survey found **43.6% of students in government schools are without access to a smartphone**, while 67.3% of those who received learning materials in these institutions got them over WhatsApp. This underscores the role played by gadgets and connectivity.
- **Only about one-third of the surveyed children had access to online learning** and only 11 per cent had access to live online classes.

**What steps can be taken to better the situation?**

- This unsettling finding by the Annual Status of Education Report 2020 **should prompt the Centre and the State governments to plan remedial measures** for the future, when it will be safe again for students to return to the classroom.
- **Expanding availability of textbooks to all**, including those who dropped out or are waiting to be formally admitted, will help parents and siblings aid learning.
- **Bridging the divide on educational aids** by including smartphones, will enable transmission of learning materials, and personal tutorial sessions.
- **Students could use the safety of the open countryside** to learn, under guidance from teachers. This is particularly feasible for lower classes, where observational learning creates a strong foundation.
- **Educational video, which has helped thousands**, can advance learning even beyond the pandemic, using talented teacher-communicators.
- States such as Tamil Nadu and Kerala have already hosted curriculum-based video lessons on the Internet, after beaming them on television.

**Way forward**

- The experience of southern states in the past decades proves that investment in a public school system multiplies opportunities manifold.
- It will take out-of-the-box thinking during the pandemic to come up with interventions that are a substitute for traditional methods and prevent 2020 becoming a zero year.

**69. India-US relations**

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

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

**Context** - India-US relations over the year and significance of 3<sup>rd</sup> 2+2 Dialogue.

**How India-US ties deepened with the end of Cold War?**

In the post-cold war era, India's relationship with the US on defence and strategic issues has strengthened. This can be reflected in the following:

- **1991-** India's engagement with the US on defence cooperation started with the 1991 Kicklighter Proposals.
- **1998:** Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee authorized five underground nuclear tests in response to Pakistan's test firing of a surface-to-surface missile. This had set India and U.S at a confrontational footing.
- **2005- New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship** has established an institutionalized framework, With a Defence Policy Group and its four sub-groups-
  - The Procurement and Production Group.
  - The Joint Technical Group.
  - The Military Cooperation Group.
  - The Senior Technology Group.
- **Bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement 2008:** Culminating a decade of partnership on civil nuclear issues, the two sides have agreed to build nuclear reactors in India. This was the time when the relationship between India and USA peaked and it was considered as a Game changer for INDO-US relations.
- **Bilateral trade:** overall trade between the two countries has grown and reached \$140 billion in 2018, the US is India's largest trade partner.



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

- From less than \$400 million of defence acquisitions till 2005, the U.S. has since signed defence contracts of \$18 billion.
- **2016-** The U.S. categorized India as “a Major Defence Partner” in 2016. It has helped that India also joined the export control regimes (Australia Group, Missile Technology Control Regime and Wassenaar Arrangement) and has practices consistent with the Nuclear Suppliers Group.
- **2018-** India was placed in Category I of the Strategic Trade Authorisation, easing exports of sensitive technologies.

### Areas of growing cooperation:

- 1. Quad** - India's vision of the Indo-Pacific and its distinctive inclusiveness in the region is against the premise of multilateralism that the Quad presupposes. 'Quad' grouping of like-minded democracies has the potential to dramatically change the region's security landscape.
- 2. Indo-pacific** - The US under its Pivot to Asia policy views India as an ideal balancer to check the aggressive rise of China. Therefore, the US has formulated the concept of Indo-Pacific to counter China in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean.
- 3. 2+2 dialogue:** It is the dialogue between Indian External Affairs and Defence Ministers, and their US counterparts. The main outcomes of 3<sup>rd</sup> India-USA 2+2 dialogue are-
  - a) BECA** - India has signed the **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement** (BECA) with the USA. It will enable the exchange of geospatial data and information between the two countries and will improve the accuracy of India's missiles in precision strikes.
    - BECA is one of the four foundational military communication agreements between the two countries. The other three are:
      - **GSOMIA**- General Security of Military Information Agreement.
      - **LEMOA**- Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement.
      - **COMCASA**- Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement.
- 4. India's participation in Five Eyes meeting-** India's first-ever participation, in a meeting of the exclusive Five Eyes grouping that facilitates intelligence-sharing among the US, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand.

### Way forward-

India defined strategic autonomy as Non-alignment 2.0. The Indian strategic community needs to appreciate that policies cannot become prisoners of labels. The policy objective has to enhance India's strategic space and capability.

# General Studies Paper - 3

## General Studies - 3

---

### 1. The end of 'Inspector Raj'- Labour and Farm Bill

**Source-** The Indian Express

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context-** Reforms are broadly about leaving resource allocation and production decisions to market forces rather than know-all ministers and bureaucrats.

**What were the challenges faced by general people working in the Agriculture and Labour sector after the Independence?**

**Farmers in Agriculture Sector-**

- They had been treated as captive sources of producing cheap food grain while living at subsistence levels.
- There was no freedom to choose the point of sale for his produce, they could not decide the price of their product and had no say in selecting the buyer.

**In Labour Sector-**

#### 1. Entrepreneurs-

- If one even thought of becoming an entrepreneur, there were 44 different labour laws with more than 1,200 sections and clauses that demanded compliance.
- Different inspectors and departments administered those laws and the tyranny of "inspector raj" hindered or killed many entrepreneurial journeys from taking flight.

**2. Private Investors-** The Companies Act of 2013 needed to be reform as the Bill had many adverse provisions, one of which was to criminalise even otherwise normal civil infractions of routine nature. The Bill completely paralysed risk-taking and quick decision-making among the private wealth creators.

#### 3. Financial sectors -

- They are completely outside the ambit of RBI regulation.
- They served millions of ordinary people, but had no standard governance norms or binding regulations to protect customer interest.
- The politicians who controlled these banks were the primary obstacles in introducing any reforms in these sectors.

**What are the reforms that will change the life of farmers in Agricultural Sector and labours in Labour sector?**

**Farmers in Agricultural Sector-**

- Now he can sell his produce wherever he wants, to whomsoever he wants and at whatever price he can command.
- If he gets a higher price in the market, then he is free to take it else the security of MSP anyhow exists.
- The stifling nature of the Essential Commodities Act and the APMC Act has both been removed.
- Contract farming is now nationally enabled, allowing private investment to come in, which will bring in technology, modern equipment, better seeds, and know-how for in-between-season crops, improved yields, better logistics and freer access to national and international markets.

**In Labour Sector-**

**1. Labour Laws-**

- The web of 44 central labour laws has been dismantled.
- The Parliament has now put in place four labour codes that are much simpler —
  - a. The Code on Wages.
  - b. The Industrial Relations Code.
  - c. The Social Security Code.
  - d. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code.
- They universalise minimum and timely payment of wages among a host of other labour-friendly measures.
- They enable ease of doing business by bringing in a regime of one-registration, one-licence and one-return. The tyranny of “inspector raj” is finally over.

**2. Private investors-** The perverse sections of the Companies Act 2013 have been done away with and the fear of criminal prosecution that hung over every corporate decision is now history.

**3. Banks-**

- The bilateral banking netting law has been passed and a large corpus of unproductive capital has been freed to be deployed in the market.
- Cooperative banks will now be regulated by the RBI and its customers will have the same protections as those of other regular banks.

**Way Forward**

The bureaucracy must ensure that the fruits of these reforms reach the last mile.

**2. C&AG’s report on GST compensation cess**

**Source-** The Hindu

**Syllabus-** **GS 3-** Government Budgeting.

**Context-** In its audit report on the accounts of the Union Government, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has pointed out grave lapses in the accounting of revenue from the GST compensation cess.

**What are the key findings of the CAG report related to cess?**

- 1. Retained in the Consolidated Fund of India** - The GST Compensation Cess with ₹47,272 crore, was not remitted to its rightful account over the first two years of GST.
  - Union Finance Ministry quietly retained over 40% of all cess collections in 2018-19 in the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI).
- 2. Short transfer to the Public Account** - As many as 35 different cesses, levies and charges yielded ₹2.75-lakh crore in the year, but just around ₹1.64-lakh crore was remitted to the specific reserve funds for which these cesses were levied.
- 3. Crude Oil Cess** - Over 10 years, not a single penny 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.
- 4. Central Road and Infrastructure Fund** - 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.
- 5. A new 4% Health and Education Cess on income tax** was partly deployed towards education, but no fund was created for health. Same with a Social Welfare surcharge levied on customs.



**What is the mechanism of utilization of compensation cess?**

**Transfer of reserve funds-** Cesses and levies collected are required to be first transferred to designated Reserve Funds and utilized for the specific purposes intended by Parliament.

- Funds collected through Central taxes along with cesses and other levies go to the CFI.
- Taxes and surcharges in CFI are parked in a divisible pool and 42% of the total is given to States as devolution.

**What are the major reasons for the proliferation of cesses in India?**

**Inter- governmental fiscal arrangement-**

1. **Lack of transparency-** Article 271 excludes the distribution of the revenue from any surcharge or cess levied by the Union government for any specified purpose, revenues from these sources do not form part of the divisible tax pool and are thus not shared with states. The lack of transparency in the accounting of these funds is undesirable.
  2. **Complexities in Tax structure-** There are as many as 35 earmarked cesses, it is difficult to see all of them as priority areas requiring protection of funding. Too many cesses also complicate the tax system and add to administrative and compliance costs. There are debates over whether such levies are in sync with a nation trying to simplify its tax regime.
- The operation of the cesses involving collections and transfer to designated funds in the Public Accounts makes the entire process opaque as the operation of these funds too needs to be monitored and audited.

**Way forward**

Taxes in democratic societies indicate the presence of a collective socio-economic vision aimed at improving livelihoods. Since a cess is introduced with a specific purpose, it is unjustified when the proceeds remain unutilized for so many years. It is high time that the government immediately begins utilizing cess proceeds. Importantly, it should also publish an annual account of the manner in which they have been utilized.

**3. Labour bills**

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Economics

**Context:** Government's response to migrants' plight, economic crisis, has been to unilaterally bring changes in labour laws.

**How has the share of circular migrants and workers outside agriculture changed over the years?**

- **Employment security:** scarce jobs in industry and services increasingly became jobs which did not offer any job security.
- Between 2004-05 and 2017-18, the share of salaried workers outside agriculture without any written contract increased from **60 per cent to 71 per cent.**
  - In private and public limited companies, this share increased **from 59 per cent to 71 per cent.**
- **The share of the circular migrants** in all the risky jobs outside of agriculture increased over this period from 47 per cent to 57 per cent.
- **In organised manufacturing,** the reported share of contract labour increased from **13 per cent in 1995-06 to 36 per cent in 2017-18.**

**What are the changes introduced in the ecosystem of labour laws?**

- **The three revised labour Code Bills** were on Industrial Relations, Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions, and Social Security
- These three labour codes, along with the Code on Wages approved earlier, **affect the lives of every Indian worker**, except a tiny section of the public sector and managerial employees.
- In 2018, the government amended the **Standing Orders on Employment Act and introduced the category of “fixed term” worker**. That category, which creates a permanent unit of temporary workers, with no prospects of career growth and job security.
- Various government **spokespersons had rationalised fixed-term employment** by arguing that industries had resorted to the third-party engagement of contract labour to get around the rigidities in firing workers.
- **Codes further liberalised the provisions** relating to employment of contract labour and making their regulation applicable only in establishments employing 50 or more workers, instead of 20 or more.
- **The key provisions which regulate the employment** of inter-state migrant workers have been further diluted and made applicable only to establishments employing 10 or more such workers, compared to five earlier.
- **The threshold for factories:** It has been doubled from 10 to 20 workers with power and therefore eliminating a large number of important regulatory provisions for the smaller factories.
- Relevant **governments have been given much more scope in excusing establishments** from the applicability of a whole range of provisions in the Code.
- **Inspection provisions have been diluted** in all the Codes and will no longer even be complaints based.

**Comment on the changes made in the bill?**

- These changes may appeal to **narrow-minded interests** which believe that industrial prosperity can be built on a race to the bottom for workers.
- **The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS)** has clearly argued, **informality contributes to inequality** and to conditions which make sustainable growth impossible, and economic recovery more difficult.
- **Low productivity and lack of competitiveness:** It also creates conditions in which employers under-invest in workers’ capacities and workers are not invested in a company’s future.

**Way forward**

- The NCEUS calls for changes which balanced employers’ interests with workers’ security and rights. It is this thinking that has led somewhat more enlightened governments, and industrialists, in India and the world over, to investing in the long-term future of workers.

**4. Biodiversity and Pandemic**

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

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Environment

**Context:** India’s pandemic recovery must be greened as the country is a key member of biodiversity convention.

### Why should India should plan a green trajectory after Covid-19?

- **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):** The body acknowledged the link between biodiversity loss and the spread of animal pathogens and called for an end to destructive industrial and commercial practices.
- **UN Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 report:** None of the 20 targets has been fully met. Many countries have chosen to ignore the connection between biodiversity and well-being, and depleted ecological capital in a quest for financial prosperity.
- **Conservation targets set a decade ago**, to be achieved by 2020 were:
  - reform or phasing out of subsidies that erode biodiversity
  - steps for resource use within safe ecological limits
    - preventing industrial fisheries from destroying threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems
    - an end to pollution, including growing plastic waste
    - protecting surface and subsurface water, inland, coastal and marine areas
- **WWF's Living Planet Index:** It points out 68 per cent decline in vertebrate populations over 1970 levels.
- **India has recognised the value of nature** as much as the destructive impact of unregulated resources exploitation.
- **National laws of the 1970s and 1980s** have indeed protected islands of biodiversity, particularly in about 5% of the country's land designated as protected areas
- **The new EIA norms:** There is little concern for indigenous communities that have nurtured biodiversity, and there was no effort to make them strong partners in improving the health of forests and buffer zones.

### Way forward

- The 196 CBD member-countries must chart a greener course, aligning it with the Paris Agreement, which has a significant impact on the health of flora and fauna.
- India too has the opportunity to plan a trajectory of green growth after COVID-19, around clean energy, ecological agriculture, a freeze on expansion of mining and dam-building, resource recovery from waste, and regeneration of arid lands.

### 5. India's inflation targeting policy

Source - Live Mint

**Syllabus- GS-3** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context-** Inflation targeting and the decisions of Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

#### What causes inflation?

The primary cause of inflation is the mismatch between demand and supply. The mismatch can be in following context-

1. **Excess money supply that raises aggregate demand**
2. **Supply deficiency** (A shortfall in the production of a commodity fails to meet even the basic needs of the citizens and thus prices raise causing inflation).

#### What is the new monetary framework?

The agreement between the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the central government signed in February 2015. The agreement explicitly made inflation targeting the objective of the MPC while using the repo rate as the instrument for it.

- **Rate steady-** The Reserve Bank's MPC was given the target of keeping inflation at 4% with a tolerance limit of 2%. This meant that inflation should be between 2% and 6%.
- **Contrasting target** - The target was in contrast with the multiple indicator approach that predated this framework where the central bank focused on both growth and price stability.

Thus, RBI was finally free to do its core job as guardian of the rupee's value and granting currency the stability needed to serve as a credible unit for long-range forecasts.

### **What is inflation targeting? What are the views of critics?**

Inflation targeting refers to keeping inflation rate within the permissible band so that business houses can plan their investment activities.

#### **Procedure-**

1. **Review meeting-** (every two months): Where MPC discuss the likely inflation and growth estimates over the coming months.
2. **Targeting inflation:** Based on this review, the MPC targets inflation using the policy rate, or the repo rate.

#### **Critics' view-**

- Inflation targeting was ill-suited to an emerging economy like India.
- Flexible regime with a wide inflation band was far too rigid to foster growth.

Inflation in India has been subdued since the new monetary policy framework was brought in. Many view this as a sign of its success in India while others point at the tight policy and its adverse impact on India's growth rate as a sign of problems with the framework, which has come at the cost of growth.

#### **Way forward**

Centre must not act in haste to abandon inflation targeting. Price stability is a goal too worthy to give up on. For the sake of fairness, if not the rupee, government should resist the temptation to use the "money illusion" of inflation for short-term ends.

## **6. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC 2016)**

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** Gs3: **Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment**

**Background:** The Prime Minister mentioned that Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC 2016) would help aid India's path to self-reliance.

### **What are the issues hindering investments in India?**

- **Backlog in court cases:** nearly four crore matters pending final judgment.
- **The enforceability of contracts:** On an average, it takes 1,445 days for a contract to be enforced, and that too at a cost of nearly 31% of the claim value.
- **Criminal penalties:** imprisonment for minor offences act as major deterrents for investors.

### **What is the importance of IBC in promoting investment climate in India?**

- Replaced the inefficient bankruptcy law regime.
- It has transformed insolvency resolution in India by streamlining insolvency processes in a sustainable, efficient, and value retaining manner.
- It focuses on prioritising resolution rather than liquidation.



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

- Relatively short time-bound processes. With IBC in place, the overall time taken in recovery improved nearly three times. (4.3 years in 2018 to 1.6 years in 2019).
- It has successfully instilled confidence in the corporate resolution methodology.
- Increased the possibility for the creditors in recovering some of their investments in firms being liquidated. With IBC in place, the recovery rate improved nearly threefold (26.5% in 2018 to 71.6% in 2019).
- Besides promoting investor and investee confidence it has allowed credit to flow more freely to and within India.
- IBC reforms improved the ease of doing business in India that resulted in increased Foreign Direct Investment into India during 2019-2020.
- Instilled greater confidence in both foreign and domestic investors. It will help in enabling India to emerge as a 'Make for World' platform.

### **What are the other steps taken by government to promote investments?**

- Government of India is working toward decriminalisation of minor offences which will significantly reduce the risk of imprisonment for actions that are not necessary.
- The rolling out of the commercial courts, commercial divisions and the Commercial Appellate Divisions Act, 2015, to resolve pending cases
- The removal of over 1,500 obsolete and archaic laws.

### **7. India's inflation targeting policy**

**Source - Live Mint**

**Syllabus- GS-3** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context-** Inflation targeting and the decisions of Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

#### **What causes inflation?**

The primary cause of inflation is the mismatch between demand and supply. The mismatch can be in following context-

1. **Excess money supply that raises aggregate demand**
2. **Supply deficiency** (A shortfall in the production of a commodity fails to meet even the basic needs of the citizens and thus prices raise causing inflation).

#### **What is the new monetary framework?**

The agreement between the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the central government signed in February 2015. The agreement explicitly made inflation targeting the objective of the MPC while using the repo rate as the instrument for it.

- **Rate steady-** The Reserve Bank's MPC was given the target of keeping inflation at 4% with a tolerance limit of 2%. This meant that inflation should be between 2% and 6%.
- **Contrasting target** - The target was in contrast with the multiple indicator approach that predated this framework where the central bank focused on both growth and price stability.

Thus, RBI was finally free to do its core job as guardian of the rupee's value and granting currency the stability needed to serve as a credible unit for long-range forecasts.

#### **What is inflation targeting? What are the views of critics?**

Inflation targeting refers to keeping inflation rate within the permissible band so that business houses can plan their investment activities.

### Procedure-

1. **Review meeting-** (every two months): Where MPC discuss the likely inflation and growth estimates over the coming months.
2. **Targeting inflation:** Based on this review, the MPC targets inflation using the policy rate, or the repo rate.

### Critics' view-

- Inflation targeting was ill-suited to an emerging economy like India.
- Flexible regime with a wide inflation band was far too rigid to foster growth.

Inflation in India has been subdued since the new monetary policy framework was brought in. Many view this as a sign of its success in India while others point at the tight policy and its adverse impact on India's growth rate as a sign of problems with the framework, which has come at the cost of growth.

### Way forward

Centre must not act in haste to abandon inflation targeting. Price stability is a goal too worthy to give up on. For the sake of fairness, if not the rupee, government should resist the temptation to use the "money illusion" of inflation for short-term ends.

### 8. Power sector in India

**Source-** The Indian Express

**Syllabus-** **GS 3-** Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

**Context-** The financial hole into which the DISCOMS have fallen will deepen in light of COVID.

#### What is UDAY scheme?

- Launched in November 2015, the Ujjwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) was designed to turn around the precarious financial position of state distribution companies (DISCOMS).
- The state governments took over 75 % of the debt of their DISCOMS, issuing lower-interest bonds to service the rest of the debt.
- In return, DISCOMS were given target dates (2017-19) to meet efficiency parameters like reduction in power lost through transmission, theft and faulty metering.

#### What is the current situation of State Electricity Distribution Companies DISCOMS in India?

DISCOMS today are facing unprecedented cash flow problems-

##### 1. Loss-

- The losses of DISCOMS, which had reduced in 2016-18, have nearly doubled in 2019 to INR 28,036 crore.
- DISCOMS have also missed the FY 2019 UDAY target to bring down their aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses to 15 %.

2. The finance minister allocated Rs 1.25 lakh crore to DISCOMS in her Rs 20-lakh crore stimulus package. This is roughly the amount the government portal, PRAAPTI, indicates are the dues owed by DISCOMS to the power generators.

#### What were the reasons for failure of UDAY scheme?

1. While the ACS-ARR gap was supposed to be eliminated by FY19, it remains as high as Rs 0.25 per unit.

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

- a. Part of the problem can be traced to inadequate tariff hikes. Currently, only four states — Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka — had recorded an ACS-ARR below 0.
2. The issue of whether the power subsidy released by state governments is adequate.
3. Dues by state DISCOMS to power generators have risen.

### What are the fundamental problems in DISCOM sector in India and it's possible Solutions?

1. **Cross- subsidy-** Electricity price for certain segments such as agriculture and the domestic category is cross-subsidized by the industries and the commercial sector. This affects the competitiveness of industry.
2. **Led behind in eliminating the electricity cost gap-** There is the problem of AT&C, which is a technical term that stands for the gap between the cost of the electricity that DISCOMS gets from the generating company, the bills that it raises and the final realization from the collection process from end-consumers.

### Solution-

1. **Clearing dues-** The stakeholders involved in the electricity value chain (generators, transmission companies, DISCOMS, consumers, regulators and state governments) to clear their dues to each other, the DISCOMS would look much stronger.
2. **Efficiency-** The AT&C (aggregate transmission and distribution losses) losses need to go down, and billing and collection efficiencies should go up.

### Way forward

Need of an hour is a multi-pronged and networked overhaul of the DISCOM sector and, in particular, the regulatory structure and deliverables. All stakeholders will have to take a haircut. COVID will introduce a new pressure point (i.e. Generation Z and the millennial) on governments that would compel them to look at the inherited structural problems through a different angle.

### 9. The non-violent economic model

**Source-** [Live Mint](#)

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context-** The year of corona may yet shift the focus from Gandhi as an icon of political protest to Gandhi as a far-sighted economic thinker.

### What were the ideologies to solve the economic problems during the Great Depression, 1930?

1. **John Maynard Keynes-** People must pretend to ourselves and to everyone that fair is foul and foul is fair; for foul is useful and fair is not. Avarice and usury and precaution must be our gods for a little longer still.
2. **Mahatma Gandhi-** The charkha and rejuvenation of local economies. Gandhi's primary focus was on the profound structural violence unleashed by this assumption that lies at the heart of modernity.
3. **David Graeber, American anarchist philosopher and anthropologist-** He was credited with inspiring the Occupy Wall Street movement and coining the evocative term "99% vs. 1%" to describe wealth disparity.

Thus, Non-violent economics shifts the focus from wealth distribution to difficult questions about what constitutes value and how it might be measured.

**What are the developments on the world stage that created hope of overturning the worship of greed?**

Over the last 30 years, there were two major developments-

1. **The rise of the free or open software movement-** The open software movement gifted us the World Wide Web when its creator Tim Berners-Lee refused to patent its protocols.

However, the democratizing and decentralizing potential of the web has been cannibalized by Google, Facebook, etc.

2. **Manipulation** - Today's internet giants use their manipulative power that could undermine mental health and democratic institutions across the world.

**Is there any hope for a non-violent economy?**

1. **COVID** - It might serve as a wake-up call for leaders and foot soldiers of the current global disorder. The link between environmental degradation and proliferation of ever-more-deadly pathogens is more widely acknowledged.
2. **If value is equated with money-** People are shockingly vulnerable as long as value is equated with money. If supply chains break down for long enough, even millionaires are in danger of starving.
3. **GDP as a measure-** It is now more widely recognized that gross domestic product (GDP) as a measure of economic activity is grievously misleading. For instance, it doesn't take into account the negative externalities of using fossil fuels.
4. **Green accounting and HDI-** Creating a combined measure that tracks social(HDI) and environmental well-being(green accounting practices) is now a survival imperative.

**Way Forward**

Bhutan's gross national happiness mechanism, the genuine progress index (GPI) developed by think-tank GPI Atlantic etc hold promise because instead of directly attacking the "foul is fair" assumption by seeking to make it less lucrative.

**10. Farms Bills**

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

**Syllabus:** Gs3: Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure, Devolution of Powers

**Context:** The passage of the three Farm Acts has raised a constitutional debate on Union's powers to legislate on state subjects.

**What are the three contentious farm bills?**

1. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020.
2. The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020,
3. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

**What is the controversy around Entry 33 in concurrent list?**

- Following subjects are on the state list:
  - Agriculture
  - Trade and commerce within the State, production, supply and distribution of goods
  - Markets and fairs are enumerated as states subject.



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

- However, the trade and commerce within the State (Entry 26) & production, supply and distribution of goods (Entry 27) are subjected to the provisions of Entry 33 of concurrent list after the 3<sup>rd</sup> amendment act, 1954.
- As per Article 369, the responsibility of agricultural trade and commerce within a State was temporarily entrusted to the Union government for a period of five years beginning from 1950. However, the 1954 Amendment changed this into a permanent feature in the Constitution.
- Despite many opposed, stating that the Bill would lead to an expanding encroachment on the rights of the States the Bill was passed. Now the same Entry 33 was invoked to encroach the powers of the States.

### **What are the directives given by Supreme Court in I.T.C. Limited vs. Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) case 2002?**

- The development of the tobacco industry was brought under the Centre through the Tobacco Board Act, 1975.
- However, Bihar's APMC Act continued to list tobacco as an agricultural produce.
- In this case, the question was if the APMC could charge a levy on ITC for the purchase of unprocessed tobacco leaves from growers.
- The then Constitution Bench upheld the validity of the State APMC Act, and provided some important directives :
  - a) Market fees can be charged from ITC under the State APMC Act
  - b) State laws become repugnant only if the State and Centre enact laws on the same subject matter under an Entry in List III.
  - c) In those cases, outside List III, one has to first examine if the subject matter was an exclusive entry under List I or List II, and only after determining this can one decide on the dominant legislation that would prevail.

### **How the directives of Supreme Court related to present Farm Acts of 2020?**

- In the case of the Farm Acts of 2020, the applicable points are (a) and (c).
- With regard to (a), States could continue to charge mandi taxes from private markets anywhere in the notified area regardless of the Central Act.
- With regard to (c), the State legislation should prevail as agriculture is an exclusive subject matter under Entry 14 in List II.

### **Why the recent Farm Acts are said to have poor legal validity?**

- Centre to use Entry 33 in List III to push the Farm Bills weakens the spirit of cooperative federalism.
- Second, agriculture is exclusively a State subject. Everything that is subsidiary to an exclusive subject in List II should also fall under the exclusive legislative purview of States.
- Most importantly, Entry 28 in List II markets and fairs is not subject to Entry 33 in List III.

## **11. Rainbow new deal - Integrating ecological protection and tackling inequality**

**Syllabus** GS-3- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

**Context** – India needs a rainbow recovery plan to emerge successfully from COVID 19 and the structural changes it has brought in society.

### **What is meant by Rainbow new deal?**

It refers to a seamless integration of ecological protection and tackling of wealth inequality and economic vulnerability of several hundreds of millions of people.

### **What are the features of rainbow new deal?**

**1. Sustainable livelihoods** – Many small farmers, pastoralists, and fishers can be enabled to sustain or switch to organic, ecologically sustainable production. This would ensure their own food security and local marketing links.

This has to be built on regenerating and safeguarding the country's soil, natural ecosystems, water, biological diversity, and air.

**2. Sustainable lifestyle** – This involves encouraging lifestyles and livelihoods that obtain substantial food, medicines, household items and other needs, as also sustainable livelihoods, from natural ecosystems.

**3. Focusing on MSME's** -It would entail reviving and sustaining India's incredible diversity of crafts, and decentralized production of most goods and services with a massive investment in the small and medium sector enterprises.

For instance, Ela Bhatt, founder of SEWA, has proposed the '100-mile radius' as a region within which the objective of self-reliance can be met.

**4. Improving social sector** – It involves substantial investments in public health, education, housing, transportation and other basic needs.

**5. Wealth redistribution** - Economist Prabhat Patnaik has pointed out, a mere 2% wealth tax coupled with a 33% inheritance tax on the richest 1% of India could generate more revenue than the total recovery package the Government of India announced for corona induced challenges.

### **Way Forward**

If the diverse strands of resistance, feminist, worker, farmer, and other mobilizations of the marginalized, and myriad grassroots initiatives at alternative living all can be synergized, a RND kind of transformation may yet be on the horizon in post-Corona Indian economy.

## **12. Labour codes reforms**

**Source- The Indian Express**

**Syllabus- GS 3** - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

**Context-** The three labor bills will immensely help the country in bringing much needed economic growth and will help in employment generation.

### **What are the new labour codes?**

The government has introduced new versions of three labour codes in Lok Sabha which are-

1. Industrial Relations Code Bill, 2020.
2. Code on Social Security Bill, 2020.
3. Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code Bill, 2020.

These three bills are part of four labour code envisaged incorporating 29 labour laws. First code on wages has already been enacted.

### **What are the benefits of labour codes 2020?**

1. **Raised the threshold for requirement of a standing order-** The expansion of firms by increasing the threshold for retrenchment/closure or lay-off without requiring government approval, from 100 to 300 workers.

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

2. **Fixed term employment [FTE]** - It is an intervention to enable the hiring of employees directly instead of hiring through contractors, which will ensure flexibility.
  - The code also reduces the time limit for receiving gratuity payment from the continuous service of five years to one year for all kinds of employees, including fixed-term employees, contract labour, daily and monthly wage workers.
3. **Social protection system-** The inclusion of the gig and platform workers in the Social Security Code 2020 is a step towards strengthening the formal economy.
  - The provision for insurance coverage has been extended to plantation workers and free annual health check-ups. A bipartite safety committee has been introduced for hazardous factories.
4. **Gender equality and empowers the women workforce-** Female labour force participation is a driver of growth and, therefore, participation rates indicate the potential for a country to grow more rapidly.
  - Women will be entitled to be employed in all establishments for all types of work and, with consent can work before 6 am and beyond 7 pm subject to such conditions relating to safety, holidays and working hours.
5. **Inclusion of inter-state migrant workers in the definition of worker:** It has been made possible that a migrant, who comes on his own to the destination state, can declare himself a migrant worker by registering on an electronic portal based on self-declaration seeded with Aadhar Card.
  - Registration on the portal has been simplified and there is no requirement of any other document except Aadhaar Card.
  - For de-licencing/de-registration, it is mandated to notify registering officers about the closure of their establishment and certify payment of dues to all employed workers, which will ensure that workers will not be exploited even during the closure of the concerned establishment.
6. **Reskilling Fund-** Industrial Relation code also proposes setting up of a reskilling fund to help skill retrenched workers.
  - To set up a re-skilling fund for training of retrenched workers with contribution of the employer of an amount equal to 15 days last drawn by the worker.
  - The lifelong learning opportunity is provided to match the evolving skill sets required for technology and process changes.
7. **Notice period-** Under Industrial Relations Code 2020, the provision for a 14-day notice period before strikes and lockdowns would allow both workers and employers to attempt resolving the issues.

### Way forward-

The reforms introduced in the three labour codes will help to build a future of work that is safer, fairer, greener and more resilient. The reform measures address basic needs - to revive the economy and tackle barriers in the expansion of firms. Moreover, they promote the employment of women as well as reskilling of the workforce for the deployment of migrants.

### 13. Issues of Indian Sugar Industry

**Source-** The Hindu Business Line

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

**Context** - The Centre and States governments have persisted with populist policy measures have aggravated the sugar industry's structural problems.

**What are the problems of sugar industry in India?**

1. **Mounting arrears**- High cost of sugarcane (due to high State advised price), inefficient technology, uneconomic process of production and heavy excise duty result in high cost of manufacturing. Lower prices of sugar than production cost causes mills to incur losses rendering them unable to pay farmer's dues.
  - In Uttar Pradesh alone have run up arrears of over ₹8,447 crore for 2019-20, twice the amount due in the previous year.
2. **COVID-19 pandemic**- The extended lockdown, millers' cash flows have been hit by a sharp fall in the institutional off-take of sugar from food and beverage makers and hotels which usually a stable revenue source.
3. **Impact of crude oil prices** - Usually, when oil prices are high, mills tend to divert cane for making ethanol that is used for blending with petrol. With recent fall in oil prices, mills will not find it attractive to divert cane for ethanol.
4. **Transportation subsidy**- Centre delaying its promised payouts towards transport subsidy on sugar exports, relying on which the industry has shipped out over 60 lakh tonnes of sugar this year.
  - The Centre has been tardy in reimbursing mills for the carrying costs on the 40-lakh tonne buffer-stock created at its behest.
5. **Structural problem**- Centre has kept up FRP hikes and begun announcing a 'minimum selling price' for sugar, which would discourage farmers from planting excessive cane.
6. **Short Crushing season**- Sugar production is a seasonal industry with a short crushing season varying normally from 4 to 7 months in a year. It causes financial loss and seasonal employment for workers and lack of full utilization of sugar mills.

**What are the steps taken by the government to address the issue of sugar industry?**

C. Rangarajan committee (2012) was set up to give recommendations on regulation of sugar industry. Its major recommendations:

- **Price of sugarcane**- Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) recommended a hybrid approach of fixing sugarcane prices, which involved fair and remunerative price (FRP).
- **Remove the regulations on release of non-levy sugar**- Removal of these controls will improve the financial health of the sugar mills. This, in turn, will lead to timely payments to farmers and a reduction in cane arrears.
- **Trade policy**- Abolition of the quantitative controls on export and import of sugar, these should be replaced by appropriate tariffs.

**Way forward-**

Considering the importance of sugar industry the crisis faced by sugarcane farmers need to resolved promptly through Centre and State policy initiatives such as allowing free market forces to dictate the demand-supply equation for sugarcane and its end-products

**14. Production Linked Incentive Scheme**

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

**Syllabus:** Gs3: Changes in Industrial Policy and their Effects on Industrial Growth



**Context:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has introduced a Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing.

**What is Production Linked Incentive Scheme?**

- Aim is to position India as a global hub for electronics system design and manufacturing.
- It provides an incentive of 4-6 per cent on incremental sales of mobile phones and specified electronic components manufactured in India, to eligible companies, for a period of five years.
- Eligible companies are (a) mobile phones manufactured and sold by domestic companies, (b) mobile phones manufactured and sold by other companies (invoice value of ₹15,000 and above) and (c) specified electronic components.
- The scheme is available to all companies registered in India which meet the threshold requirement of a specified incremental investment between ₹100 crore and ₹1,000 crore in the next four years as well as incremental sales of manufactured goods.
- Accordingly, the scheme is designed to select only the few top companies. A maximum of five domestic and five global mobile manufacturing companies and 10 electronic component manufacturers will be selected.
- The scheme also provides for the constitution of Empowered Committee (EC) which has the power to review and revise rate of incentives, ceilings, eligibility criteria, etc.
- Unlike export linked subsidy schemes such as MEIS, EPCG, and SEZ, the present scheme is **investment and production linked** and may not violate international trade agreements.

**What are the concerns associated with the scheme?**

- The scheme offers higher incentives for higher production rate. However, the incentives cannot be claimed beyond the financial outlay proposed by the Government, which is ₹40,951 crore.
- In case of incentives exceeding the annual financial outlay, the incentives will be disbursed to all companies on the basis of their net incremental sales. This implies that an over-performing company may not be reap the benefits under the scheme in absolute terms.

**What is the way forward?**

- The Government should also look to implement similar incentive schemes for other sectors such as automobile, pharmaceuticals, FMCG, etc.
- Further, the government must also focus on service industry which has rarely got any incentive from the Government.

The Production Linked Incentive Scheme has all the necessities required to increase investments, employment generation, domestic value addition, capacity building and innovation to make India 'Atmanirbhar' as far as mobile phone manufacturing is concerned.

**15. Platform Workers**

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

**Syllabus:** Gs3: Changes in Industrial Policy and their Effects on Industrial Growth.

**Context:** The recent labour codes has not offered any guarantees for better and more stable days for platform workers who are meant to be 'the future of work'.

**What are the key provisions available for Platform workers in the recent labour code bills?**

- The new **Code on Social Security** defines a platform worker by their **vulnerability**.

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

- The three new labour codes acknowledge platform and gig workers as **new occupational categories**.
- The **Code on Wages, 2019**, uses 'wages' as the primary definition to define who an 'employee' is.
- The main aim of these laws for a platform worker is to make available benefits and safety nets from the government or platform companies.

### **What are the concerns associated with new labour codes with respect to platform workers?**

- Platform delivery people can claim benefits, but not labour rights. The new labour codes do not allow them to seek remedy in the courts to demand better and stable pay.
- This also means that the government or courts cannot regulate platform companies for their choice of pay, or limit working hours.
- Though the Code on Social Security, 2020, makes platform workers eligible for maternity benefits, life and disability cover, old age protection, provident fund, employment injury benefits it does not mean that the benefits are guaranteed.
- Actualising these benefits will depend on the political will at the Central and State government-levels and how unions elicit political support.
- The new labour code, does not make it mandatory for the platform companies to contribute towards benefits or be responsible for workplace issues.

The current laws do not see platform workers as future industrial workers. As India embraces 'new kinds of work', like delivery, in the digital economy it has to make labour friendly policies to keep India's young workforce secure.

### **Case study:** No stable pay for Gig economy/platform workers

During the last six months, many platform workers have unionised under the All India Gig Workers Union and have protested against Swiggy for reducing their base pay from Rs. 35 to Rs. 10 per delivery order. Assured Stable earnings have been the key demand of delivery-persons and drivers through years of protests.

## **16. Artificial Intelligence - 'AI for All'**

**Source-** The Indian Express

**Syllabus-** **GS 3** - Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

**Context-** India's "AI for All" strategy focuses on making India the AI garage of the world, a trusted nation to which the world can outsource AI-related work.

### **What is RAISE 2020 Summit?**

RAISE 2020 summit [Responsible AI for Social Empowerment] is a first of its-kind, global meeting of minds on Artificial Intelligence to drive India's vision for social transformation through responsible AI.

- **Panel discussion-** **Leveraging AI** for Pandemic preparedness, **Inclusive AI** and partnership for **successful innovation**.
- **Organized by-** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and NITI Aayog.

### **What is Artificial Intelligence?**

AI is the branch of computer science concerned with developing machines that can complete tasks that historically require human intelligence. It includes technologies like machine learning, pattern recognition, big data, neural networks, self-algorithms etc.

**Economics advantages-** The opportunity for AI in India is colossal, as is the scope for its implementation. By 2025, data and AI can add over \$500 billion and almost 20 million jobs to the Indian economy.

**What are some applications of AI?**

- 1. In healthcare-** Machine Learning-based deep-learning algorithms in AI can aid in the early detection and prevention of diseases by capturing the vitals of patients.  
**For example-**
  - Bengaluru based start-up has developed a non-invasive, AI-enabled technology to screen for early signs of breast cancer.
  - Hospitals in Tamil Nadu are using Machine Learning algorithms to detect diabetic retinopathy and help address the challenge of shortage of eye doctors.
- 2. Communication** -For the COVID-19 response, an AI-enabled Chatbot was used by MyGov for ensuring communications and ICMR deployed the Watson Assistant on its portal to respond to specific queries on COVID-19.
- 3. Biopharmaceutical-** AI-based applications have helped companies to significantly shorten the preclinical drug identification and design process.
- 4. Agriculture** - Technologies like image recognition, drones, and automated intelligent monitoring of irrigation systems can help farmers kill weeds more effectively, harvest better crops and ensure higher yields.
  - ICRISAT has developed an AI-power sowing app, which utilizes weather models and data on local crop yield and rainfall and advise local farmer on when they should plant their seeds.
- 5. Weather Forecasting-** An AI-based flood forecasting model that has been implemented in Bihar is now being expanded to cover the whole of India to forecast warning 48 hours earlier about impending floods.

**What are the initiatives taken by government to adopt Artificial Intelligence?**

- 1. School curriculum-** CBSE has integrated AI in the school curriculum to ensure that students passing out have the basic knowledge and skills of data science, machine learning and artificial intelligence.
- 2. AI Programs** –
  - a. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology had launched a “**Responsible AI for Youth**” programme, wherein more than 11,000 students from government schools completed the basic course in AI.
  - b. India has launched **National AI Strategy** and National AI Portal and has also started leveraging AI across various sectors.

**Way forward-**

The RAISE 2020 summit has brought together global experts to create a roadmap for responsible AI an action plan that can help create replicable models with a strong foundation of ethics built-in.

**17. Ensemble forecast**

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

**Gs3:** Disaster Management

**Context:** India needs to shift to ensemble weather and flood forecast model to achieve better accuracy in flood forecasting.

**What is the significance of using Ensemble forecast?**

Deterministic forecast model	Ensemble forecast
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deterministic forecast model merely indicates “Rising” or “Falling” above a water level at a river point.</li><li>• In this model, there is no idea of the area of inundation, its depth, and when the accuracy of the forecast decreases at 24 hours and beyond</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It gives probability-based estimation as to different scenarios of water levels and regions of inundation.</li><li>• For example, it can indicate the probability like, the chances of the water level exceeding the danger level is 80%, with likely inundation of a village nearby at 20%.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It provides a lead time of just 24 hours</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It provides a lead time of 7-10 days ahead.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Since the end users (district administration, municipalities and disaster management authorities) receive such forecasts with very less “Lead time” and have to act quickly, flood forecast becomes less accurate.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It helps local administrations with better decision-making and helps them to get prepared better in advance.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• India has recently shifted towards - Deterministic forecast model</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The United States, the European Union and Japan have shifted towards Ensemble flood forecasting along with “Inundation modelling”.</li></ul>

**What are the shortcomings with India’s flood forecasting?**

**Multiple agencies:**

**Lead Time**

- The time gap from issuance of the forecast and occurrence of a flood event is termed as “lead time”.
- It is the most crucial aspect of any flood forecast to enable risk-based decision-making and undertake cost-effective rescue missions by end user agencies.

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issues meteorological or weather forecasts while the Central Water Commission (CWC) issues flood forecasts at various river points.
- Therefore, the advancement of flood forecasting depends on how quickly rainfall is estimated and forecast by the IMD and how quickly the CWC integrates the rainfall forecast with flood forecast.
- It also is linked to how fast the CWC disseminates this data to end user agencies.
- This complicated arrangement reduces the “Lead time”.

**Obsolete methods:**

- Most flood forecasts at several river points across India are based on outdated statistical methods that enable a lead time of less than 24 hours.
- It renders the India’s flood forecast driven by Google’s most advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques ineffective.



**Not uniform across India:**

- A recent study shows that, India has only recently moved to use hydrological or simply rainfall-runoff models not all, but in specific river basins.

**Impact:**

- Therefore, outdated technologies and a lack of technological parity between multiple agencies and their poor water governance decrease crucial lead time.
- Forecasting errors increase and the burden of interpretation shifts to incompetent end user agencies. The outcome is an increase in flood risk and disaster.

**What is the way forward?**

- The IMD has already started testing and using ensemble models for weather forecast through its supercomputers (“Pratyush” and “Mihir”).
- Yet, the forecasting agency has to adapt with advanced technology and need to achieve technological parity with the IMD in order to couple ensemble forecasts to its hydrological models.
- The IMD has to modernise the telemetry infrastructure along with raising technological compatibility with river basin-specific hydrological, hydrodynamic and inundation modelling.
- It also needs to train its technical workforce to get well versed with ensemble models and capable of coupling the same with flood forecast models.
- It is only then that India can look forward to probabilistic-based flood forecasts with a lead time of more than seven to 10 days that will place India on par with the developed world.

**18. India’s monetary framework and COVID-19**

**Source - Live Mint, The Indian Express**

**Syllabus- GS 3 - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.**

**Context-** Higher-than-anticipated inflation prints in recent months have compelled the six-member monetary policy committee (MPC) to hold policy rates.

**What causes inflation?**

The primary cause of inflation is the mismatch between demand and supply. The mismatch can be in following context-

1. **Excess money supply that raises aggregate demand.**
2. **Supply deficiency-** A shortfall in the production of a commodity fails to meet even the basic needs of the citizens and thus prices rise causing inflation.

**What is the new monetary framework?**

The agreement between the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the central government signed in February 2015. The agreement explicitly made inflation targeting the objective of the MPC while using the repo rate as the instrument for it.

- **Rate steady-** The Reserve Bank’s MPC was given the target of keeping inflation at 4% with a tolerance limit of 2%. This meant that inflation should be between 2% and 6%.
- **Contrasting target -** The target was in contrast with the multiple indicator approach that predated this framework where the central bank focused on both growth and price stability.

**What are the impacts of Pandemic on the inflation front?**

1. **Higher rate**- Consumer prices have been rising at a higher rate than the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) 2-6% tolerance band since April this year, and are likely to rise further in September.
2. **Retail inflation**- The prolonged pandemic is likely to have disrupted many smaller companies that produce and sell essential items for which demand is typically steady.
3. **Low investment growth** - Investment growth is likely to be impacted more severely than consumption growth, even after the recovery starts gaining traction due to risk aversion, weak profitability and a tendency to preserve cash given the uncertain outlook.

**How India can manage to keep inflation low**

1. **Structural reform**- The current framework has led to an excessive and obsessive emphasis on point CPI estimates, at the cost of ignoring other indicators. This should be taken into consideration, while reviewing the existing monetary policy framework.
  - The success of the inflation-targeting framework should not only be judged by the actual CPI inflation trend, but also in terms of the convergence achieved between actual CPI inflation and inflation expectations.
2. **Pause on policy rates**- RBI should hold policy rates as it will allow the steps taken so far to work their way through the economy and it would bolster its inflation-fighting credentials, which is particularly important for the first meeting of a revamped MPC.

**Way forward-**

With a large drop-off in tax revenue caused by the pandemic, a high fiscal deficit and rising public debt, the authorities should double down on their inflation targeting objective. RBI needs to remain active with a host of unconventional measures, which will likely include more proactive bond purchases to ensure that market interest rates do not rise significantly due to fiscal and market borrowing-related concerns.

**19. Manufacturing in India - PLI scheme**

**Source:** [The Live Mint](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Economy

**Context:** India can be the world's great back-up manufacturing factory.

**How can India become back up factory?**

- **Production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme:** It is designed to facilitate the country's emergence as a global manufacturing hub for mobile phones and electronic components.
- 11 global handset and input makers including Foxconn and Samsung are reported to have qualified for special **incentives spanning five years**, along with five domestic units, including the makers of Lava and Micromax devices.
- The government expects the initiative to result in **output worth ₹10.5 trillion over half a decade**, about 60% of it from exports.
- **Apple Inc's is keen on expanding supply** network operations here and except for Korea's Samsung, all the foreign firms on the PLI list work for the California-based company as contract manufacturers.
- **India could present itself up as a factory** to the world for some of its most fancied products as high-end **electric car sensation Tesla** is also seen to be on its way in the country.

**Why could china face a possible potential isolation?**

- **“China plus” strategy for global value chains:** After the risks of their Chinese dependence began to rise, strategy to diversify sources of supply has gained appeal among transnational corporations.
- **Trump’s trade war with China:** Efforts to isolate china have been intensified by worries of a **“bamboo curtain”** like the iron version of the Cold War era which foreseeably split the world apart into western and eastern blocs.
- A recent survey of over 200 US firms operating in the People’s Republic revealed that only about **4% were shifting some production back to the US.**
- China remains an attractively cheap place to make stuff; it also offers a huge domestic market that might take us rather long to match.

**What is the way forward?**

- **Easy for all to do business:** Cherry-picked businesses should not be given privileges at the cost of people at large, for example, as Beijing has long done.
- **Wage bill flexibility** is crucial for any large-scale export venture but there are plenty of other compliance requirements that need to be carved down.
- **Land acquisition policy needs clarity:** state-earmarked posts are all we have on offer. However, Investors need greater choice.
- **Skill and infrastructure gaps must be filled** and an assurance of policy stability will also help in doing so.
- Our import duties have seen too much change of late, for example, while every link in a global value chain which must operate across borders must **be allowed reliable cost projections.**
- Taxation could do with a repair to simplify a heap of taxes.

**20. Redesign policy for private investment**

**Source- The Indian Express**

**Syllabus - GS 3-** Investment models.

**Context-** Partnerships with various stakeholders in the private sector is required for sustainable infrastructure creation in India

**What is PPP investment model?**

Public Private Partnership is a cooperative arrangement between public and private sectors. The PPP model displays three essential characteristics:

- Long term contractual arrangement.
- A significant level of responsibility and risk that is transferred from public to private sector.
- Contractual arrangements are built around performance based outcomes.

**What are the challenges on ramping up private investments in infrastructure?**

- **Policy reforms-** Refreshing institutions and policies for channeling financing.
- **Stable ecosystem-** Providing a stable, durable, and empowering ecosystem for private players to partner with government entities in the task of infrastructure-creation.

**What are the recommendations of Vijay Kelkar Committee on Revisiting and Revitalizing PPP Model?**

Vijay Kelkar Committee Finance Minister in the Union Budget 2015-16 announced that the PPP mode of infrastructure development has to be revisited and revitalized. Committee had put out a timely, practical, and balanced report on overhauling the PPP ecosystem.

**Key recommendations of the committee-**

1. Contracts need to focus more on service delivery instead of fiscal benefits.
2. Better identification and allocation of risks between stakeholders.
3. Prudent utilization of viability gap funds where user charges cannot guarantee a robust revenue stream.
4. Improved fiscal reporting practices and careful monitoring of performance.
5. Report also included governance reform, institutional redesign, and capacity-building.

**How government can redesign the PPP model?**

**1. Redesign ecosystem-**

- Overhaul the culture and attitude towards the conjoining of government entities and private partners for creating specific pieces of infrastructure.
- **Plug and play-** There needs to be an approach of give and take, instead of government interlocutors trying to adopt a purely transactional approach without adequate focus on outcomes.
- **Minimizing risk-** Passing on uncertain elements in a project like the land acquisition risk to the private partner.
- **Incentives-** The private partners also need to be incentivized to focus on project outcomes, with guard-rails in place to discourage rent-seeking behaviour.

**2. Regulatory front-**

- **Secure legislation-** Promulgate a PPP legislation which can provide a robust legal ecosystem and procedural comfort to the various actors and stakeholders.
- **Revenue flow assurance-** The key to a successful PPP is to provide stable revenue flow assurances and a settled ecosystem to investors over long periods by means of policy stability, assurances possibly secured by law.
- Government partners in PPP arrangements need to ensure that open-ended arrangements that might entail unforeseeable risk are minimized for the private investor, including aspects such as land availability and community acceptance.

**Way forward-**

In a post COVID era, a focus area for public policy has to be the creation of a modern-day, sustainable and resilient infrastructure. Government needs to design a fresh approach and create a stable policy environment that provides comfort and incentives to private investors.

**21. CRISPR-Cas9: life sciences into new epoch**

**Source-** The Hindu

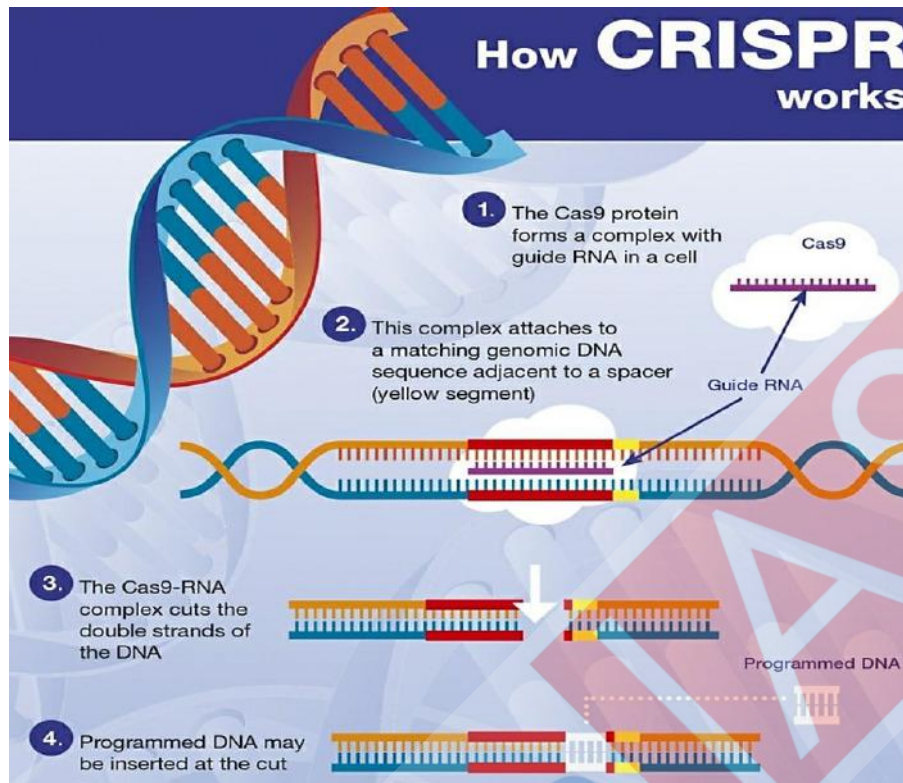
**Syllabus-** **GS 3-** Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

**Context-** The 2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry is awarded to Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer A. Doudna for the development of CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing technology.

**What is CRISPR-Cas9?**

It is a Gene editing technique which is short for “Clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats and CRISPR-associated protein 9”.





- The CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing tool has two components — a short RNA (Ribonucleic acid) sequence that can bind to a specific target of the DNA and the Cas9 enzyme which acts like a molecular scissor to cut the DNA.
- To edit a gene of interest, the short RNA sequence (gRNA) that perfectly matches with the DNA sequence that has to be edited is introduced.
- Once it binds to the DNA, the Cas9 enzyme cuts the DNA (like scissors) at the targeted location where the RNA sequence is bound. Once the DNA is cut, the natural DNA repair mechanism is utilized to add or remove genetic material or make changes to the DNA.

### What is the role of gene-editing technology?

**In healthcare-** The technology has enabled scientist to edit human DNA in a dish and early stage clinical trial are ben attempted to use the tool to treat a few diseases, including inherited disorders/diseases and some type of cancer.

### In agriculture-

- It is being tried out in agriculture primarily to increase plant yield, quality, disease resistance, herbicide resistance and domestication of wild species.
- The potential to edit genes using this method has been used to create a large number of crop varieties with improves agronomic performance.

### Is it legal to use Gene editing technique?

1. There is a general consensus in the scientific communities that the CRISPR–Cas9 gene-editing technique should not be used clinically in embryos.
2. There is also consensus that gene editing can be potentially used only to prevent serious genetic disorders that have no alternative treatment.
3. In the absence of any clinical trial data as well as consensus to use this tool to prevent HIV infection, performing it on babies as a form of medical intervention is unethical.

**Way forward-**

This CRISPR technology is indeed a path-breaking technology, to alter genes in order to tackle a number of conventional and unconventional problems, especially in the health sector. However, experiments and tests to validate its use must be subjected to appropriate scrutiny by the regulators, and their use must be controlled to prevent commercial misuse.

**22. MPC meeting- shifting focus from containment to revival**

**Source-** The Hindu, Live Mint and Live Mint

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context-** The latest MPC decision came as retail inflation continued to remain at the upper end of RBI's tolerance range and the policy stance accommodative with reviving growth as the primary objective.

**What are the measures taken by RBI to revive the growth?**

- 1. Keep repo rate unchanged-** The newly appointed Monetary Policy Committee members unanimously voted in sync with RBI members to leave the policy repo rate unchanged at 4% and maintain a dovish stance for the rest of the fiscal year, and into the next, along with continued provisioning of ample system liquidity.
- 2. Nudge to bond market-** RBI request to the market to bid responsibly in government bond auctions, the policy has also taken some very strong measures to dispel any doubts regarding RBI's commitment to ensuring lower rates.
  - **SLR HTM limit extended-** Extending the recently announced HTM limit hike to March 2022 that will help give confidence to banks to handle higher market risks from deploying higher liquidity in government bonds.
  - Announcement of OMOs in state development loans (SDLs), which ensures the expanding borrowing programme of states do not lead to a rise in credit spreads.
  - RBI also re-iterated its commitment to ensure smooth functioning of the borrowing programme.
- 3. Liquidity measures-** RBI said the focus of liquidity measures by the RBI will now include the revival of activity in specific sectors that have both backward and forward linkages, and multiplier effects on growth.
  - The new on-tap TLTRO scheme for banks to borrow up to ₹1 trillion from the window and invest in corporate bonds and other debt instruments of certain sectors.
  - Doubling the size of open market operations (OMO) purchases in each auction to ₹20,000 crore to flatten the yield curve further and keep interest rates benign.
- 4. Risk weightages-** The central bank also announced a rationalization of risk weightages assigned by banks for all new home loans sanctioned up to March 31, 2022 to spur job-intensive real estate sector.
- 5. Real time Gross Settlement payment system to go 24/7 from December 2020.**

**What are the projection and positives of the MPC meeting?**

**Positive growth outlook-** RBI underscored while COVID-19 remains a threat, the economy is showing signs of improvement.

- The MPC said the agricultural sector emerged as a bright spot. Its prospects have strengthened on the back of good spatial and temporal progress of the south-west monsoon.

**Inflation projection-** The RBI said inflation will remain elevated in the September print, but ease gradually towards the target over Q3 and Q4.

**Way forward-**

RBI's commitment to keeping its stance 'accommodative' into FY22 is a particularly strong one. Combined with its commitment to provide liquidity and manage bond supply, the policy measures are geared towards ensuring that transmission across markets (money, bonds, bank lending) does not freeze and that monetary policy remains active.

**23. MPC - Improving rate transmission.**

**Source- The Indian Express**

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context-** The newly constituted MPC has focused on improving rate transmission.

**What is the highlight of MPC meeting?**

- Repo rate were kept unchanged at 4%, with a continuation of an accommodative stance.
- It chose to ignore elevated levels of CPI inflation as transitory and has maintained focus on supporting growth.
- It appears that the MPC would maintain a status quo on rates through this fiscal year.

**What are the current challenges of RBI?**

**Balance-of-payments (BoP) surplus-** India's foreign currency reserves have been growing at an unprecedented rapid pace.

**Factors-**

**a. India is getting far more dollars than it needs –**

- Weak domestic economy kept imports weak, even as large fiscal stimuli in the developed world and a rapid output revival in China led to a faster normalization of exports.
- Low energy prices, policies supporting Atmanirbhar Bharat naturally mean lower imports, and the push towards making India a participant in global value chains mean higher exports.

**b. Structural reforms-** There have also been structural shifts in India's economic policy which point to a persistent BoP surplus.

However, RBI can direct this surplus into government bonds, it can maintain its independence and credibility, and at the same time achieve its target of rate transmission.

**What are the announcements made by the RBI to ensuring the rate transmission?**

- With unchanged repo rates, the focus of the liquidity measures announced by the RBI is to further improve transmission of previous rate cuts across a spectrum of market rates and other instruments.
- The RBI Governor assured market participants that the large supply of government bonds in the second half along with a likely pick-up in credit demand, would be accommodated through open market purchases of government bonds.

**Other measures-**

- 1. Extending HTM maturity limits-** The extension of enhanced Held to Maturity (HTM) limit of banks on their government bonds portfolio to March 2022, will also help improve demand for bonds.

- 2. Credit growth-** A new on-tap targeted LTRO window was announced, for banks to borrow up to ₹1,000 billion from the RBI at a floating rate linked to the repo rate, and invest in corporate paper issued by specific sectors and to provide loans to them.
- 3. Containing Inflation-** Higher fuel taxes and import duties are expected to provide an upward push though. Effective supply management will therefore be crucial in controlling food inflation and ensuring that it does not turn persistent and feeds into non-food inflation.
- 4. Risk weightages-** The central bank also announced a rationalization of risk weightages assigned by banks for all new home loans sanctioned up to March 31, 2022 to spur job-intensive real estate sector.

#### Way forward-

Economic challenges may persist for the foreseeable future. The financial system still needs a major overhaul, and the only permanent solution to the large BoP surplus is stronger domestic demand, and is best achieved through a well-designed fiscal stimulus.

#### 24. New market led system V/s MSP

**Source-** The Indian Express

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing

**Context-** The new farm bills offer greater choice to farmers through open market, without demolishing the existing MSP system.

#### What is MSP system and how the new system can improve the agriculture sector?

Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a form of market intervention by the Government of India to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices.

- However, MSP is not a law but administrative decision of the government. The very existence of APMC does not guarantee MSP.
- In a surplus economy, unless we allow a greater role for markets and make agriculture demand-driven, the MSP route can spell financial disaster.
- The MSP system is much more costly and inefficient.

#### Advantages of new market led system-

- The new laws are trying to increase the relative role of markets without dismantling the MSP system.
- The reforms remove all the commodities from the APMC Act and enable the farmers to sell their produce to any private entity, individual buyer, any other state or even the mandis (arhartiyas) as per the earlier model.

#### What are the issues related to MSP and food subsidies?

- 1. Excess storage-** This kind of procurement without sufficient storage has resulted in huge piling of stocks in the warehouse. The stock has now become double the requirement under the schemes of PDS, Buffer stock etc.
- 2. WTO issues** - India's MSP scheme for many crops has been challenged by many countries in the WTO. For example- Australia has complained of the MSP on wheat.
  - Grain stocks with the FCI cannot be exported without a subsidy, which invites WTO's objections.
  - They have been claimed to be highly trade-distorting by its method of calculation. If the current process continues, India will face international



criticism for breaching the percent norm for subsidy on farm production set by the WTO.

3. **Market distortion**- It distorts the free market and favours some particular crops over other crops.
4. **Killing of competition**- Any interference by the government kills the competition. This affects the agents who procure the crops at lower prices and sell them at higher prices and earn profit.

#### **What is the success formula of milk commodity?**

India is the largest producer of milk with 187 million tonnes annually way ahead of the second-ranked US which produces around 100 million tonnes every year. And, the milk sector has been growing at a rate two to three times higher than rice, wheat and sugarcane

- **No government interference**- In the case of milk co-operatives, pricing is done by the company in consultation with milk federations, not by the government.
- **It is more in the nature of a contract price** - Milk and poultry don't have MSP and farmers do not have to go through the mandi system paying high commissions, market fees and cess.

#### **Way forward-**

- The pricing system has its limits in raising farmers' incomes. More sustainable solutions lie in augmenting productivity, diversifying to high-value crops, and shifting people out of agriculture to high productivity jobs elsewhere.
- The new Farmers bill will be a boon for the economy and any loopholes will be addressed by the experts and the policymakers.

#### **25. Reviving consumption and investment**

**Source-** The Hindu, The Indian Express and The Indian Express

**Syllabus-** **GS 3**-Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context-** The government has announced a twin set of measures to boost consumption demand and capital expenditure in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

#### **What are the new proposals announced by Union Finance Minister?**

1. **Consumer spending proposals**- Putting money in the hand of government employees so as to incentivize spending. The consumer spending proposals includes-
  - a) **LTC cash vouchers scheme**- Giving out cash vouchers to central government employees this year in lieu of leave travel concession (LTC) fare which could be spent only on buying non-food GST-rated items.
    - Since travel is difficult to undertake during the pandemic, the government will pay the entitled fare as cash vouchers which have to be spent by March 31, 2021.
    - Government says that LTC voucher scheme will boost the generated demand worth ₹28,000 crore.
    - The tax concessions are available for the State governments and the private sector companies.
    - **Specific Conditions-**
      - This must be spent on items that have 12% GST or more.
      - Can only spend them in digital mode only, no cash payments.
      - And, have to buy only from GST-registered sellers so a GST invoice would be required on the basis of which they will be reimbursed. This spending has to be completed by March 31, 2021.

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

- Three times the amount equivalent to the return air/rail fare would have to be spent to qualify for this.
- b) Special festival advance scheme-** Central government employees and officers will get an interest free festival advance of Rs.10000. The repayment of this advance will have to be made in 10 installments by the employee.
- This ₹10,000 advance will come as a pre-paid RuPay card, which can be availed and spent by March 31, 2021.
  - The government expects to disburse ₹4000 crore under this advance scheme. If given by state governments, another ₹8000 crore is likely to be disbursed.
  - Additional consumer demand generated will be ₹8000 crore.
- 2. Capital expenditure-** The second set of announcements that aim to spur capital spending include a 50-year interest free loan of Rs 12,000 crore to states, and the enhancement of central government capital expenditure by Rs 25,000 crore.
- **For the 50-year interest-free loans to boost Capex, states have been categorized into three groups:**
  - a. Group 1** -Which includes the Northeastern states (Rs 1,600 crore) and Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh (Rs 900 crore).
  - b. Group 2** -This has other states which will get Rs 7,500 crore in proportion to their share as per the Finance Commission devolution.
  - c. Group 3** - Having states which will get a total Rs 2,000 crore if they meet three out of four reforms, including One Nation One Ration, outlined in the government's Atma-Nirbhar package.
  - This can be used for new or ongoing projects and even to pay existing dues.
  - Increasing capital expenditure by both Central and state government.

### What are the critic's views on this stimulus package?

- 1. Denting travel industries-** Most employees have not been able to travel after the start of pandemic, the shifting of the LTC benefit is expected to generate demand elsewhere, although it may negatively impact the travel and tourism industry.
- 2. Lesser impact-** the amount of demand stimulus is underwhelming, and the impact on both fiscal and growth going to be quite limited.

### Way forward-

- These announcements should be the first steps of a broader, more ambitious fiscal package, which addresses the needs of stressed segments of the economy.
- The timing of these announcements is just right, as we are entering the festival season, and this should help improve consumer sentiment and demand in the economy.

## 26. Gene Editing

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

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Science & Technology

**Context:** India requires guidelines for gene-editing research as the development of a method for genome editing CRISPR-Cas9 came into the limelight.

### What is the controversy surrounding the Nobel Prize to CRISPR-Cas 9 technology?

- **The two scientists, who were awarded the Nobel Prize founded the use of CRISPR** (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) – Cas9 (CRISPR-associated protein 9) system as a gene editing tool.
- 8 years since its discovery, the method has already made a **significant impact in biology, medicine, and agriculture.**

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

- **The exclusion of Siksnyis from this year's Nobel** is in the limelight especially when the Nobel Prize can be given to three individuals.
  - Discovery on the use of CRISPR as a gene-editing tool was by a Lithuanian biochemist, Virginijus Šikšnys, in 2012 and he showed that Cas9 could cut purified DNA in a test tube.
- **The Nobel committee recognised Charpentier and Doudna** as the sole discoverers for proving the ability of CRISPR-Cas9 to function as a gene-editing tool.
  - Siksnyis along with Charpentier and Doudna shared another coveted award, the Kavli Prize for Nanoscience, in 2018.
- Other notable early contributors to the field that many believe deserve mention are **Feng Zhang of Broad Institute of MIT-Harvard and George Church of Harvard.**
- **Dana Carroll, who developed the system of Zinc-finger nucleases** in which CRISPR can slice DNA at specific sites, is another notable exclusion from this year's chemistry prize

### What are some of the other developments with regard to gene editing?

- In India, there is a long way to go before **realising the utility of gene editing for therapeutic applications.** However, we cannot be satisfied and wait for a rogue individual or unit to try it out on humans.
- He Jiankui edited genes in human embryos using the CRISPR-Cas9 system that were subsequently implanted and resulted in **the birth of twin girls which left the world alarmed in 2018.**
  - Chinese scientists claimed this was **apparently to prevent them from contracting HIV**, and the incident was known as the case of the first gene-edited babies of the world.
- **The World Health Organization** formed a panel of gene-editing experts which said "a central registry of all human genome editing research was needed in order to create an open and transparent database of ongoing work".

### What are the laws available in India?

- **"Rules for the Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells, 1989"** notified under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, regulate genetically modified organisms.
- **Environment protection act and the National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical and Health Research** involving human participants, 2017, by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), along with Biomedical and Health Research Regulation Bill involves regulation of the gene-editing process.

### Way forward

- The recognition that Charpentier and Doudna's work has received will encourage women to take up science as a career, in spite of the hard struggle to balance family life and a difficult life in a scientific career.
- It is time that India came up with a specific law to ban germline editing and put out guidelines for conducting gene-editing research giving rise to modified organisms.

## 27. Air pollution and Delhi

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

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Environment

**Context:** The capital launched an anti-pollution campaign in an attempt to curb air pollution levels ahead of winters by controlling emissions, reducing private vehicles and increasing electric vehicles.

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

**ForumIAS**

**What is anti-pollution campaign? How are the pollution levels of Delhi?**

- **The anti-pollution campaign** is focused on cutting the deadly smoke from thermal plants and brick kilns in the National Capital Region as well as on chemical treatment of stubble burning from nearby States.
- **Pollutant concentration:** Particulate matter, PM2.5 and PM10, exceed national standards and the more strict World Health Organization limits. Delhi's toxic air also contains high doses of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide along with the lack of wind.
- **Delhi needs a 65% reduction** to meet the national standards for PM2.5. Vehicles, including trucks and two-wheelers, contribute 20%-40% of the PM2.5 concentrations.

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

- **Enforcement of emission controls:** There should be a willingness to impose tougher penalties as emission testing of vehicles under Delhi's Pollution under Control Policy was only 25%.
  - Two-wheelers and three-wheelers were as important as cars and lorries in Beijing's experience.
  - Bangkok ramped up inspection and maintenance to cut emissions.
  - The first order of business is to implement the national standards.
- **Strengthening public transport:** The Supreme Court's ruling to increase Delhi's bus fleet and align it with the Metro network must be carried out as reducing private vehicles on the road would help.
  - The system should reduce exemptions, allow a longer implementation period, and complement it with other measures such as 'odd-even' number plate policy.
- **Electric vehicles (EVs):** Subsidies and investment will be needed to ensure that EVs are used to a meaningful scale, without fossil fuels for charging them.
  - The Delhi government's three-year policy aims to make EVs account for a quarter of the new vehicles registered in the capital by 2024.
  - EVs will gain from purchase incentives, scrappage benefits on older vehicles, loans at favourable interest and a contract of road taxes.
- **Citizen participation and the media** are vital for sharing the message on pollution and health, using data such as those from the Central Pollution Control Board.
  - Delhi's own actions will not work if the pollution from neighbouring States is not addressed, and so the issue of stubble burning and industrial pollution also needs to be dealt with.

**Way forward**

Technical solutions need to be underpinned by coordination and transparency across Central, State, and local governments. It is a matter of prioritising people's health and a brighter future. Once the pandemic is over, Delhi must not stumble into yet another public health emergency and so prior action is required.

**28. Issues plaguing the banking sector**

**Source-** The Indian Express

**Syllabus-** **GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context** - There is complacency in policy circles surrounding the political and economic prospects of India when it comes to the public sector banking system in India.



**What is the current condition of financial infrastructure of India?**

Two recently published books reveal the sustained hollowing out of the financial architecture in India-

- **Quest for Restoring Financial Stability in India**- by former deputy governor of the RBI, Viral Acharya.
- **Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver**- by former governor of the RBI, Urjit Patel.

**There are some problems with the existing architecture.**

- 1. The state ownership of banks**- The government is the dominant owner of public sector banks in India, which account for 63 per cent of deposits of the banking system.
  - a. Prudential regulatory norms required for financial stability, if applied as they ought to be, will lead to a huge need for the government to recapitalize the banks; this would put a stress on the fiscal deficit. Hence, there is **pressure from the government for regulatory forbearance**, as the prudential norms are ownership neutral.
  - b. **Problem of moral hazard**: Governments have used them as tools for macroeconomic management. This kind of state interface with the business of financial intermediation naturally induces extreme levels of moral hazard in the behavior of both debtors and creditors.
  - c. PSBs are not incentivized to exercise due diligence since they expect regulatory forbearance and recapitalization in the event of rising NPAs on their books.
- 2. Fiscal dominance in India**- Fiscal dominance provides the basis for a “theory of everything” that impacts financial stability in the domain of the central bank. This includes banking regulation, debt management and timely disclosures of defaults, market regulation, capital flow measures and RBI profit transfer.
- 3. Dependent Bureaucrats**- The widespread perception that market regulators work under close government direction. The career progress of these individuals is typically based on their ability to implement political instructions. Hence, their very appointment destroys perceptions of competence and independence of the regulator.
- 4. The chronically high fiscal deficits run by the consolidated public sector.**

**What are the possible solutions?**

Dealing with this will require, at a minimum, three reforms.

- 1. There has to be a wholehearted attempt at privatization of PSBs**- In the last decade, the share of PSBs in overall lending has dropped sharply from 75.1% to 57.5% at present. As PSBs keep losing share, they will cause fewer headaches for the government and the central bank in the decades to come.
- 2. The RBI needs to be relieved of its public debt management role.**
- 3. The RBI has to be empowered to act independently of the government**- It is untenable for government-owned banks to be regulated by an agency that is itself reporting to the government.

**Way forward-**

- Government needs to stop the practice of appointing favoured bureaucrats as heads of regulatory institutions.
- There is a need to pay attention to the package of measures recommended to deal with the NPA problem while dealing with the Covid-induced scenario.

## 29. Small stimulus package

**Source-** The Hindu

**Syllabus-** GS 3-Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context-** Union Finance Minister recently announced two sets of measures to generate consumption demand and boost capital spending in the economy.

### What are the new measures announced to step up Capex by the Centre and the States?

- 1. Leave Travel Concession (LTC) Cash Voucher Scheme:** The Government has decided to give cash payment to employees in lieu of one LTC during 2018-21. Full payment on Leave encashment and tax-free payment of LTC fare depending on class of entitlement will be given.
- 2. Special Festival Advance Scheme:** All central govt. employees can now get interest-free advance of Rs. 10,000, in the form of a prepaid RuPay Card, to be spent by March 31, 2021. It was meant for non-gazetted government employees. It is being revived as a one-time measure for gazetted employees too.
- 3. Capital Expenditure Boost for States:** A special interest-free 50-year loan to states is being issued. For ₹ 12,000 crore capital expenditure which is to be spent by March 31, 2021: (1) ₹ 200 crore each for 8 North East states; (2) ₹ 450 crore each for Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh; (3) ₹ 7,500 crore for remaining states, as per share of Finance Commission's devolution.
- 4. Other measure-** An additional budget of Rs 25,000 crore for Capex on roads, defence infrastructure, water supply, urban development, and domestically produced capital equipment. This is expected to come through re-allocation of resources

### What are the concerns related to these new measures?

- 1. Too many restriction-** Provisions like buying goods and services worth three times the fare, only in goods attracting GST of 12% or more through digital mode before 31st March etc. end the freedom of the consumer in decision making.
  - Eligible employees may find the scheme complex and too expensive to avail.
- 2. Smaller size-** Capex amounts are too small to have any meaningful impact on economic growth.
  - With the previous rounds of budgetary fiscal support of around 1% of GDP, current measures take total fiscal support to about 1.7% of GDP, which is small compared with the size of the growth hit and reflects India's weak fiscal starting position.
  - ₹2,000 crore has been set aside for States that manage to complete three of four reforms mandated in the earlier Atmanirbhar Bharat package, in order to get additional borrowing leeway. Only some States may qualify for this.
- 3. Limited Impact:** As the measures are aimed at encouraging spending for government employees rather than private/vulnerable section (where job losses/income losses have been significant), the overall impact will be limited.
- 4. COVID-19 impact-** The pandemic restrictions have affected the ability to get new projects, just about ₹1.34-lakh crore of the budgeted Capex had been spent. The same problem will impact the new capital expenditure scheme.
- 5. Negative impact on Tourism industry-** LTC Voucher Scheme may impact the travel and tourism industry negatively if consumers choose to spend through the scheme. Demand in travel and tourism has already fallen significantly after the Covid-19 induced lockdowns and closed borders.

#### Way Forward-

- The focus of these packages should not just be on conjuring a trickle-down stimulus from those with their jobs and savings intact but also on relief measures for those without.
- These announcements should be the first steps of a broader, more ambitious fiscal package, which addresses the needs of stressed segments of the economy.

### 30. The Domestic Market Economy Mirage

**Source:** Indian Express

**Syllabus:** Gs3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

**Context:** The debate in India has focused on domestic-demand led growth but the rapid and sustained economic growth requires export dynamism.

#### What is India's Past experience with growth models?

- Pre-1991, a 3.5 per cent growth rate was associated with export growth of about 4.5 per cent.
- India's GDP growth of over 6 per cent after 1991 was associated with real export growth of about 11 per cent.
- There is no known model of domestic demand/consumption-led growth that has delivered quick, sustained, and high (say 6 plus) rates of economic growth for developing countries.

#### What is needed to rely on domestic demand led growth?

- Policies needed to increase more public spending.
- Tax cuts to boost private consumption and private investment.
- Reforms in financial sector to boost private investment.

#### What are the challenges with domestic demand led growth?

- **Limited fiscal space:** The fiscal space for spending will be severely limited both because of high levels of deficits and indebtedness.
- **Slow growth:** Only growth can rehabilitate balance sheets but stressing balance sheets further cannot realistically revive growth.
- **Fall in consumption:** Consumption growth will be limited by the fact that household debt has grown rapidly in the last few years. Consumption now can grow only if incomes grow.
- **Rise in debt:** Post-COVID, India's debt is expected to rise from about 70 per cent of GDP to about 85-90 per cent and deficits are likely to be in the double-digit range.
- **Persistent inflation:** India's interest rates are not at zero and are unlikely to be so because of persistent inflation.
- **high cost of borrowing:** India's borrowing is still considered risky and the favourable interest rate-growth differential that supports expansionary policy in the advanced countries is absent in India.
- **Poor condition of financial sector:** Given the limited progress in fixing the financial system, prospects for investment remain weak.
- **Small market:** India's market is too small to sustain any kind of serious import substitution strategy.

#### What is the Way forward?

- **Take advantage of unskilled labours:** In China's wages are rising as it has become richer, it has vacated about \$140 billion in exports in unskilled-labour intensive sectors, including apparel, clothing, leather and footwear.

- **Attract investments:** investors moving away from China as they seek to hedge against supply chain disruptions because of trade actions against China.
- **Openness: China and Vietnam** at the time of their export boom in textiles and clothing suggests that exports were highly dependent on imports (between 40 and 45 per cent). In contrast, India's import share is about 16 per cent. Achieving Chinese and Vietnamese levels of success will therefore require greater imports and openness.
- **Eliminate unnecessary tariffs:** for instance, long-standing tariff on man-made yarn because man-made fibre-based exports (not cotton-based apparel) are the most dynamic segment of world exports.
- **Enhance competitiveness globally:** If domestic producers are competitive internationally, they will be competitive domestically and domestic consumers and firms will also benefit.

### 31. PLI - analysis and global value chain

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Economy

**Context:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) said it had approved 16 firms in the mobile manufacturing sector for the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to transform India into a major mobile manufacturing hub.

**What is PMP?**

- **The PMP (phased manufacturing programme)** was implemented with an aim to improve value addition in the country and PLI comes on the back of it.
- **The PMP incentivised the manufacture of low value accessories** initially, and then moved on to the manufacture of higher value components.

**What is the status of imports in India?**

- **Analysis of factory-level production data from the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI)** shows that value addition for surveyed firms ranged from 1.6% to 17.4%, with most of the firms being below 10%. More than 85% of the inputs were imported for the majority of the surveyed firms in 2017-18.
- **UN data for India, China, Vietnam, Korea and Singapore** (2017-2019), show that except for India, all countries exported more mobile phone parts than imports.
- India's imports of mobile phone parts were 25 times the exports in 2019.
- **The PMP policy increased the value of domestic production** while improvement in local value addition remains a work-in-progress.

**Why should we focus on value of production?**

- The new PLI policy offers an incentive subject to brinks of incremental investment and sales of manufactured goods; these **thresholds vary for foreign and domestic mobile firms**.
- **Focus remains on increasing value of domestic production, and not local value addition.** If implemented, an additional capacity of 60 crore mobile phones per year may be onstream at the end of the PLI.

**Why the shift from China is unlikely?**

- India produced around 29 crore units of mobile phones for the year 2018-19; **94% of these were sold in the domestic market and the rest was exported.** This means that much of the production and sales under the PLI policy will have to be for the export market.



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

- **A study by Ernst & Young for the India Cellular & Electronics Association** showed that if the cost of production of a mobile phone is say 100 then the effective cost of manufacturing mobile phone in China is 79.55, Vietnam is 89.05, and India is(including PLI), 92.51.
- It may be **early to expect a major chunk of mobile manufacturing to shift from China to India** as incentives under the PLI policy may not turn out to be a game-changing move.
- **The PLI policy does not strengthen our current export competitiveness** in mobile phones; and markets with higher average selling price have lower volumes.

### Why is it difficult for domestic firms?

- **Domestic firms have been nearly wiped out from the Indian market** and thus their ability to take advantage of the PLI policy and grab a large domestic market share seems difficult.
- Domestic firms **may have the route of exporting cheaper mobile phones to other low-income countries** but their performance has not been promising.
- For example, among the chosen domestic firms, Lava International reported exports of ₹324 crore in 2018, while Optimus Electronics exported ₹83 crore in 2018 and ₹4 lakh in 2019.

### Why is supply chain colocation important?

- The six component firms that have been given approval under the **'specified electronic components segment'** do not complete the mobile manufacturing ecosystem.
- For example, literature shows that when Samsung set up shop in Vietnam, it relied heavily on its Korean suppliers which co-located with it to produce in-between inputs, so much so that 63 among Samsung's 67 suppliers then were foreign.
- Even though Samsung is invested hugely in India, it has not co-located its supply chain in the country.

### Way forward

- Foreign firms chosen under the PLI policy should be encouraged to co-locate their supply ecosystems in the country as the assemblers and component manufacturers move together.

## 32. Domestic Innovation and Manufacturing of vaccines

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS -3- Science & Technology/ Innovation

**Context:** Long-term partnerships and increased R&D investments are required as they determine scientific tools which will help during health emergencies.

### How will we overcome the pandemic or any other health emergency?

- **Collaboration at a global level** is going to be the foundation of a strategy that can potentially end this pandemic. Scientists, experts and countries must work together to come up with unique and innovative solutions to help end this crisis.
- Scientists worldwide are now **working together to develop a potential vaccine against COVID-19** and globally; 42 vaccines are in various phases of clinical trials already.
- **In India, there are over three vaccine candidates** at advanced stages of development:

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

- The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine or ChAdOx1 is in Phase 3 human trial which is supported by the Serum Institute of India.
- Indigenous vaccines like COVAXIN (developed by Bharat Biotech and ICMR) and ZyCoV-D (developed by Zydus Cadila) are in Phase 2/3 trials.
- **India is one of the largest manufacturers of vaccines in the world** in terms of volume. Also, vaccines developed in India are much more affordable than the other vaccines in the market.
  - For instance, the indigenous rotavirus vaccines developed by India cost less than a dollar.
- **Affordable prices** ensure that more people around the globe have access to these life-saving tools. Approximately 70 per cent of vaccines for low and middle income countries are manufactured in India and delivered through partnerships with UNICEF and Gavi.
- **Partnerships;** such as the Grand Challenges India are also playing a crucial role in quickening research, developing new tools, and driving continued progress in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - **Partnerships earlier have led to innovations like the Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN)**, which is an indigenously developed technology and was developed in partnership with UNDP. It has revolutionised vaccine distribution and supply.

### Way forward

- It took several failures and multiple near-perfect solutions to finally build these innovations and practices that could ease the whole country's vaccine distribution process. The same principle can be applied to vaccines.
- Long-term partnerships and increased R&D investments are required as they determine scientific tools which will help during health emergencies.

### 33. Bangladesh's per capita income greater than India's

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

**Syllabus:** Gs3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

**Context:** For the year 2020, the per capita income of an average Bangladeshi citizen would be more than the per capita income of an average Indian citizen. The same phenomenon happened in 1991 as well, when growth rate of India was lower than Bangladesh for some time.

#### Why India's per capita income has fallen below Bangladesh this year?

- **Contracted Growth:** India's economy is over 10 times the size of Bangladesh and India's growth surpassed Bangladesh during 2004 to 2016. However, since 2017 India's growth rate has decelerated while Bangladesh's growth rate increased.
- **Increase in population growth:** Per capita income is calculated by dividing the total GDP by the total population. Compared to Bangladesh, between 2004-2019 India's population growth was high. As mentioned above India GDP growth has been low compared to Bangladesh since 2017.
- **Covid 19 impact:** With India's GDP set to reduce by 10%, India is one of the worst affected economies whereas Bangladesh GDP expected to grow by 4%.

#### How has Bangladesh managed to grow so fast?

- Moving away from Pakistan gave the country a chance to plan its own economic and political identity.

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

- Flexible Labour laws and higher female participation in the labour force leading to stellar export performance in garments and apparel industry.
- Structure of Bangladesh's economy is led by the industrial sector, followed by the services sector. With manufacturing sector being more labour intensive creates opportunities for more jobs and are more remunerative than agriculture.
- Whereas India, on the other hand, has struggled to boost its industrial sector and has many people still dependent on agriculture.
- Improvement on social and political metrics such as health, sanitation, financial inclusion, and women's political representation.
- In the latest gender parity rankings, Bangladesh is in the top 50 Out of 154 countries, while India is at 112.
- The gender parity rankings measures differences in the political and economic opportunities as well as the educational attainment and health of men and women.
- Bangladesh has also performed better in Global Hunger Index. GHI focuses on four factors: Undernourishment, Child Wasting, Child Stunting and Child Mortality.

However, level of poverty and illiteracy is still high in Bangladesh, compared to India, resulting into low HDI rank for it. Corruption, Political conflicts and radicalisation are also threatening stability in the Bangladesh.

To boost growth, India should reverse its protectionism measures — lower tariffs, embrace free trade agreements, and seek greater integration with global supply chains.

### 34. MSME Udyam Process

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

**Syllabus:** GS-3: Inclusive Growth and issues arising from it.

**Context:** Udyam initiative is promising in terms of capturing reliable and verified information about MSMEs but it can impact some MSME's from accessing formal finance

#### Why the information available on MSME's are not adequate?

- Reliable and updated information regarding small businesses in India is absent.
- Also, a dedicated census for MSME sector was not conducted in last 13 years.
- Now, basic information available on MSME units is scattered across various databases such as the UAM, MSME Databank, and GSTN.
- UAM, MSME Databank contain self-certified, voluntary information provided by a fraction of MSMEs
- Whereas the GSTN has information's of businesses with a turnover of more than Rs 40 lakh, need be registered on it

#### What is Udyog Aadhaar Memorandum?

- An online filing system for MSMEs notified by the government in 2015.
- The registration process is free, paperless and awarded instant registration.
- It was based on the self-declaration and self-certification of basic information regarding the enterprise's existence and functioning.
- In 2016, the government notified rules under which MSMEs had to furnish information relating to their enterprises, online, in an MSME databank.

#### Why Udyam registration process?

- Compared to UAM, the Udyam registration stress on importance of generating a verified database of MSME units.
- Under the Udyam registration process, Aadhaar is made mandatory for proprietors

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

- Irrespective of the number of manufacturing and service activities provided, every enterprise can have only one Udyam Registration Number,
- The Income Tax department database and the GSTN is used to verify the self-declared information regarding investment and turnover.
- The government has integrated the Udyam system with the Trade Receivables Electronic Discounting System (TReDS) and the Government e-Marketplace (GeM), In an attempt to nudge more enterprises.
- This will significantly benefit MSMEs by offering a free and automatic route to onboard bill discounting mechanisms and the government's online procurement system.

### How Udyam process can affect MSME's Financial inclusion?

- RBI has clarified that all lenders may now obtain the Udyam Registration Certificate from entrepreneurs.
- It is clear that, in future financial institutions can make the Udyam registration mandatory for lending purposes.
- Whereas most of the MSME has characteristic features of household enterprises and operate with less than five workers.
- Most of these firms are not formally registered as being invisible benefits these firms from paying income tax or getting registered under the GST, Also the cost of formalisation and compliance are high.
- With Udyam registration being the only valid proof for an entity to be recognised as an MSME as per the revised definition invisible MSME's will lack legal backing to source finance from the financial institutions

### What is the way forward?

- In 2018, the International Finance Corporation estimated that the finance from formal sources met only one-third of the credit demand of the MSME sector.
- Due to their inability to meet documentation protocols, inadequate collateral, disorganised book-keeping etc. these businesses prefer relying on informal sources for financing.
- So, the government and RBI should consider to exempt registration of units with investment and turnover in the lower end. Such that institutional lending initiatives continue to remain accessible for all businesses, formal and informal.

## 35. Hyderabad urban flooding

**Source-** The Hindu

**Syllabus-** **GS 3-** Disaster and disaster management.

**Context-** Ineffective and unplanned hydro-geology of cities and town of India are more responsible for floods than monsoon.

### What is urban flooding?

- Urban flooding is the inundation of land or property in a built environment, particularly in more densely populated areas, caused by rainfall overwhelming the capacity of drainage systems, such as storm sewers.
- Urban flooding is significantly different from rural flooding- urbanization increases flood risk by up to 3 times, increased peak flow results in flooding very quickly. Further, it affects large number of people due to high population density in urban areas.



**Mention the causes of recent floods in Hyderabad?**

- 1. Unplanned development-** Unplanned development, encroachments in riparian zones, failure of flood control structures, unplanned reservoir operations, poor drainage infrastructure, deforestation, land use change and sedimentation in river beds are exacerbating floods.
  - **Urban flooding-** Wetlands and watersheds play a vital role in absorbing excess rainfall, but regrettably, rapid urbanization in the twin cities has resulted in the loss of a large portion of the wetlands.
  - Indiscriminate encroachment of waterways and wetlands, inadequate capacity of drains and lack of maintenance of the drainage infrastructure.
  - An analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment in 2016 revealed that 3,245 hectares of water bodies were lost in Hyderabad between 1989 and 2001.
- 2. Neglect pre disaster planning-** The extent of the damage and the turmoil show a lack of preparation and disaster mitigation, a problem that plagues most urban centers in the country.
  - **Over flowing of lakes-** The Hussain Sagar Lake in the middle of the city and the breaching of storm water drains.
  - **Waste management-** Every water body has a holding capacity. But, with all the industrial waste and sewage being dumping into the lakes, the waste accumulated and has now affected the holding capacity of the lakes.
  - All the nalas, storm drains, culverts are gone, either land-filled and build over or simply filled with garbage, detritus and forgotten.

**What are the measures needed to mitigate this?**

1. Hyderabad urgently needs to expand and remodel its drainage system.
- 2. Focusing on urban flood management-** Risk mapping of the areas of the city should be done to assess the vulnerability, related to urban floods by using GIS technology.
- 3. Minimize the surface runoff-** Limit, reduce or mitigate for impervious surface throughout the watershed by use of new engineering techniques like pervious pathways, parking lots should be considered and implements wherever possible to minimize the surface runoff.
- 4. Prioritizing Buffers, Flexibility and Adaptability -** This includes reviewing safety criteria of dams and canals, re-building these with higher safety factors, creating new intermediate storages, and introducing dynamic reservoir management.

**Way forward-**

The effects of flooding due to deluges can only be mitigated if urban planners take into account the hydro-geology of cities and ensure that construction, development and land occupation do not take place in a way that reduces the area of wetlands.

**36. Governance of Public sector units**

**Source-** The Hindu Business Line

**Syllabus-** **GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context-** To decentralize decision-making and facilitate more informed investment decisions, the Centre has restructured the board of Steel Authority of India (SAIL).

**How Privatization of SAIL can boost their business?**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the restructuring of the Board of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL).

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

- 1. Decentralization-** This move will facilitate greater decentralization and nimble decision making with the directors-in-charge of plants as direct ACC appointees with their views having weight in the central corporate governance structure.
  - This will also facilitate speedy modernization and expansion programme of SAIL.
  - This decentralization will also ensure there is greater transparency.
- 2. Attract investment-** The government's exit will attract private investment and contribute to the exchequer, enabling higher public investment.

### What is CPSEs?

Central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) are those companies in which the direct holding of the Central Government or other CPSEs is 51% or more.

**Role-** CPSEs have always played a crucial role in executing the socio-economic development agenda of the government as an extension of the government apparatus.

- During recent lockdown period, CPSEs ensured that essential services such as power, fuel and food-grain supply remain uninterrupted.
- They are carrying out capital expenditure works/infrastructure development activities of approximately ₹2 lakh crore in the sectors of petroleum, power, defence, mining, logistics, etc.
- CPSEs not only act as a catalyst for other economic activities but would also provide informal employment during the construction phase.

### What are the arguments in favour of privatization?

- 1. Efficiency-** One of the strongest arguments in favour of privatization aired by its supporters is the dismal performance of the PSEs and, thus, its inefficiency can be removed if these enterprises are privatized.
  - Governments jobs are often taken for granted and have no difference between a performer and a non-performer when considering productivity.
  - Privatization will usher in an improvement in efficiency and as improved performance is concerned with 'profit-oriented' decision-making strategy.
- 2. Lack of political interference-** Indian PSEs are subject to too much governmental and political interference thereby making them operationally inefficient. Private sector is free from such unavoidable interference. They are motivated by political pressures rather than sound economic and business sense.
  - A most important component in enhancing the performance of a PSU is reduced intervention by political powers and preventing misuse of infrastructure by all.

### Way forward-

- Privatization has become a popular measure for solving the organizational problems of governments by reducing the role of the state and encouraging the growth of the private sector enterprises.
- Privatization should be in a unique form in accordance with the priorities of our mixed economy and as well as by considering operational aspects of the PSUs.

### 37. Hyderabad Floods

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** Gs3: Disaster and Disaster Management.

**Context:** Recent Floods in Hyderabad has resulted in the death of over 20 people and a property loss estimated more than ₹6,000 crore.

**More on News:**

**Devastating Floods in the past:**

- **In India:** Chennai (December 2015), Kochi (August 2018), Mumbai July 2005
- **Around the world:** Sydney (December 2018), New York (October 2019), Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans (October 2005)

**What are the reasons for flood disaster in India?**

- **Climate change:** According to climate experts extreme weather events have become the norm. For example, recently floods in Hyderabad is due to record precipitation for most rain in a century. It is not possible for any city or region to absorb this order of precipitation in such a short period.
- **Inadequate Mitigation measure:** Indian cities such as Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, lacks such contingency plans to deal with sudden bursts of rain while cities in the developed world, such as New York, Paris and Copenhagen have contingency plans such as constructing sponges or sinks.
- **Policy failure:** While the Smart City project and the National Infrastructure Pipeline focus on making roads, affordable houses and revamping drainage systems for cities they fail to recognise these as inter-connected objectives.
- **Encroachment of Wetlands:** Floods in Mumbai and Chennai were a result of Construction along river beds, wetlands and drainage pathways. In case of Hyderabad, Musi riverbed was occupied by city bus station whereas in Bengaluru case hundreds of lake beds were converted into high rises. All of these activities impact the ability of natural wetlands to absorb water.
- **Inefficient River flow:** Along with this, the drains and rivers are not cleaned or adequately de-silted before the monsoon.
- **Inefficient urban planning:** Most of the city's urban planning policy, do not cater to the need for underground drainage. For example, Hyderabad's Hi-Tec city

**How India should adapt to it?**

- Need to prioritise waste recycling.
- Municipal and urban infrastructure bodies should cooperate with each other rather than working as two separate entities.
- Above all, the nexus between the politicians, bureaucracy and real estate interests, which leads to violation of zoning laws, needs to be checked.
- Need to hold local bodies accountable for losses arising out of inappropriate location of properties. This can be done by Re-examining the Real Estate (Development and Regulation) Act.
- Greater civic participation as envisaged under the 74th Constitutional Amendment, is a must to improve urban governance

India's cities must have a contingency plan that goes beyond using weather warning technologies to reviewing urban planning and administration.

**38. Nutrient-based subsidy**

**Syllabus: GS-3- Agriculture**

**Context:** Cap on subsidised fertiliser only addresses issue of its diversion, doesn't fix overuse by farmers.

**What is nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) regime for fertilisers?**

- Under the scheme, a fixed amount of subsidy, based on the nutrient content present in them is provided on each grade of subsidized Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizer except Urea.

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

- It was expected that the NBS scheme will control farmers from applying too much urea containing only nitrogen.

### Was the NBS regime successful?

- No, the actual results prove otherwise. Between 2009-10 and 2019-20, urea consumption increased.
- The reason for this is, Since April 2010, the maximum retail price (MRP) of urea has been raised by hardly 11 per cent.
- Whereas the MRPs of other fertilisers that were decontrolled, with the government only giving a per-tonne subsidy based on their nutrient content have gone up from 2.5 to four times during these 10 years.

### What are the steps taken to prevent over use of Urea?

- Compulsory neem-coating of all urea from December 2015.
- Making fertiliser subsidy payment to companies' conditional upon actual sales to farmers being registered on point-of-sale machines with retailers after biometric authentication.
- Along with this, there is an upcoming plan to cap the total number of subsidised fertiliser bags that any person can purchase during an entire cropping season.

### What is the reason for the policy failure?

- **Urea Under-priced:** The basic MRP of urea hasn't been revised at all in its nearly six-and-a-half years. So, less cost leading to more consumption.
- **Failed to bring urea under NBS:** This would have pushed up its MRP thereby encouraging farmers for balanced use of fertilisers.
- **Failed policy approach:** Even, the measures taken to prevent over use of Urea merely address the issue of subsidised fertilisers, especially urea, getting diverted to bulk buyers/traders or even non-agricultural users. It does not address overuse by farmers themselves.

### What is the way forward?

- **Bringing urea under nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) regime.**
- **Increasing the MRP of Urea to Rs 10,000 per tonne** over two years and simultaneously reducing the NBS rates of phosphorus, potash and sulphur.
- In the long run, **NBS should be replaced by a flat per-acre cash subsidy** that could be used to purchase any fertiliser.

## 39. Growth through infrastructure and manufacturing

### Source-Live Mint

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Context-** India needs to create 90 million non-farm jobs by 2030 to avoid economic stagnation.

### What is the importance of these two sectors?

- **Construction-** 24 million non-farm jobs could come from construction alone by 2030, 16 million from real estate and 8 million from infrastructure.
- **Manufacturing-** This sector could generate one-fifth of the incremental annual GDP (about \$750 billion) and close to 11 million new non-farm jobs by 2030.



### How India can trigger construction growth and what are the reforms needed?

To generate its share of employment, the construction sector needs to grow at about 8.5%, nearly double its 4.4% growth rate over financial years 2012-13 to 2018-19. The following steps can trigger this growth-

1. Spend about 8% of GDP on infrastructure annually for the next 10 years.
2. Build 25 million affordable homes over the decade.

#### Reforms required-

##### 1. Real estate reforms-

- India could include generously increasing **incentives for home ownership and creating rental stock.**
- **Tax incentives-** At the central level, substantially raising tax deductions limits on mortgages and rental incomes, as well as introducing tax incentives for investments in rental housing stock could be considered.

**For example-** The US, which offers tax deductible interest of up to \$750,000 on mortgage loans and an effective low-income housing tax credit incentive.

- Rationalizing stamp duties and registration fees, introducing regulatory amendments in rent-control policies, launching digitally-enabled, single-window clearances to reduce time delays in affordable housing construction.
  - Bringing the goods and services tax on modern construction methods in line with in-situ buildings.
- ##### 2. High land-price-to- average-income ratio-
- In terms of per square-meter price to per-capita GDP, it is about 6.0 in Mumbai and 3.8 in Bengaluru versus 0.5 in Bangkok and 0.2 in Beijing. To narrow this gap, India could do two things.
- Release 20 to 25% of underused but buildable public-sector land.
  - Reform zoning regulations in the top 300 cities by population.

#### What are the proposed ways to turbocharge Manufacturing

1. **Structural reforms-** India could introduce targeted, time-bound and conditional incentives to reduce the cost disadvantage that Indian manufacturers face while competing with companies from China and Vietnam, among other countries.
2. **Free trade warehousing zones-** Indian states could also create powerful demonstration effects by establishing port-proximate manufacturing clusters that contain free-trade warehousing zones.
  - They could provide land at lower costs, plug-and-play infrastructure, and common utilities, apart from expedited approvals.
3. **Reduction in costs-** India also needs to consider reducing its factor costs of power and logistics. Both these costs could be reduced 20–25% by enabling franchised and privatized distribution company models, reducing cross-subsidy surcharges, and establishing multi-modal freight ecosystems.

#### Way forward-

- If adequately set up for success, manufacturing and construction could be pivotal in driving India's growth over the next decade.
- The government has to introduce sector-specific policies to raise productivity in manufacturing and real estate sectors.

#### 40. Coal mining reforms

Source- [Live Mint](#)

Syllabus- **GS 3-** Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

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

**Context-** Centre has allowed commercial mining under its Aatmanirbhar Bharat package, with the aim of making India among the biggest exporters of the dry fuel.

### What provisions does coal Ordinance contain?

1. It allows Coal mining by any Company.
  - **Earlier:** Only those in Power, Iron & Steel and Coal washery Business could bid for Mines.
2. It also does away with captive end-use criteria i.e. Coal can be commercially mined and sold to any buyer in an open market.
  - **Earlier:** The Coal mined by a licensee could be used for only specified purpose like for its own Thermal power plant i.e. they could not be sold in Open market like that of Coal India Ltd (Public Sector Enterprise).

### What are the advantages accruing from this changed regulatory regime?

1. **Expands the pool of Potential bidders-** This will lead to better competition during auctions thus fetching better revenues for the government.
  - **Foreign Direct Investment-** The move will promote FDI in the sector.
2. **Fixed royalty-** Previously, the floor price was a fixed royalty of ₹150 per tonne, and bidders contested by bidding upwards of this. This time around, the floor price is fixed at 4% of the annual revenue realized from the coal mine.
  - This change from fixed royalty to variable royalty gives miners protection from fluctuations in prices.
3. **Import Substitution-** The move will boost both production and mining efficiency besides substituting import of coal worth Rs 30,000 crore.

### What are the challenges?

1. **Underwhelming response-** No bids have been received for 15 of the 38 coal blocks that are up for auction, continuing the trend of tepid participation.
  - None of the big foreign miners like BHP, Glencore and Peabody are participating, and domestic companies dominate the list of bidders.
2. **Lower royalty revenue-** Muted demand for coal due to an economic slump means that auction prices may be depressed. States are already complaining about a possible drop in royalty revenue.
3. **Federal Challenges-** In a writ petition to the SC, Jharkhand has said the Centre's decision to commence commercial mining process flouts Schedule-V of the Indian Constitution, which refers to the 'scheduled areas' falling under the state government.
  - The suit argued that depressed demand for coal due to the ongoing economic slowdown would lead to lower prices accruing to the state.
4. **Monopoly-** The Adani Group, which includes its four subsidiaries, accounts for nearly one-sixth of all bids submitted and has bid for 11 of the 23 mines up for auction, if all Adani Group companies secure their respective blocks, a significant number of new mines will be under the ambit of one conglomerate.
5. **Climatic Concerns-** When countries across the world are moving away from fossil fuel resources this step to enhance Coal production is criticized by environmentalists.
6. **Health Concerns-** Coal burning releases Carbon dioxide, particulate matter, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and mercury- thus damaging the health of many people around the region.

7. **Environmental Challenges-** One of the proposed auctions of a mine site is near Maharashtra's Tadoba- Andhari Tiger Reserve. The State government has raised concerns that mining at the site can lead to destruction of wildlife corridors.

**Way forward-**

- Government needs to balance its commitments towards Climate Change and its imperative to push the developmental agenda. Promotion of Clean Coal Technology which is at present Cost prohibitive is the way to move ahead.
- As the new auctions usher in a new regime in India's complex history of coal mining, the full implications on both production and revenues realized will be keenly watched.

**41. Reason for October pollution**

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Environment

**Context:** Delhi's air quality started to dip as the AQI touched very poor for the very first time this October.

**Why does air pollution rise in October each year?**

- Air pollution in Delhi and the whole of the Indo Gangetic Plains is a complex phenomenon that is dependent on a variety of factors. The first and foremost is **the input of pollutants, followed by weather and local conditions.**
- Once monsoon season ends, **the main direction of winds changes to north westerly from easterly winds.**
- According to a **study conducted by scientists at the National Physical Laboratory**, 72 per cent of Delhi's wind in winters comes from the northwest, while the remaining 28 per cent comes from the Indo-Gangetic plains.
- **The dip in temperature is also behind the increased pollution levels.** The inversion height which is the layer beyond which pollutants cannot disperse into the upper layer of the atmosphere is lowered and concentration of pollutants in the air increases.
- **Wind speed dips in winters which are responsible for dispersing pollutants.** AQI dips even more when factors such as farm fires and dust storms are added to the already high base pollution levels in the city.

**What is the role of farm fires?**

- **Stubble burning which is a way to get rid of paddy stubble quickly** and at a low cost, gained widespread acceptance when governments of Punjab and Haryana passed laws delaying the sowing of paddy.
  - The aim of passing this law was to conserve groundwater as the new sowing cycle would coincide with monsoons and less water would be extracted.
  - This left very little time for farmers to harvest paddy, clear fields and sow wheat for the next cycle.
  - The paddy straw and stalks have high silica content and are not used to feed livestock.
- **The alternatives like the happy seeder machine** which helps covering the residue, are seen as unavailable, and money and time consuming by smaller farmers.
- **A 2015 source-apportionment study on Delhi's air pollution conducted by IIT-Kanpur** also states that 17-26% of all particulate matter in Delhi in winters is because of biomass burning.

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

- **The System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR)** has developed a system to calculate the contribution of stubble burning to Delhi's pollution.
- Last year, during peak stubble burning incidents, **its contribution rose to 40%**.

### What are the other big sources of pollution in Delhi?

- **Dust and vehicular pollution are the two biggest causes** of dipping air quality in Delhi in winters.
- **Dust pollution contributes to 56%** of PM 10 and the PM2.5 load at 59 t/d, the top contributors being road 38 % of PM 2.5 concentration, the IIT Kanpur study said.
- According to the IIT Kanpur study, **20 % of PM 2.5 in winters comes from vehicular pollution.**

### What are the steps taken by the government to address the pollution?

- The effort to reduce vehicular pollution, which experts say is more harmful as it is released at breathing level, the following has been done:
  - The introduction of **BS VI (cleaner) fuel**
  - Push for **electric vehicles**
  - **Odd-Even** as an emergency measure
  - **Construction of the Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressways**

**Way forward** - With vehicles back on the road, temperature dipping and stubble burning starting, Delhi's air is set to get worse and so the steps introduced by the government should be implemented properly to find some relief from the pollution in Delhi.

## 42. Security and Terror Outfits

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** Gs3: Role of External State and Non-state Actors in creating challenges to Internal Security.

**Context:** During the pandemic, the terror activities around the world has decreased but once the pandemic eases, we may see a resurgence of terror.

### The Doha Accord background

- After 9/11 attacks, the U.S. intervened in Afghanistan immediately to capture Osama bin Laden and his associates.
- However, the U.S ended up getting entangled with the Taliban and both remained hostile for several years.
- Under Doha Accord, the Taliban and the U.S are engaged in the process of brokering peace. In return for the Taliban's promise to preserve peace in Afghanistan the U.S has agreed to a near total withdrawal of all its troops from Afghanistan.

### What are the factors that makes the al-Qaeda and other terror outfits still relevant to India's security?

- They are threat to modern society, especially to India and its neighbourhood.
- They attract misguided youth in India whose loyalties are extraterritorial.
- Even though they are small in numbers, they can cause a ripple effect that can be devastating.
- Terrorist cells are utilising this period for gathering resources for future lethal assaults against India and other countries in the neighbourhood.



- The aggravating poverty in developing nations due to COVID-19 could offer a fertile ground for recruitment and intensified religious indoctrination of poverty ridden communities.
- Unlike other outfits such as JeM, LeT, that are confined to the Afghanistan-Pakistan area, al-Qaeda and the Islamic State they have global reach backed by global ambitions.
- Recent raids by the National Investigation Agency confirms the presence of al-Qaeda network in India who are conspiring to attack various targets, including the National Capital Region.
- Once the pandemic eases, AL-Qaeda with other aggressive Islamic outfits in and around Pakistan is bound to escalate the offensive against India.

#### **What are the Implications of Doha Accord for India?**

- The Taliban's assurance to the U.S. that, as part of the agreement, it will keep the al-Qaeda under check seems doubtful.
- The Taliban and the al-Qaeda need each other in many areas. Both are friendly towards Pakistan and could pose threat to India's security in the near future.

Terror outfits may not indulge in attacks like 9/11, but they will have the determination and prowess to carry out operations that can impact India's border security.

#### **43. It's time to save urban rivers**

**Source:** Down to Earth

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Environment

**Context:** The article discusses about urban river pollution and solutions to address the same.

#### **What is the Importance of Urban Rivers?**

- Rivers provide water, and provide habitats for plants and animals.
- These are important to the city. For example, they have a cooling effect, help to lower surface and air temperatures by providing shade and releasing moisture into the air.
- They also manage floods as most of the plants species that grow on river banks absorb a lot of water, reducing flood energy.
- Urban Rivers also provide space for social cohesion and socio-economic benefits to citizens.

#### **What are the threats to urban rivers?**

- **Unplanned urbanization:** Rapid and unplanned urbanization leads to increase in impervious surfaces which, coupled with urban drainage systems, alters the hydrological regime, sediment regime morphology of rivers.
- **Water Pollution:** point sources such as waste water from a tributary drain, sewage draining and grey water, industrial effluents and wastewater.
- **Encroachment:** The fragmentation of vegetation in the riparian zone due to human settlements and construction

#### **What are the institutional challenges in protecting urban rivers?**

- **No specific land-use category** or legislation which identifies the 'River Regulation Zone' or 'River Riparian Zone' and the optimum width of this zone has been identified in India.
- India has various **socio-cultural religious issues** involved human activities in the rivers like mass idol immersion, cremation by river bank.

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

- India has promoted 'urban riverfront development'. However, this has been limited to **cosmetic 'river beautification'** and investment to increase its real estate and commercial value.

### What is the way forward?

- The solutions need to be multi-dimensional, holistic and should involve all relevant stakeholders.
- The river front development should involve the community to be the key agents for action to mitigate problems related to river pollution.
- The optimal land-use planning for the riverfront areas should be done by adding green spaces along the river edges.
- Regulation and riparian limits should be framed for protection of the actual riverbeds and riparian fringes.
- The encroachments inside the river channels and river beds should be checked and riparian fringes be fully protected along with strict and transparent social and environment impact assessments.
- Yodogawa river side development in Osaka, Japan, and Room for the Rivers Programme in The Netherlands are best practices to refer to for successful models of riverfront development and other interventions at decentralised level.

### 44. Boundary issues in northeast

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

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Internal Security

**Context:** Residents of Assam and Mizoram have clashed twice over territory, injuring at least eight people and set fire to a few huts and small shops.

### What were the recent clashes about?

- Residents of Lailapur village in Assam's Cachar district clashed with residents of localities near Vairengte in Mizoram's Kolasib district.
- **According to an agreement between governments of Assam and Mizoram** some years ago, **status quo should be maintained in no man's land** in the border area.
- People from Lailapur broke the status quo and allegedly constructed some temporary huts, in response people from Mizoram side went and set fire on them.
- The Karimganj DC, said that even if the disputed land was historically cultivated by Mizoram residents, **on paper it fell within the Singla Forest Reserve** that is under Karimganj's authority.
- **Mizoram civil society groups blame "illegal Bangladeshis"** on the Assam side who came and destroyed huts, cut plants and pelted stones on policemen.

### How complex is the boundary dispute?

- **The boundary between present-day Assam and Mizoram is 165 km long** and it dates back to the colonial era, when Mizoram was known as Lushai Hills, a district of Assam.
- **The dispute branched from a notification of 1875 that differentiated Lushai Hills from the plains of Cachar, and another of 1933 that draws a boundary between Lushai Hills and Manipur.**
- Mizoram believes the boundary should be drawn on the basis of the 1875 notification, which is derived from **the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR) Act, 1873.**

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

- Mizo leaders have argued in the past argued against the demarcation notified in 1933 because Mizo society was not consulted and the **Assam government follows the 1933 demarcation**. This was the point of conflict.
- **The last time the boundary saw violence was in February 2018** when the MZP had built a wooden rest house in a forest for farmers and Assam police with the forest department officials demolished it saying this was in Assam territory.

### What are the other boundary issues in the Northeast?

- During British rule, Assam included present-day Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya besides Mizoram, which became separate state one by one. Today, **Assam has boundary problems with each of them**.
- **According to a 2008 research paper from the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses**, violent clashes and armed conflicts, marked by killings, have occurred on the Assam-Nagaland border since 1965.
- In two major incidents of violence in 1979 and 1985, **at least 100 persons were killed** and the boundary dispute is now in the Supreme Court. **Nagaland shares a 500-km boundary with Assam**.
- **Assam-Arunachal Pradesh boundary (over 800 km), clashes were first reported in 1992**, according to research paper from the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.
- There have been several charges of illegal intrusion from both sides, and recurrent clashes. This boundary issue is also being heard by the Supreme Court.
- **The 884-km Assam-Meghalaya boundary faces clashes as well**. There are 12 areas of dispute between the two states according to Meghalaya government.

### 45. Offset Policy in Defence

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

**Syllabus:** Gs3: Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology.

**Context:** Recently, the government diluted the “**offset**” **policy in defence procurement**, based on the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India’s report tabled in Parliament last month.

#### More in News

- As of 2019, the Defence Ministry had signed 52 offset contracts worth \$12 billion via Indian offset partners, or domestic firms.

#### Findings of CAG report?

- Between 2007 and 2018, the government reportedly signed 46 offset contracts, However, the realised investments were merely 8%.
- Also, technology transfer agreements in the offset clause were not implemented, failing to accomplish the stated policy objective.
- Government has not put in place an automatic monitoring system for offset contracts, as initially promised.

#### What is an offset policy? And how is it expected to boost domestic capabilities?

- Initiated in 2005, on the recommendations of the Vijay Kelkar Committee.
- The offset clause has a requirement of
  - Sourcing 30% of the value of the contract domestically.
  - Indigenisation of production in specified time limit and
  - Training Indian professionals in high-tech skills, for promoting domestic R&D.

- In simplest terms, the offset is an obligation by an international player to boost India's domestic defence industry if India is buying defence equipment from it.

**What changes were made in the offset policy?**

- After the dilution, the offset clause will not be applicable to bilateral deals or deals with a single (monopoly) seller or Intergovernmental agreement.
- For example, the deal to buy 36 Rafale fighter jets, was an intergovernmental agreement .so, the sellers are not obliged to fulfil the offset clause.

**Why it is a concern?**

- Most defence deals are bilateral or a single supplier deal, the dilution means practically giving up the offset clause that deters India's prospects for boosting defence production and technological self-reliance
- It will be a Setback for augmenting domestic capabilities or for realising the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- Government defends its decision by stating that, the offset clause results in the higher (upfront) cost of the agreement. But in the long run it reduces costs by indigenisation of production and the potential technology spill-overs for domestic industry.

**How the Offset policy performed in Aerospace? (Case study—Success of Offset policy)**

- The offset policy was introduced in 2005, for contracts valued at ₹300 crore or more where 30% of it will result in offsets implemented through Indian offset partners.
- According to the United Nations Comtrade Database, the exports via the offsets increased by a whopping 544% in 2007, compared to the previous year. Also, by 2014 exports increased to \$6.7 billion from a mere \$62.5 million in 2005.
- It enabled India to join the league of the world's top 10 aerospace exporters.
- Later in 2016, the offset clause was relaxed, threshold for the policy was raised from ₹300 crore to ₹2000 crore which resulted in lowering exports.

**What is the way forward?**

- The offset policy can succeed, if it is designed and executed correctly. For example, its success in Aerospace industry.
- India needs to re-conceive or re-imagine the offset clause in defence contracts in national interest.
- Offset policy is very much significant for 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan', or a self-reliant India.

**46. India's innovation potential and initiatives**

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Science & Technology

**Context:** Recognising the innovation potential of India, the government is putting in place a framework of collaboration, simplification and regulation to lift innovative ecosystem of India.

**What is the realistic potential of India's Innovation ecosystem?**

- The Indian innovation system is very multifaceted in terms of user segments and income gaps. However, central government is trying to boost innovation in the country through several schemes.
- Innovation in India is being planned around the triangle of collaboration, facilitation and responsible regulation. It is advanced by cross-disciplinary collaboration.



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

- India is the fastest growing country in terms of Internet usage, with over 700 million users and the number projected to rise to 974 million by 2025.
- The JAM (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, and Mobile) trinity has 404 million Jan Dhan bank accounts with 1.2 billion Aadhaar and 1.2 billion mobile subscribers.
- There is a potential to add over \$957 billion to India's GDP by 2035 with artificial intelligence (AI).
- The realistic potential of technology for India echoes in the 'Amara law' named after Roy Amara, a Stanford computer scientist, who said that "People tend to overestimate the impact of a new technology in the short run, but to underestimate it in the long run."

### What are the Initiatives of Government of India to boost innovation?

Recently, Indian government organised two events to boost innovation:

- **Vaishvik Bharatiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) summit:** Numerous overseas Indian-origin academicians and Indians participated to form ideas on innovative solutions to several challenges.
- **Responsible AI for Social Empowerment (RAISE) 2020 summit:** It grants a course to efficiently use AI for social empowerment, inclusion, and transformation in key sectors such as health care, agriculture, finance, education and smart mobility.
- **Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) scholarships:** Attract youth talent to the study of science at an early age and thus build the required critical human resource pool for Science & Technology system.
- **Ramanujan Fellowship:** It is meant for brilliant Indian scientists from outside India to take up scientific research positions in India.
- **Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN) scheme:** Providing avenues to women scientists and technologists for capacity building.
- **Smart India Hackathons (SIH):** To provide students a platform to solve some of pressing problems of society.
- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):** To promote innovation and entrepreneurship across India.
- **Biotechnology Ignition Grant (BIG) scheme:** Largest early stage biotech funding programme in India. Aims to encourage researchers to take bio-technology closer to market through a start-up.
- **Future Skills PRIME** (Programme for Reskilling/Upskilling of IT Manpower for Employability) capacity building platform
- Triad of **Scheme for Transformational and Advanced Research in Sciences (STARS)**, **Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)** and **Impactful Policy Research in Social Science (IMPRESS)**: Common objective is to boost India specific research in social and pure sciences.
- **National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems:** Aims to catalyse translational research across AI, IoT or the Internet of Things, Machine Learning, Deep Learning, Big Data Analytics, Robotics, Quantum Computing, Data Science.
- **The Reserve Bank of India, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India allow for regulatory sandboxes for channelling new ideas.
- **The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** has recently introduced recommendations for regulating cloud services in India, suggesting a light-touch

regulation in collaboration with industry, balancing commercial freedom and principles adherence.

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

- **Increase R&D spending:** Government should frame a policy with the aim of increasing total GERD (Gross domestic expenditure on R&D) to 2% of India's GDP.
- **Global partnerships in innovation:** Global innovation partnerships need to be strengthened by enhancing public-private partnership mechanisms and increased public funds should be earmarked for joint industrial R&D projects.
- **Idea-to-market challenge:** Government needs to create a **special fund** to help Indian innovations to advance their start-ups during difficult times.

**Way forward**

- Innovation has the potential to build a future where AI will transform education and health care, clean energy will drive economy, gene-editing would help us bring back extinct species and virtual reality will change the way we interact with the physical world.
- India must make the right institutional, industrial, and policy reforms.

**47. Fiscal Expansion Response**

**Source:** [Live Mint](#)

**Syllabus: Gs3:** Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

**Context:** The Indian fiscal response till now is more automatic stabilizers than discretionary policy measures, more indirect than direct fiscal action.

**What are the Components of fiscal expansion?**

- **The non-discretionary automatic stabilizers:** Automatic stabilizers are ongoing government policies that automatically adjust tax rates and transfer payments in a manner that is intended to stabilize incomes, consumption, and business spending over the business cycle.
- **The discretionary fiscal impulse:** Actions taken in response to changes in the economy. These acts do not follow a strict set of rules, rather, they use subjective judgment to treat each situation in unique manner. Examples may include passing a new spending bill that promotes a certain cause, such as green technology.

**How was India's fiscal policy response to revive economic contraction?**

- Discretionary fiscal impulse in India has been only a modest 1.8% of GDP.
- Most of the fiscal expansion this year is likely to come from a decline in tax collections and other types of automatic stabilizers, rather than government action.
- In comparison, almost 60% of the fiscal expansion in emerging markets has come from discretionary policy
- India's fiscal response has been more of "below the line" measures through credit guarantees, payroll support, equity infusion and special liquidity schemes.
- "Below the line" fiscal support amounts to 5.2% of GDP. In this, India resembles advanced economies rather than its emerging markets peers.

**Why India has emphasised to spend low on discretionary spending?**

- During the crisis India's Fiscal strength was far less than other major economies.
- Fear of sovereign credit-rating downgrade, in case the fiscal situation deteriorates further.

- Prevalence of high inflation, which means that a demand stimulus during a severe supply shock would have added to price pressures.

#### 48. Digital payment system in India

**Source-**The Hindu

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

**Context-** The government has a crucial role to play in protecting consumers against exploitation in the digital payment system.

#### What is the role of RBI in the evolution of digital payment in India?

1. **RTGS-** This system enables transfer of money from one bank account to another on a “real time” and on “gross” basis.
  - Settlement happens in real time.
  - The large value payments on stock trading, government bond trading and other customer payments were covered under the RTGS, providing finality of settlement, thereby reducing huge risks.
2. **NEFT-** NEFT facilitates funds transfer across all computerized branches of banks (member / sub-member of NEFT) across the country.
  - Settlement happens in batches, and the system is available around the clock and RTGS will follow from December 2020.
3. **SEBI T+1 settlement-** The market regulator SEBI is considering lowering the settlement cycle for completion of share transactions to T+1 (trade plus one day) to boost liquidity, improve efficiency and reduce payment-related risks to brokers and the system.

**NPCI:** National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), an “Not for Profit” umbrella organization for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India, is an initiative of RBI and Indian Banks’ Association (IBA) under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, for creating a robust Payment & Settlement Infrastructure in India. It aims in bringing innovations in the retail payment systems through the use of technology for achieving greater efficiency in operations and widening the reach of payment systems.

#### What steps taken by government to promote digital payment?

1. **Zero merchant discount rate-** In a bid to promote digital transactions, the government exempted merchants from paying merchant discount rate (MDR) cost for payments made through RuPay and UPI platforms.

##### Issues in Zero MDR -

- a. **Discriminatory approach-** For now, MasterCard and Visa cards are permitted to charge MDR. This has led the banks to switch to Visa and Master cards for monetary gains.
  - b. The European Central Bank imposed a ceiling on MDR for all to protect consumer interest.
2. NPCI must supply retail fee providers at discounted value. This will result in a fee system community and infrastructure in rural and semi-urban areas in partnership with Fin-Tech firms and banks.

**Way forward:** Government needs to take corrective action in the next Budget to ensure a level playing field and to relieve the NPCI from such policy-induced market imperfection.

#### 49. Durga Puja and Economy

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** Gs3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

**Context:** Economy of Durga Puja being affected due to the pandemic.

##### How important are festivals for the economy?

- In 2020, the projected size of the Durga Puja economy could be about 2 lakh crores (13-14% of West Bengal's GDP).
- Puja shopping for apparel, shoes, electronic gadgets, spending over idols, pandals, and tourism, all contribute to the economy.
- Contribution of Durga puja festival to the economy is bigger than any other festival around the world such as the Rio Carnival (Rio de Janeiro), Mardi Gras (New Orleans), Oktoberfest (Munich), Hanami (Japan).
- Corporate funding and outdoor advertisements account for about 90% of the funding. The traditional five-day festival usually extends to 10-12 days giving additional business opportunity.

##### What is the impact of pandemic on Durga pooja?

- The festival and the economy of the Puja will be reduced because of the fear of contagion. It will result in job losses and reduction in income.
- The order of Calcutta High Court to not allow visitors within a radius of five metres for small pandals and 10 metres for big pandals, many of the big Pujas will be offered virtually.
- It has jeopardised Puja-trips of Bengali people, reduced the expenditure on community worship there by affecting livelihood of millions who are dependent on this Puja economy.

#### 50. Fiscal stimulus

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** Gs3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

**Context:** Need for a strong stimulus for a quick recovery.

##### What is the state of economy?

- The OECD expects the world economy to shrink by as much as 7.6 per cent in 2020. India's full-year economic contraction is estimated between 9 and 12.5 per cent.
- The pandemic has severely impacted both demand and supply.
- With two years of slowdown the balance sheet of both the government and the industry has already strained.
- The banking system is in deep distress to support growth.
- All the four engines of growth (Private consumption, Exports, domestic consumption, government spending) are declining.
- The pandemic has forced most central banks and the governments to announce large stimulus to ensure rapid post-Covid recovery.

##### What were the steps taken by government to revive the economy?

- **Tight fisted approach:** The government has chosen structural reforms and debt support, rather than offering large scale stimulus to revive the economy or a GST rate-cut, to revive economic growth.



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

- **Agri-reforms:** It has brought in agriculture reforms to boost the farm sector growth.
- **Conditional Loans:** It has allowed the cash-strapped States, to borrow more but on conditional basis. For example, undertaking reforms like ending free power to farmers.

### Why government is not resorting to Fiscal stimulus?

- The stimulus offered so far is just 1.2 per cent of GDP whereas Japan's stimulus stands at 21.1 per cent of GDP and US' at 13.2 per cent.
- The government strongly believes of a V-shaped recovery is in progress but it is unclear whether this recovery will sustain.
- The government is worried that any fiscal stimulus if provided will have same impact that of the 2008 stimulus which caused sustained inflation.

### What is the way forward?

- It is clear that without a strong stimulus, the recovery will be slow.
- Only a sustained increase in demand will push the industry to start investing again.
- If that happens, three of the four engines of growth will fire (public consumption, private investment and government spending) causing economic growth to return.

## 51. Air pollution and green recovery

**Source:** Down To Earth

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Environment

**Context:** The newly released the state of Global Air 2020 report shows that India recorded the highest increase in air pollution related deaths and infant mortality.

### What is the state of air pollution in India?

- **India recorded the highest PM2.5 exposure** and the most increase in deaths between 2010 and 2019.
- **Air pollution accounts for 20 per cent of newborn deaths** worldwide, 24 per cent of these infant deaths occur in India which is the highest. This defies the principles of inter-generational justice.
- **The State of Global Air that is a collaborative study** of Health Effect Institute and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation of Global Burden of Disease Project has presented that:
  - Out of the total tally of 6,670,000 particulate matter (PM) 2.5-attributable deaths globally, 980,000 deaths occurred in India which was a 61 per cent increase since 2010.
- **The other silent killer sidling up in India is ozone:** the country has recorded an 84 per cent increase in ozone-related deaths since 2010.

### What is the effect of air pollution on newborns?

- **The effect of air pollution on infants** that shows an estimated 1.8 million deaths worldwide, mostly within 27 days of childbirth. Mothers' exposure to toxic air leads to pre-term birth and lower birth weight.
- **Babies born too small or too early become more vulnerable** to lower-respiratory infections, diarrhoeal diseases, brain damage, inflammation, blood disorders and jaundice.
- **Inflammation and oxidative stress deeply affect the health** of pregnant women and babies as particles and toxic components move across membranes of the lungs

and get carried to different parts of the body and affect placental function and the fetus.

- **Burning of solid fuels for cooking accounts for 64 per cent of infant deaths** while the rest is due to outdoor air pollution. Hence, vulnerability of poorer women increases.
- **According to director of All India Institute of Medical Sciences**, the young and the infants whose lungs and respiratory systems are not yet developed have higher chances of chronic illness, lung damage, and death. This compromises their quality of life.
- **COVID-19 and air pollution: Exposure to air pollution can compromise immune defense**, making people more prone to respiratory and other infections.

#### What are the steps to be taken for green recovery?

- **The National Clean Air Programme should improve legally** due multi-sector action across regions to clean up all air shelters.
- **Deeper sectoral reforms are required** to clean up emissions from vehicles, power plants, industries and local sources like construction and waste.
- Effective intervention can lead to verifiable improvement in health outcome as this is evident in the reduction in household pollution exposure from 54 per cent to 36 percent due to **improved access to clean fuels in India**.

#### Way forward

- There can be substantial economic benefit from improvement in health outcomes related to air pollution, as a lot of these diseases are preventable and so required changes should be made to improve the existing situation.

## 52. Increasing Onion Prices

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

**Syllabus:** GS3: Issues of Buffer Stocks and Food Security

**Context:** To control the rising prices of onions which crossed Rs 80 per kg in many cities, the centre has reintroduced the stock limit on onions.

#### More in news

- Recently, the Parliament has amended the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to exclude onions besides potatoes, edible oils, oilseed and pulses from the list of essential commodities, thus freeing them from stock limits.

#### What is the need for government intervention?

- **Production losses:** Heavy rainfall in north Karnataka has resulted in massive losses of kharif onions.
- **Storage losses:** The heavy rains not only destroyed the new crop in Karnataka but also took a toll on stored onions in states.
- **Low shelf life:** Overuse of urea by farmers has resulted in the lower shelf life of the onions.
- All these factors have resulted in rise of prices due to a supply-demand mismatch.

#### What steps were taken to reduce the price rise?

- First, to control prices, government banned the export of onion.
- This was followed by the relaxation of import norms that allowed easy shipping of onions from Iran, Turkey and other onion-producing nations.

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

- Recently, the government has reintroduced the stock limit. Wholesale traders are now allowed to stock up to 25 tonnes of onion, and retail traders up to 2 tonnes.

### 53. Farmers' Produce Trading and Commerce Act 2020

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

**Syllabus: Gs3:** Storage, Transport and Marketing of Agricultural Produce and Issues and Related Constraints

**Context:** Farmers' Produce Trading and Commerce Act 2020 enables Farmers to engage in direct marketing thereby eliminating intermediaries which was major issue in Agriculture Produce Market Regulation (APMC) acts.

#### What is Agriculture Produce Market Regulation (APMC) acts?

- From the 1960s, there have been concerted efforts to bring all wholesale markets for agricultural produce in various states under the Agriculture Produce Market Regulation (APMC) acts.
- All states, except Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir and Manipur, enacted such laws.
- The APMC Acts mandated that the sale/purchase of agricultural commodities is carried out in a specified market area, and, producer-sellers or traders pay the requisite market fee, user charges, levies and commissions for the commission agents (**arhtiyas**).
- These charges were levied irrespective of whether the sale took place inside APMC premises or outside it and the charges varied widely across states and commodities.

#### How effective were APMC acts in achieving its sated objectives?

- In the initial years, APMC acts helped remove malpractices and freed the farmers from the exploitative power of middlemen and mercantile capital.
- Later, market facilities did not keep pace with the increase in output and regulation did not allow farmers to sell outside APMC markets.
- The farmers were left with no choice but to seek the help of middlemen. Due to poor market infrastructure, more produce is sold outside markets than in APMC mandis.
- The net result was a system of interlocked transactions that robs farmers of their choice to decide to whom and where to sell, subjecting them to exploitation by middlemen.
- Over time, APMC markets have been turned from infrastructure services to a source of revenue generation.
- In several states, commission charges were increased without any improvement in the services.
- And to avoid any protests from farmers against these high charges, most of these were required to be paid by buyers like the FCI.
- This not only results in a heavy burden on the Centre but also increases the logistics cost for domestic produce and reduces trade competitiveness.

#### Need for Farmers' Produce Trading and Commerce Act 2020?

- The reforms in market regulation remained slow even after successive governments at the Centre made repeated attempts to persuade the states to make appropriate changes in their APMC acts.
- Finally, the centre used the constitutional route to address long-pending issues of market reforms by introducing **Farmers' Produce Trading and Commerce Act 2020**.

### Significance of FPTC Act

- The FPTC Act gives farmers the freedom to sell and buy farm produce at any place in the country either from APMC markets or outside the mandated area like the sale of milk.
- The Act promote e-commerce in agriculture trade by allowing transactions on electronic platforms.
- Excessive and unjustified charges levied under the APMC acts will be reduced. The FPTC Act will only put pressure on APMC markets to become competitive.
- It is expected to bring down market charges and commissions to 2 per cent or less to enable APMC mandis to compete with sales outside their premises.

The states, in farmers' welfare should keep mandi charges below a reasonable level of 1.5 per cent to ensure the co-existence of APMC mandis and private channels permitted under the new Act in a true competitive spirit.

### 54. Buffer Stocks

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

**Syllabus:** Gs3: Issues of Buffer Stocks and Food Security

**Context:** Irregular rainfall patterns is resulting in production fluctuations of agricultural crops.

#### How the production fluctuation is happening?

- **Unreliability of kharif crop production even in normal monsoon years:** In the last two years, excess rains in a single month has damaged the standing crops including onions, pulses and soyabean leading to production losses of kharif crop.
- **Bumper harvest during Rabi season:** Extended monsoon rains, although not beneficial for kharif, will help recharge groundwater aquifers and thereby result in bumper production during the rabi season.
- Hence the rabi crop will increasingly impart stability to India's agricultural output.

#### What are the steps taken by the government?

- Banning exports and easing imports.
- Imposing stock holding limits in onions.
- Forcing cold store owners to release potatoes deposited with them.

#### What is the way forward?

- With climate change and irregular rainfall patterns becoming a norm, Production fluctuations are inevitable
- The government should create a buffer stock of not just food grains, but even onion, potato, sugar, edible oil, milk powder and white butter, to enable non-distortive marketing intervention.

### 55. Air Pollution in India

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

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Environment

**Context:** US President has criticised India's air quality.

#### What is the state of air pollution in India?

The State of Global Air that is a collaborative study of Health Effect Institute and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation of Global Burden of Disease Project has presented that:



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

- **PM 2.5 Concentration:** India recorded the highest annual average PM 2.5 concentration exposure in 2019. India was followed by Nepal, Niger, Qatar and Nigeria.
- **Household Air Pollution:** India has managed to reduce the number of people exposed to household air pollution to 61% from 73%.
- **Ozone(O3) Exposure:** Among the 20 most populous countries, India recorded the highest increase (17%) in O3 concentrations in the past ten years.

### What steps have India taken to combat air pollution?

- **National Clean Air Programme:** It aims to meet prescribed annual average ambient standards at all locations in the country in a stipulated timeframe. It calls for:
  - Augmentation of existing air quality monitoring network by increasing number of existing manual and continuous monitoring stations,
  - introducing rural monitoring stations,
  - identifying alternative technology for real-time monitoring network
  - augmenting capabilities of existing monitoring stations to measure PM2.5 concentration
  - national-level emission inventory
- **Launch of National Air Quality index (AQI):**
  - The AQI classifies air quality of a day considering criteria pollutants through colour codes and air quality descriptor. Further, it also links air quality with likely human health impacts.
  - The index measures eight major pollutants, namely, particulate matter (PM 10 and PM 2.5), nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, carbon monoxide, ammonia and lead.
- **Measures to curb vehicular pollution:** In March 2017, the Supreme Court banned the sale of BS III vehicles in the country. The court ordered that from April 1, 2017 onwards only BS IV would be registered in India. The Indian government BS-VI norms from 2020.
- **Measures to curb indoor air pollution:** The government launched Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojna to replace unclean cooking fuels used in the most underprivileged households with clean and more efficient LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas). A major objective of the scheme is to ensure smoke-free houses and thus curb indoor air pollution.

### 56. DISCOMs

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

**Syllabus:** GS3: Infrastructure: Energy

**Context:** Providing only Stimulus package will not solve the entire problems of DisComs.

#### More in News

- DisComs, are utilities that buy power from generators and retail these to consumers.
- The government provided an earmarked stimulus package of ₹1,25,000 crore for DisComs to respond to COVID-19's economic shock.
- The loan is meant to be used by DisComs to pay off generators.

### Why the Stimulus package provided won't be sufficient?

- As per **PRAAPTI** (Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators) portal, DisComs owe **one lakh crore rupees** to generators.

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

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

- But, PRAAPTI portal is not comprehensive as it is based on voluntary compilation of dues.
- Whereas, according to The Power Finance Corporation (PFC)'s Report on Utility Workings for 2018-19, DisComs owe ₹2,27,000 crore to generators which is twice that of the dues shown in PRAAPTI portal.

### Why do DisComs face financial crunch?

- **Management issues:** Inefficiency and Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses that arise due to theft, lack of collection from consumers.
- **Unsustainable tariff rates:** Regulators themselves have failed to fix cost-reflective tariffs that denies DisComs to become a profitable sector.
- **State as defaulters:** State governments are the biggest defaulters, responsible for an estimated a third of trade receivables, besides not paying subsidies in full or on time.
- **Consumers as defaulters:** Consumers owed DisComs over ₹1.8 lakh crore in FY 2018-19, booked as trade receivables.
- **Impact of Covid19:** it has disproportionately impacted revenues to DisComs from paying customers, commercial and industrial segments.

### What is the way forward?

- It is important to Improve AT&C losses.
- Need for a complete overhaul of the regulation of electricity companies and their deliverables.
- Rationalisation of electricity tariffs instead of free electricity. For this, regulators must allow cost-covering tariffs.
- Need a much larger liquidity infusion than has been announced along with credible plans to pay down growing debt.

To meet the current national needs of quality, affordable, and sustainable power its vital to improve the financial position of DisComs.

## 57. Punjab Assembly Rejects Centre's Farm Laws

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

**Syllabus- GS 3-** Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

**Context** - Legislative approach of Punjab government to nullify some provisions of the Central farm laws

### What are the sole objectives of farms bills 2020?

**Liberate farmer from out-dated system-** Opens up agricultural sale and marketing outside the notified Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis for farmers.

- It will allow farmers an option to sell their produce directly to these new zones, without going through the middlemen and paying levies such as mandi fees.

### What are the new farm bills introduced by Punjab state government?

Punjab government passed legislation under Article 254(2) of the Constitution, to negate the enforcement of three Farm Acts passed by the Central government under Entry 33 of the Concurrent List.

**Punjab State Bills** - The Punjab assembly introduced three farm Bills-

- 1. Agreement on price assurance and farm services-** It seeks to ensure that sales or purchase of wheat and paddy in Punjab is not allowed below the Minimum Support Price.
  - It provides for imprisonment of not less than three years and fines for harassment of farmers or payment of less price to the farmer.
- 2. Fee on trade outside the APMCs-** The central law abolished any market fees or licences for private players outside the APMCs, the Punjab bills have reintroduced it. These fees will go towards a fund for the welfare of small and marginal farmers.
- 3. Essential Commodities bills-** It prevents hoarding and black-marketing of agricultural produce and seeks to ensure status quo ante with regard to implementation of the Central Act namely, 'The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020'.

**What is the main reason of passing new bills by Punjab Government?**

**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 main subjects of the three acts are agriculture and market that are essentially state subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.
- The Central government in devious manner its way into the legislation by misconstruing its authority on food items, a subject in the Concurrent List, as authority over the subject agriculture.

**What is Article 254 (2) will this help the states?**

It enables a State government to pass a law, on any subject in the Concurrent List, that may contradict a Central law, provided it gets the President's assent. A state legislation passed under Article 254 (2) requires the assent of the President of India.

**Way forward-**

- Farming community and state governments should give the reform measures a fair chance by giving farmers access to competitive purchases, affording better prices.
- Government should improve agricultural infrastructure to strengthen competition.

**58. DeepFake**

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

Gs3: Issues associated with Development of new technologies.

**Context:** The threat emerging out of Deepfakes and measures to counter it.

**What is Deepfakes?**

- Deepfakes are the digital media (video, audio, and images) manipulated using Artificial Intelligence.
- Using Deepfakes its possible to fabricate media by swapping faces, lip-syncing, and puppeteer.
- Access to cloud computing, algorithms, and abundant data has opened opportunities for media manipulation.
- Deepfakes have now become new tool to spread computational propaganda and disinformation at large scale and at faster rate.
- Disinformation perpetuated using new technologies like Deepfakes are increasingly used for creating social discord, polarisation, and in some cases, influencing an election outcome.

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

- Deepfakes and hyper-realistic digital falsification can inflict damage to individuals, institutions, businesses and democracy.

### Why it is a threat?

- **Impact on women:** Pornographic deepfakes reduce women to sexual objects and harms their reputation and psychology.
- **Economic impact:** Using audio and video deepfakes it is possible to deceive individuals for financial gains. Also, it can be used to extract money, confidential information, or exact favours from individuals.
- **Impact on media:** It further erodes the trust in news media and can contribute to a culture of factual relativism.
- **Impact on security:** It can be used by insurgent groups and terrorist organisations to cultivate anti-state sentiments among people.
- **Impact on social institutions:** False information about institutions, public policy, and politicians powered by a deepfakes can be exploited to alter the democratic discourse and undermine trust in institutions.
- **Impact on Democratic processes:** A Deepfake produced to harm the image and reputation of political candidate can confuse voters and disrupt elections.
- **Impact on citizen's Freedom** Authoritarian regimes can use this as a tool to justify oppression and to disenfranchise citizens.

### What is the way forward?

- **Multi-stakeholder and multi-modal approach:** collective techniques across legislative regulations, technology intervention, and media literacy can provide effective and ethical countermeasures to mitigate the threat of malicious deepfakes.
- **Media literacy for consumers and journalists:** Consumers of media must have the ability to decipher, understand, translate, and use the information they encounter.
- **Regulation:** Facilitate disincentivising the creation and distribution of malicious deepfakes.
- **Technology intervention:** Need easy-to-use and accessible technology solutions to detect deepfakes.
- **Behavioural change:** Falsity goes viral more than the truth on social platforms. Citizens should restrain themselves from spreading disinformation and become a part of the solution to this infodemic.
- **Re-evaluate:** The principle of Democratising nature of information dissemination need to be discussed, debated.

Deepfakes created without consent is a threat to psychology, security, political stability, and business disruption.

### 59. Urbanpoverty

**Source:** [The Live Mint](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Economy

**Context:** India needs policy intervention to uplift its urban poor.

### What are the problems faced by urban poor?

- **Lack policy support** of the kind provided in the West. During its urbanization, slum residents' lives in India have been full of instability and unpredictability.
- **They have disposable livelihoods**, as they usually make a living when well-off city residents need their services and the pandemic has made slum dwellers' incomes fall steeply.

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



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

- **Multiple informalities:** Informality of different kinds fill the lives of slum residents with risk and uncertainty. Only tiny share of slum residents have formal jobs with written contracts.
  - More than 70% have homes without titles, and 40% lack identity papers needed to access entitlements. This makes their lives extremely volatile and vulnerable.
- **The pandemic pushed many slum families into persistent poverty.** For example, Residents from 35 out of 40 settlements in Patna continued to cut back on food or other essentials, while residents from 30 settlements needed to borrow money to meet essential needs.
- **Few good jobs:** The urban labour forces are growing but regular factory jobs are not growing alongside; there is a huge scarcity.

### What are the steps to be taken?

- **The need for policies:** Three kinds of policies are necessary.
  - **The conditions of employment** must progressively be made more secure, with workplace protection, old-age support, and health care benefits.
  - **The process of slum notification needs to be accelerated**, so the threat of demolition passes, even if individual titles are not given immediately.
- **Interventions are required in education and skills training**, and to make entrepreneurship more rewarding.
  - Such efforts are being made on a small scale by social mobility promoting organizations, including Prerana in Bengaluru, Udaan Foundation in Mumbai, and CSRL in various cities.
- **Affordable and reliable health care is necessary** as the worst-off in slums almost always involve families ruined by high medical expenses.
  - The government seems to be pursuing this through Ayushman Bharat.

### Way forward

- It is necessary to raise slum residents' prospects for good jobs and upward mobility.
- Policy interventions that help reduce the ill effects of informality are necessary.

## 60. Farm Bill and MSP

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

**GS3:** Issues related to Direct and Indirect Farm Subsidies and Minimum Support Prices

**Context:** The recently enacted farm bills have triggered debate on the desirability of the MSP regime.

**More in news:** The period from 2004 to 2012 was the period of high commodity prices, high government procurement and rapid reduction in rural poverty. This shows a causal link between the high prices and decrease in poverty

### What is the issue?

- The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) bill allow for free entry of agents (private individuals, producer collectives or cooperatives) to set up markets.
- This means that the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and other associated agencies can procure in the traditional mandis or in a new market established under this law or in their own backyard.
- Critics view that the dismantling of the monopoly of the APMCs as a sign of ending the assured procurement of food grains at minimum support prices (MSP).

**Are MSPs irrelevant for the welfare of the farmers?**

- According to the supporters of the farm bills the MSPs are irrelevant for most of the farmers in the country as it benefits only a small fraction of farmers (Punjab and Haryana) and procurement has remained confined to only a few crops.
- However, it has indirectly benefited all food grain producers in the country.
- For example, the procurement through MSP significantly exceeds the PDS requirement, this creates additional demand in the food grain market, pushing up the prices especially when the international prices have remained low.
- The RBI's annual report of 2017-18 on the impact of MSP-based procurement on the food prices conclusively shows that MSP is a leading factor influencing the output prices of the farm produce in the entire country.
- Also, for rain-fed agriculturists, the only state supports these farmers (primarily cotton and pulse producers) have is that of MSPs as they are deprived of irrigation and they don't benefit from subsidies on electricity and fertiliser.

**61. New ordinance to curb Air Pollution**

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

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

**Context-** Centre issued an ordinance to form new commission for air quality management in NCR and adjoining areas.

**What is the new commission for air quality management?**

Indian President has promulgated an ordinance to constitute a Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas.

- The Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance 2020, released by the law and justice ministry
- This commission for air quality management will replace the EPCA (environment pollution and prevention control authority).
- Commission will be constituted for air quality management for better coordination, research, identification and resolution of problems surrounding the air quality index.
- **Area under commission-** It will include representatives from Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan.
- **Composition-** A Chairperson, a representative from the Ministry of Environment, members from the state of Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, technical experts from Central Pollution Control Board and Indian Space Research Organization among others.

**What are the powers of the commission?**

- The ordinance makes it clear that state as well as central bodies will not have jurisdiction over matters related to air pollution.
- The commission has been given executive powers to act upon those found violating directions set by it to curb the pollution crisis.
- The ordinance will erase the relevance of start pollution control bodies since they do not have the powers to make any autonomous decisions anymore.
- It will also have the power to lay down parameters of air quality and emissions, issue directions to abate pollution crisis, take up matters suo moto on basis of complaints, stop power supply or take action against any entity or industry.

### Penal power

- There will be a penalty imposed for non-compliance to the commission's orders.
- The offence could be punishable with imprisonments upto a term of 5 years, with fine which may extend to RS 1 crore or more.
- Offence under the ordinance shall be non-cognizable and be triable under the national green tribunal act in the court of the national green tribunal (NGT).

### What are the challenges?

1. **Co-ordination problem**- The Commission has a large number of members from the central government, which has not gone down well with the states.
2. **Rule enforcement**- A major weakness, in tackling air pollution has been the inability of agencies to consistently enforce rules on the ground. For instance, factors in stubble burning or prevent pollution from thermal plants do exist, but these are often not strongly enforced always in States due to political considerations.

### Issues with new ordinance-

1. The central government has taken control over the pollution control matters in the Delhi NCR region.
2. Limiting the adjudication to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and not any other court.

Political differences will also now play a part in the functioning of the Commission because states are not happy with the overarching powers being vested in it.

## 62. Stubble Burning Issue and Analysis

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

**GS3:** Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life.

**Context:** New innovative method, the PUSA Decomposer, developed at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa can offer a sustainable solution for stubble burning.

### What is stubble burning?

- Stubble burning refers to the practice of farmers setting fire to plant debris that remain in farms after harvest.
- Stubble burning is practised predominantly by farmers in north India.
- It is to be noted that, before the 1980s, farmers used to till the remaining debris back into the soil after harvesting the crops manually.

### Why farmers resort to stubble burning?

- **Advent of the Green Revolution:** It resulted in increased production of rice and wheat which simultaneously increased stubble post-harvest.
- **Mechanised harvesting:** Machines used in combined harvesting technique is not efficient as it left behind one-foot-tall stalks.
- **Economic reason:** Due to the limited time period of 20-25 days between harvesting one crop and sowing another, Stubble burning offered a low-cost and speedy solution to farmers.

### What are the negative impacts of Stubble burning?

- **Source for toxic gases:** It releases harmful gases including nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide into the atmosphere.

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

- **Air pollution:** It creates vast smoke blankets across the Indo-Gangetic Plains. As per TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute) report, in 2019 the air pollution in New Delhi and other parts of north India was 20 times higher than the safe threshold level as prescribed by the World Health Organization.
- **Impact on crop production:** It degrades soil fertility, destroys organic fertilizers and reduces ground water levels.
- **Impact on Health:** Stubble burning during a pandemic could worsen the situation by making lungs weaker and people more susceptible to disease.

### What are the Steps taken to control stubble burning?

#### Laws & Regulations

- In 2013, the Punjab government-imposed ban on stubble burning.
- Later, in 2015, the National Green Tribunal imposed a ban on stubble burning in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab.
- Stubble burning is an offence under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1981.

#### Technological intervention

- To control stubble burning NGT directed government to assist farmers by obtaining equipment like happy seeders and rotavator.

#### Setting up of independent Commissions

- Recently, in **Aditya Dubey v. Union of India**, the Supreme Court appointed a one-man committee under Justice Madan B. Lokur to monitor and provide steps to prevent stubble burning activities in Punjab, Haryana and U.P. Haryana.
- Presently, a permanent commission for air quality management was set up by the Union government through an ordinance. It will replace the Justice Madan B. Lokur Commission.

### What is the way forward?

- **Setting up Custom Hiring Centres** it will facilitate farmers removing stubble by providing them with machinery such as the happy seeder, rotavator, paddy straw chopper, etc
- **Innovative solutions:** For example, the Union government is testing an innovative method, the **PUSA Decomposer**. It helps the paddy straw to decompose at a much faster rate than usual.

Technological innovations can offer a better solution for problems like stubble burning. The application of **happy seeders** and **super SMS machines** along with innovative solutions like **PUSA Decomposer** will not only reduce air pollution but also increase soil fertility and agricultural productivity



# General Studies Paper - 4

## General Studies - 4

---

### 1. Roadmap on vaccine procurement and distribution

**Source-** The Indian Express

**Syllabus- GS 4-** Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in-human actions; dimensions of ethics; ethics – in private and public relationships. Human Values – lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators; role of family society and educational institutions in inculcating values.

**Context-** Union health minister has announced that by early July 2021 India would receive and utilize 400-500 million doses of COVID vaccine for 20 to 25 crore people.

#### What are the challenges across distribution of COVID-19 vaccine?

1. **Priority-** Within the country, it is certainly not clear who should be treated first or it should be determined by need, affordability, vulnerability or some other criterion or a combination of all.
2. **Guideline** – The need of a policy regarding how much of the vaccine produced should go to other countries and at what cost. It must ensure whether agencies funding the research or the researchers or government authorities or citizens decide on a global policy of distribution.
3. **Distributive hierarchy** –The cost of the vaccine and its possible loss will have to be borne by the last receiver which likely to be more needy people of the society.
4. **Cost-** If open market forces determine the cost of the vaccine and affordability then, the section of society most vulnerable to the disease would get left out.

#### What are the minutes of discussions held by Union health minister?

1. **Doses count-** The Centre is working on plans for building capacities in human resources, training, and supervision on a massive scale and roughly estimates to receive and utilize 400-500 million doses covering approximately 20-25 crore people by July.
2. **Risk group identification-** The Centre has asked states to send list of priority population who will be receiving the vaccine shots first. This includes all doctors, nurses, health care staff, ASHA workers etc.
  - Prioritization of groups for the COVID-19 vaccine shall be based on two considerations-
    - Occupational hazards
    - The risk of developing severe disease and increased mortality.
3. **Directions-**
  - States have been asked not to sign any deal with manufacturers as Centre is monitoring the entire process.
  - States were also asked to submit details of cold chain facilities and related infrastructure required down to the block level.
  - Centre may also allow corporates to get vaccines directly from manufacturers.
4. **Vaccine tracking and black market-** The government also keeping an eye on immunity data with regard to COVID-19 disease while finalizing plans on vaccine distribution. Vaccine procurement was being done centrally and each consignment would be tracked real time until delivery to ensure it reached those who needed it most.
  - Vaccines will be distributed as per pre-decided priority and in a programmed manner. To ensure transparency and accountability.

**Way forward-**

1. Immunizing a billion people will be a staggering operational challenge for the country. It is important, that the government opens the conversation to a variety of specialists like epidemiologists, ethicists, economists, patient groups, social scientists.
2. If planning for vaccine delivery starts now, India will have a well-thought-through playbook to execute from when a vaccine is ready.

**2. Dire need of Police reforms**

**Source-** The Indian Express

**Syllabus-** GS 4 - Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

**Context-** The country must wake up to the dire need for police reform.

**What are the major deficiencies in India Policing?**

1. **The police-population ratio** - The Indian police force is at only 77 per cent of its sanctioned strength. India has 144 police personnel for one lakh population, is less than what is recommended by UN i.e. 222 policemen per lakh population.
  - **Unfilled vacancies**- One in every five posts sanctioned in the Indian Police Service remains vacant. In low and middle rank positions, the vacancies of 5.28 lakh personnel account for nearly one-fourth of the total sanctioned strength of over 22 lakh.
  - **Low numbers of Women police** -Women are grossly underrepresented in our police force. They constitute less than 7 per cent of our total police strength.
2. **Untrained police personnel**- The existing police personnel are also not adequately trained. Less than 7 per cent police get in-service training. Gujarat scores the lowest, with less than one per cent having received any in-service training.
3. **Overburdened police force**- Understaffing in turn results into overburdening of work that not only reduces the effectiveness and efficiency of the police personnel (leading to poor quality of investigation) but also leads to psychological distress and contributes to Pendency of cases.

**What are the reforms required?**

1. **Sensitization of Police Forces**- The police need to be sensitized about their role in society. There has to be promptness of action and decency when dealing with public especially during sensitive issues like rape.
  - They need to be trained in body language and strictly advised to refrain from abusive behaviour.
  - The sensitization module should aim at bringing about attitudinal change, especially pertaining to gender and power relations and police behaviour.
2. **Police accountability** - As per the police laws, both the Central and State police forces come under the superintendence and control of political executives. Police priorities are frequently altered based on the will of political executives.
  - Enhancing accountability will improve police legitimacy and increase public confidence, which, in turn, will reinforce the integrity of the system.
  - The police, as the custodian of maintenance of law and order, must stay away from agenda-driven politics.
3. **Improvement in police-population ratio**- The police-to-people ratio should be improved by at least 50 per cent to meet the challenges faced by the force.

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

- **Women policing-** With the increase in the number of gender crimes, it has become a necessity to augment the strength of police by recruiting more and more women police personnel.
- 4. **Dharma-Vira Commission recommendation-** The top police leadership should be selected by apolitical representatives and an impartial body. It was a strong antidote to opportunistic appointments and transfers.

### Way forward-

- The challenge of India is to restore the culture of rule of law, and make police and justice accessible, effective and credible.
- A new role and new philosophy have to be defined for the police to not only make it a capable and effective body but also one accountable to the law of the land and to the people whom they serve.
- Police needs to be made accountable, and freed from grip of politics