

9pm

Compilation

22nd to 28th November, 2020

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General Studies - 1

1. Violence against women

Source: The Indian Express

Syllabus: GS-1- Society

Context: Domestic violence cases spiked during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Explain about the violence during the pandemic?

- **Shadow pandemic:** The UN Secretary-General used the term for rise in domestic violence cases during the lockdown.
 - Women and sexual minorities were confined indoors with their abusers and even making a call or stepping out for shelter were likely to be very challenging.
- **Violence:** Violence is the short-hand language we use to communicate power play.
 - Different kinds and contexts of violence lie on a spectrum which is defined by inequality and the desire to control.
 - This includes domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, street sexual harassment, workplace sexual harassment, custodial rape and conflict-related sexual violence.
- **Inequalities:** The deep-seated inequalities of Indian society, creates a climate where state violence is tolerated because we are conditioned to granting others power over us and condoning its abuse.

What was the impact of lockdown on the females?

- **Access to reproductive healthcare:** The lockdown made access to reproductive healthcare, including abortion, very difficult. The dullness of lockdown is the new context of marital rape, with frustration over income uncertainty is offered as justification.
- **Forceful marriages:** One of the outcomes of lockdown was that many girls were married forcibly and early in desperation to see them safe and fed.
- **Abandonment:** Women and girls with disability were left alone to fend for themselves in the aftermath of the lockdown.
- **Vulnerable to harassment:** New forms of workplace harassment have emerged with “work-from-home” and made women vulnerable to harassment.
- **Impact on children:** The children witnessed daily violence and was taken to be the normal language of human interaction.
- The male child who gets everything he reaches for knows he is entitled and that he can grab it with freedom.

Way forward

- Systematic creation of a support infrastructure (easy access helplines, secure shelter services with enabling cultures), bystander intervention awareness and gender violence sensitisation of the police and administration especially for crisis contexts, would have mitigated the epidemic of violence.

2. Right to choice of women

Source: The Indian Express

Syllabus: GS-2- Polity

Context: The Uttar Pradesh government has cleared an ordinance that enables the state to police and punish inter-faith marriages with “the sole intention of changing a girl’s religion”.

Discuss the issues associated with the law against love jihad.

- **Law against fundamental rights:** By clearing the ordinance, the state government has trespassed the fundamental right to marry guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- **Problem with this law:** Neither clan council nor khap panchayat, and certainly not a democratic government, has the licence to vet personal choices as right or wrong.
- “Love jihad” ordinance is being peddled as measures taken for the security and “respect” of women.
- **Law can be abused:** Allowing the police to examine subjective “intentions” of men and women entering a marriage sets the law up for widespread abuse.
- **It legitimises a rank communal fantasy:** It continues the pessimistic politics that seeks to organise Hindu unity by fuelling the anxieties about the ‘Muslim Other’ and treasures it in law.
- **Patriarchal fear:** The law’s scrutiny is specially focussed on a woman’s change of faith reveals the patriarchal fear behind it.
- **An attempt to police women’s lives:** The pretentiousness of protection, indeed, masks a fear of female sexuality that will not be contained by caste and clan barriers.
- It is used to police women’s lives and choices, often by violence, as is evident in the history of “honour killings”.

Way forward

- The government must withdraw the proposed law as in the eyes of law men and women are not only members of religions, but individuals with “free will and choice”.

General Studies Paper - 2

General Studies - 2

1. Global governance

Source: [Indian Express](#)

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

Context: Analysing the need for common global governance

What are the impediments to international cooperation in the 21st century?

- **USA & China:** The rivalry between the world's two largest economies has intensified spreading the fears of a new cold war breaking between them.
- **India – China:** The militaries of the two most populous countries of the world has been engaged in a tense standoff for the past seven months.
- **India and Pakistan:** Endless state of confrontation between the armies of two nuclear-armed countries.
- **West Asia:** Civil wars in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen that are externally instigated.
- **Brazil:** Fire in parts of the Amazon forest, the world's largest sink for atmospheric carbon dioxide has been a global concern
- **USA- Russia nuclear disarmament:** Uncertainty over the extension of the only remaining nuclear weapons control pact between the US and Russia, the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty which is set to expire on February 5, 2021.

What are the Other common challenges?

- Ensuring affordable availability of the COVID vaccine to the entire global population.
- Making the world economy inclusive, equitable and sustainable for complete eradication of poverty.
- Achieving time-bound climate action to protect the planet.
- Preventing the militarisation of oceans, outer space and other global commons.

How can we tackle this problem?

- **Need to establish democratic world government:** Since, Non-discriminatory and justice-promoting governance is necessary for creating a more united, safer and better world. So, this concept must be brought to the centre of global discourse and action.
- **Principle of shared sovereignty:** Exclusive national sovereignty has become the greatest barrier to human unity and fraternity. The concept of national sovereignty is invoked many times to threaten peace, well-being and development. In the age of globalisation, we must embrace the virtues of shared sovereignty, in which connectivity (physical, digital, cultural and people-to-people) takes priority over the territorial sovereignty.
- **New laws of global governance:** Where militarisation of international disputes must be criminalised.
- **Disarmament:** The world community must compel all nations, to destroy all their weapons of mass destruction and to reduce their military expenditures.
- **Reform and strengthen United Nations:** To gradually evolve into a future world government body. As a key element of UN reforms, permanent membership of its security council must be abolished and nations that wage offensive wars or have failed to resolve disputes with their neighbours should stand disqualified/suspended from UNSC membership.

- **Making governance more broad-based and participatory:** Technology and mobility have made it possible for artists, professionals, environmentalists, disempowered communities etc, to collaborate by transcending national barriers. Therefore, their empowered participation in global governance is a must.
- **People's Movement:** Rally the people of all nations, races and religions around a new democratically governing body to address the issues caused by myopic, self-centred and unaccountable national governments.

The solution to polarisation is reform of government and state institutions in a way that they work for all citizens without discrimination and injustice. Societies are healed when governance becomes fair and compassionate.

2. The Wide Net of Hunger

Source: [Indian Express](#)

GS2: Issues relating to Poverty and Hunger.

Context: Since the lockdown, the Government of India (GoI) has announced Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) and Atmanirbhar Bharat. However, numerous studies have shown their inadequacy.

What is the hunger watch survey?

- The Right to Food campaign in partnership with several civil society organisations initiated “Hunger Watch”, a rapid survey across 11 states from mid-September to mid-October.
- The objective was to assess the situation of hunger among vulnerable groups, as well as to take immediate local action to support those in extreme need.
- It focussed on the conditions among marginalised communities such as Dalit/Adivasi households, daily-wage workers, households with single women, aged or disabled and so on.
- 41 per cent of sample reported having a monthly income of less than Rs 3,000 pre-lockdown compared to only 2.4 per cent more than Rs 15,000.
- One-third of them were daily wage workers.

What are the key findings of the survey?

- **Widespread hunger continues to be a major issue irrespective of the income levels:**
 - Households also face difficult conditions with 27 per cent saying that they had **no income** in the month before the survey (compared to 43 per cent with no income during April-May).
 - One in three respondents reported members having to skip meals “sometimes” or “often”.
- **Reduction in consumption to cope with food insecurity:**
 - More than half the respondents said their current consumption of rice/wheat was less than what it was pre-lockdown.
 - Two-thirds of households reported that the quantity of food consumption either decreased somewhat or decreased a lot and 73 per cent reported that their consumption of green vegetables decreased.
- **Nutrition hunger:**
 - Based on the 2011 National Sample Survey, a recent paper by Raghunathan, Headey, and Herforth, published in the Food Policy showed that between 63 and 76 per cent of rural Indians could not afford nutritious diets.

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- The statistics from the survey comparing the food situation before lockdown and in October indicate about 71 per cent of our respondents reported that the nutritional quality of food worsened.
- **Rural-Urban disparity:**
 - Based on leaked consumption expenditure survey from 2017-18, S Subramanian, showed that **consumption declined uniformly** across rural India.

What need to be done?

- Need a well-functioning Public Distribution System (PDS) along with cash-support measures through social security pensions.
- Universalise PDS to prevent starvation.
- **MGNREGA** needs to be strengthened along with an urban employment programme.
- **Effective implementation of Mid-day Meal scheme** as only less than half the anganwadi children (47 per cent) and 63 per cent of school children said that they were getting some sort of dry rations and/or cash support in lieu of the meals.

3. Time for an Asian Century

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Context: The world returning to the centrality of Asian civilisations sharing prosperity, with the U.S. adjusting to a triumvirate.

What is Asian centrality?

- 'ASEAN centrality' rejects the current frame of the West setting the agenda while allowing the West to adapt Asian rules and marking the end of the colonial phase of global history.

How Asian-led world order is emerging?

- **Economic integration:**
 - The mega trade deal is led by ASEAN, not by China, and includes Japan and Australia, military allies of the U.S.
 - The new frame goes beyond transfer of goods and services, focuses on integration and facilitating supply chains for sharing prosperity, requiring a very different calculus for assessment.
- **Rise of China and India:**
 - Both China and India are breaking the monopoly of the West in wireless telecommunications, AI and other emerging technologies.
 - India has also, in the UN, questioned Western domination calling for a "reformed multilateralism".
 - RCEP's **new rules on electronic commerce** could offset losses in declining trade in goods. 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' will leverage indigenous technological strength, data and population.
- **Declining power of west:**
 - Despite its military 'pivot' to Asia, the U.S. needs India in the Quad, to counterbalance the spread of China's influence through land-based trade links.
 - With the ASEAN '**code of conduct**' in the South China Sea, both the security and prosperity pillars of the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific construct will be adversely impacted.

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- The U.S. Congressional Research Service report identifies four key elements to strengthen its global governance:
 - Global leadership.
 - Defence and promotion of the liberal international order.
 - Defence and promotion of freedom, democracy, and human rights; and
 - Prevention of the emergence of regional hegemony in Eurasia.

What India needs to do?

- **Reduce dependence:** India needs a new strategic doctrine and mindset.
- **Focus on technology transfer:** With the Rafale aircraft purchase, India has recognised that there will be no technology transfer for capital equipment.
- **Modernisation:** Military Theatre Commands should be tasked with border defence giving the offensive role to cyber, missile and special forces based on endogenous capacity, effectively linking economic and military strength.
- **Infrastructure development:** The overriding priority should be infrastructure including electricity and fibre optic connectivity; self-reliance in semiconductors, electric batteries and solar panels; and skill development.
- **Counter china:** Leveraging proven digital prowess to complement the infrastructure of China's Belt and Road Initiative will win friends as countries value multi-polarity.
- **Joining RCEP:** The RCEP already includes India's priorities such as rules of origin, services and e-commerce also RCEP members have expressed their "strong will" to re-engage India, essentially to balance China.

There are compelling geopolitical and economic reasons for India in shaping the Asia-led order, which is not yet China-led, to secure an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

4. India- West Asia

Source: [Indian Express](#)

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

Context: Recently, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visited Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

What is the significance of West Asia to India?

- **Socio economic significance:** Gulf is a source of oil and a destination for labour exports. The UAE alone hosts nearly three million Indian expatriates and the Gulf as a whole hosts large labour force close to eight million.
- **New opportunities in the Gulf:** The Gulf states have embarked on massive economic diversification and are investing in a variety of new projects including renewable energy, higher education, technological innovation, smart cities, and space commerce.
- **Khaleeji Capitalism:** Gulf has become the source of capital that has been built on the massive accumulation of oil revenues over the last few decades. For example, sovereign wealth funds in the Gulf dominate several regional sectors from banking and finance to infrastructure and logistics etc.
- **Growing political influence:** The Gulf's financial power is increasingly translating into political influence and the ability to shape the broader regional issues in the Middle East. For example, have normalised relations with Israel, growing ability of the Gulf to influence regional conflicts from Afghanistan to Lebanon and from Libya to Somalia.

- **Reforms in Social order:** For example, the UAE recently announced a series of legal changes that make the Emirates an attractive destination for foreign workers such as decriminalization of alcohol use, permission for cohabitation among unmarried couples, criminalization of honour crimes against women, and the institution of long-term visas.
- **Security in Indian ocean:** The UAE currently chairs the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), friendly relation with gulf countries can bring scale and depth to its regional initiatives on connectivity and security in the Indian Ocean.

What are the roadblocks in strengthening India-West Asia ties?

- India's narrow bureaucratic approach towards the Gulf was incapable of a political engagement with the region's interests. For example, India viewed gulf countries through the prism of Pakistan.
- The Indian elite has long viewed the Gulf as a collection of extractive Petro-states run by conservative feudatories.
- There is a wide gap between the investments that the Gulf is ready to offer and India's ability to absorb needs. For example, in 2015, Abu Dhabi committed to invest \$75 billion in India. Still, India is a long distance away from facilitating that scale of investments.
- India provided very little attention to the significant reforms unfolding in the Gulf that seek to reduce the heavy hand of religion on social life, expand the rights of women, widen religious freedoms, promote tolerance, and develop a national identity.

How India's perspectives on the Western Indian Ocean have changed recently?

- From 2015, India has acknowledged the strategic significance of the Indian ocean island states such as mauritius and Seychelles. Since then, South Block has brought Madagascar and Comoros along with Mauritius and Seychelles into the Indian Ocean Division.
- India also unveiled a maritime strategic partnership with France, a resident and influential power in the Western Indian Ocean.
- India became an observer at the Indian Ocean Commission, the regional grouping that brings France's island territory of Reunion together with Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, and Seychelles.
- India has also become an observer to the Djibouti Code of Conduct — a regional framework for cooperation against piracy between the states of the Gulf, the Horn of Africa and East Africa.

With Gulf economies reinventing themselves, India now has every reason to support the Gulf rulers who are trying to reverse course and promote political and social moderation at home and in the region. India needs to discard outdated perceptions of the Gulf and seize the new strategic possibilities with the region.

5. Kerala's new 118A law

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- GS 2 – Polity - 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 - The Kerala cabinet recommended to the Governor the promulgation of the ordinance to insert Section 118 (A) into the Act.

What is Kerala's new 118A law?

The new Section 118A has been introduced in the Kerala Police Act, 2011.

According to the new law- The state government recommendation to amend the police act says that if the government finds any media platform including social media producing, publishing or propagating content that could threaten, insult or harm an individual

- The amendment proposes three years in prison and a fine of up to ₹ 10,000 for those found guilty.
- The state officials said this would give law enforcers more teeth to prosecute the guilty, media houses said the law could be used to gag them.

Why the law being criticized?

1. **Threat to free speech-** It is being seen as an attempt to stifle not only dissent but also freedom of speech and expression.
 - In 2015, the Supreme Court in the **Shreya Singhal case** had struck down Section 66A of the Information Technology Act and Section 118D of the Kerala Police Act, finding both provisions unconstitutionally vague and thus violative of free speech rights. [Article 19].
2. **Vulnerable to misuse-** The law is unspecific and indistinct and can be indiscriminately misused by individuals or even the government and the police.
3. **Granted the police untrammelled authority-** It empower police to suo motu interpret and deal with "offensive" communication and make arrests without a warrant.
4. Though the Kerala government claims it is to fight cyber-crimes against women, that has not found any mention in the law either.

What is the way forward?

The amendment would reverse the course of media freedom, muzzle free speech and undermine civil liberties.

- The greatest danger of such legislation is that if the Ordinance is not withdrawn by the Kerala government, it will act as an example to other states to frame similar laws of their own.

6. Contribution and Criticism of Supreme Court

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- GS 2 - Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.

Context- Criticism is the hallmark of a prosperous democracy, but unfounded and unrestrained criticism is harmful rather than contributive.

Why judiciary is the strongest pillar on which the edifice of Indian democracy stands?

1. India ranks in the top one-third of nations in efficiency of the legal framework to challenge regulations and in judicial independence.
2. At the cost of being criticized for over-interference, the courts have strained to protect the life, liberty and the quality of life of citizens.
3. India's overburdened judiciary has been epitome of a free and independent judiciary worldwide.
- On the other hand, US Supreme Court only accepts 100-150 of the more than 7,000 cases it is asked to review annually. In 2016-2017, only 92 cases were heard by the UK SC.

How Indian judiciary system is different from Poland, Hungary and Turkey?

1. **In Poland**- The legislative proposal aimed to ban judges from obeying the orders from their own Supreme Court making them liable for prosecution.
2. **In Turkey**- Thousands of Turkey's judges and prosecutors have been sacked or jailed as Erdogan's government wields the judiciary against its opponents.
 - They have been replaced by loyal and inexperienced newcomers, some in their 20s, plunging the courts into crisis.
 - By a new law, most of the 711 judges of the two highest courts will also be removed.
3. **In Hungary** - The Hungarian parliament is planning to establish a government-influenced judiciary system, apart from the ordinary courts, to establish direct political control over the judiciary.

Therefore, such a comparison is unjustified and unfounded to the Indian scenario.

Examples of Supreme Court landmark decision-

- SC ordered floor test within 24 hours in Maharashtra that led to the resignation of Devendra Fadnavis as chief minister.
- Defending LGBTQ and transgender rights.
- SC rules in favour of permanent commission to women officers and guaranteeing them the same terms of employment as men.
- Upheld the supremacy of the RTI Act over the Official Secrets Act.
- SC brought India's most polarising case to a peaceful close through its Ayodhya judgment.

Way forward-

- Judicial barbarism is an extremely unjust and unfair description of the conduct of the Supreme Court.
- **Constructive criticism** – People should try and strengthen institutions with balanced and constructive critique and not slowly nibble at their foundation by constant badgering and berating.

7. India exits RCEP

Source - [Live Mint](#)

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

Context – India's decision to stay out of the China-backed RCEP agreement and its significance.

What is RCEP and its significance?

Launched in 2012, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership is a trade pact between the 10-member ASEAN bloc, along with China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. However, India had been due to sign but pulled out last year.

Objective-

- The purpose of the deal is to create an **integrated market**.
- **Mega Trade deal**- It was described as the "largest" regional trading agreement as it covers nearly a third of the global population, contribute over a quarter of world exports and makeup around 30% of the GDP.

Significance of RCEP-

- The agreement simplifies customs procedures and rules-of-origin laws between countries.
- **Low tariff rate**- RCEP countries have agreed to progressively abolish 90% of all tariffs on goods between participating members.

- The agreement focused on diversifying trading partners, solidifying supply chains, and achieving economic and job growth through a pan-regional trade agreement.

What are the reasons for India's withdrawal from RCEP?

1. **Trade balance paradox**- India has trade deficits with 11 of the 15 RCEP countries, and some experts feel that India has been unable to leverage its existing bilateral free trade agreements with several RCEP members to increase exports.
2. **Dumping of Chinese Goods**- This is the major concern for India, as after signing RCEP cheaper products from China would have flooded the Indian market.
3. **Import might harm domestic producers**- It raised alarm about market access issues, fearing its domestic producers could be hard hit if the country was flooded with cheap Chinese goods.
 - Textiles, dairy, and agriculture were flagged as three vulnerable industries.
4. **Shallow agreement**- RCEP does not contain provision on issues like environmental protections, labour rights or intellectual property.
5. There is no investor-state dispute settlement system in RCEP.
6. **China's presence**- Apart from economic reasons (fear of dumping), escalating tensions with China are a major reason for India's hardened position on the deal.

What are the implications of India's decision of opting out?

1. **Benefits China**- RCEP is a China-backed trade deal, signing it without India will further strengthen China's economic power.
 - It will affect India's neighbourhood as China already tries to influence the region through its deep pockets.
2. India remains outside the institutionalized orbit where future discussions, amendments, additions and revisions to RCEP could occur.
 - Such discussions and potential rules will facilitate trade not just between the Asean but the other five.
3. **Losing out on Large Market**- The move could potentially leave India with less scope to tap the large market that RCEP presents.
4. Positive institutional effects of RCEP must not be underestimated as trade patterns evolve in this region. Indian firms will find it tough to adapt to a regional market.

Way forward-

- RCEP's institutional legacy could have far-reaching effects such as fostering trust, creating standards, fixing gap.
- India's absence from the Asia-Pacific trade treaty will solidify its insular economic orientation and hurt innovation.

8. India-EU trade

Source- [The Hindu Business Line](#)

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

Context- The recently concluded 15th Summit of India and EU, the broad consensus that emerged is to strengthen the EU-India Strategic Partnership.

India-EU areas of convergence-

- India's largest trading partner, while India is the EU's ninth biggest trading partner.
- India is among the few nations that run a surplus in services trade with the EU.

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- Both share similar 'universal values' of democracy, pluralism, respect for international institutions and multilateralism.
- Share common interest in tackling climate change, and building trade.

However, India's exports in the competitive EU market are not doing well such as-

- **Agriculture Commodities-** Apart from processed rice, the share of India's agriculture commodities in EU's import is invariably less than 3 per cent.
- **Marine products** - EU imports more from ASEAN than India despite its longer coastline.
- **Labour intensive products-** Bangladesh exports more such products like apparels and leather products than India.
- **pharmaceutical sector-** EU imports more by-products of same (chemicals, rubber plastic products) from China and ASEAN than India

What are the reasons for lower share of Indian export in the EU market?

1. **High production cost** in India leading to higher import cost in EU market compared to other countries;
2. **High logistics costs and poor connectivity** that make Indian exports uncompetitive in EU market.
3. **Inefficiency in trade facilitation** measures leading to high cost of export or consignments being rejected, which has spill-over effects.
4. India's exports being subjected to **higher para-tariff** in comparison to other countries.
5. **India's exports not meeting the European standard.** Indian products have been rejected/ banned due to failure to comply with EU standards and this legacy is affecting India's exports.

How India can boost EU trade?

1. **Reduction on production cost-** Advance logistics/trade facilitation measures can keep the production cost low which increases the competitiveness.
2. **Better infrastructure-** This leads to lower logistic cost and faster and direct connectivity of consignment to Europe.
3. **Enhancing connectivity-** Facilitating people's mobility and connectivity to improve mutual understanding and create opportunities for innovation and growth.
4. **Following Chinese strategy-** Indian products have been rejected/banned due to failure to comply with EU standard. On the flip side, China produces goods complying with European standards at higher price than what they produce for African/Indian market. This way, China protects their brand value and manages cost.

Way forward-

Indian producer needs to pay much more attention to complying with specific EU market standards.

9. Protecting Article 32

Source: Indian Express

Gs2: Indian Constitution—Historical Underpinnings, Evolution, Features, Amendments, Significant Provisions and Basic Structure.

Context: The Chief Justice of India is reported to have stated during the hearing of journalist Siddique Kappan's bail matter, that the Court was trying to "discourage" recourse to Article 32.

What does article 32 says?

- The right to move the Supreme Court by appropriate proceedings for the enforcement of the rights conferred by this Part is guaranteed.
- CJI M Hidayatullah in Tilokchand (1970) said that what Article 32 does is to keep open “the doors of this court” and requires the state not to put any hindrance to a person seeking to approach the Court.

What are exceptions to the article 32?

- The Court regards Article 32 as a judicial power subject to the **fundamental principles of administration of justice**.
- It does not mean that the Court must ignore and trample under foot all laws of procedure, evidence, limitation, res judicata and the like.
- Justice MP Thakkar and Kanubhai Brahmabhatt observed that time for imposing self-discipline has already come, even if it involves shedding of some amount of institutional ego and to inspire confidence in the litigants that justice will be meted out to them.
- Even if there is a constitutional right to remedies it remains **subject to the discipline of judicial power and process**.
- **Article 33** clearly says that the right will not extend to the members of armed forces.
- Justice Patnaik maintains that the article 33 and 34 will not eclipse the right of a person detained without the authority of law to move for habeas corpus.

How the new facets of article 32 evolved?

- In 1950, it has ruled that powers under Article 32 are not limited to the exercise of prerogative writs.
- In 1987 the Court ruled that it has powers to rule for compensation of violation of fundamental rights.
- In 1999 it said that this power extended to the rectification of its own mistakes or errors.
- The Court has also upheld (in 1997) the 50th amendment enlarging the scope of this article against a challenge of the basic structure of the Constitution.

What are the issues have been raised?

- CJI or the Court as a whole should not suffer from epistemic collapse so as to receive sharp reminders and rebukes from citizen commentators.
- Article 32 does not merely confer wide powers on the Court but also the judicial duty to provide constitutional remedies.
- Lawyers and justices know what distinguishes Article 32 from Article 226 is the very dimension of it. HCs have the **discretion** to act or not to.
- **Article 32 is not absolute**. The Supreme Court decides on what “appropriate proceedings” should be for it to be so moved.
- **Discrimination in bail** where one case is fast tracked whereas others are consigned to slow moving judicial action.
- **Scandalous judicial delays** and a bold resolution of “who watches the watchman” syndrome demand urgent response.

Article 32 makes the apex court into a “people’s court” and in future we should be able to conclude that the Court did not deliberately dealt deathblows to the “soul” of the Constitution.

10. Power of Pardon

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Gs2: Structure, Organization and Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

Context: Recently, US President Donald Trump exercised his powers under the Constitution to pardon Michael Flynn, his former National Security Advisor

What is the extent of the US President's power to pardon?

- **Constitutional right:** The President of the US has the **constitutional right to pardon** or commute sentences related to federal crimes.
- **No restriction:** The US Supreme Court has held that this power is **"granted without limit"** and cannot be restricted by Congress.
- **Discretionary power:** Clemency is a broad executive power, and is discretionary. The President is not answerable for his pardons, and does not have to provide a reason for issuing one.

What are the limitations?

- Article II, Section 2 of the US Constitution says all Presidents shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offenses against the United States, **except in Cases of Impeachment.**
- The power only applies to **federal crimes and not state crimes.**
- Those pardoned by the President can still be tried under the **laws of individual states.**

What is the frequency of usage of pardoning power during different Presidents?

- In 2017, Trump pardoned former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who was found guilty of being in **contempt of court** for ignoring a federal judge's order to stop arresting immigrants solely on the suspicion that they were residing in the US illegally.
- In four years, Trump has granted pardons to 29 people (including Flynn) and 16 commutations.
- President Barack Obama had, during his eight-year tenure, issued 212 pardons and 1,715 commutations.
- The only other President who can be compared with Trump for infrequent use of the power is George H W Bush, who granted 77 clemency requests during his one-term tenure.
- The highest number of clemency grants by a US President (3,796) came during Franklin D Roosevelt's 12-year tenure, which coincided with World War II.

How Indian President pardons?

- **Not discretionary:** the President has to act on the advice of the Council of Ministers while deciding mercy pleas. These include **Maru Ram vs Union of India in 1980, and Dhananjoy Chatterjee vs State of West Bengal in 1994.**
- **Article 72:** the President shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence where the sentence is a sentence of death.
- **Article 161:** the Governor too has pardoning powers, but these do not extend to death sentences.
- **Executive power with defined procedure:** The President cannot exercise his power of pardon independent of the government. The mercy plea is forwarded to the Home Ministry, seeking the Cabinet's advice. The Ministry forwards this to the concerned

state government based on the reply, it formulates its advice on behalf of the Council of Ministers.

- **Final decision making:** Article 74(1) empowers President to return cabinet's advice for reconsideration once. If the Council of Ministers decides against any change, the President has no option but to accept it.

11. India - US future cooperation

Source: The Hindu

Syllabus: GS-2- International relations

Context: The future looks bright for U.S.-India trade, but it may not be any easier.

More on news:

- **Constructive stance:** There will be a more constructive stance on multilateral issues in the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- **In bilateral trade policies:** The Biden administration is likely to emphasise enforcement, and that will not differ so much. It is less likely to engage in unilateral tariff increases and more likely to pursue remedies in the WTO.

What are the five likely developments to take place under Biden's rule?

- **Domestic concerns:** Biden plans to focus on domestic concerns first, particularly in implementing a coherent COVID-19 policy.
- Trade aspects may have limited early relevance for a future U.S.-India trade policy.
- **Trade priorities:** As it turns to trade policy, the Biden administration is not likely to place India among its top few priorities.
- Whether it should prioritise concluding Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with the U.K. in April before the Trade Promotion Authority expires.
- **Other top priorities:**
- Resolving the Airbus-Boeing dispute with the European Union.
- Formulating its approach with China, such as finding alternatives to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership to set new global standards that address China's practices.
- **Trade agreement with India:** The trade deal still pending with the Trump administration remains compelling. There could be an early opportunity to conclude these negotiations.
- This trade agreement could pave the way for later additional small agreements.
- **Trade policy forum:** The Biden administration will see the TPF's value as a venue for more regular discussions on a range of trade issues.
- A refreshed TPF will present new opportunities for the two countries to take up a range of cutting-edge trade issues that will be critical in determining whether the U.S. and India can converge more over time or will drift further apart.
- These include digital trade issues, intellectual property rights and approaches to nurturing innovation, better health sector alignment, and more regular regulatory work on science-based agricultural policies.

Way forward

It will be critical for leadership on both sides to commit to strong efforts to put the trade relationship on a new footing, which will have to involve a 'can-do' attitude to solving problems.

12. Ayush and Ayurveda

Source: The Hindu

Syllabus: GS-2- Health

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Context: Recently, the Indian Medical systems of Ayurveda, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Unani Medicine have identified surgical procedures that can be performed by postgraduate Ayurvedic doctors in Shalya (surgery).

What is the history of Ayurveda and Allopathic practices in India?

- **After Independence:** The Indian state was faced with the difficult task of accommodating both the ascendant modern medicine brought in by the British and India's traditional systems of medicine, notably Ayurveda.
 - **Options:**
- One was to take the best from all systems and integrate them into one cohesive science. This was possible but not easy as the systems had certain incompatible approaches.
- For a brief period there actually existed 'integrated' courses, wherein both Ayurveda and Modern medicine were taught to students.
- These withered away partly due to opposition from purists in Ayurveda who were outraged by the 'dilution' of their science.

Discuss the issues associated with ayurvedic graduates.

- **Ayurvedic graduates experienced an identity crisis:** Many of them had joined the course not for the love of Ayurveda but to get a degree with the honorific 'Dr.' which gave them upward mobility, social status and even value in the marriage market.
- **Their role:** They became resident doctors, intensive care duty doctors and operation theatre assistant surgeons.
- There is an instance of a homoeopathic graduate manning and training others on the extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, or ECMO, a complex heart lung machine in the largest unit used for critically-ill COVID-19 patients.
- They work for less pay which allows hospitals to control costs and even make profits.
- **The idea of Ayurvedic surgeons:** In an effort to develop postgraduate programmes, Ayurveda medical colleges developed one in "Shalya" or "surgery".
- A procedure called 'Kshar Sutra' used for anal fistula was described in Ayurveda texts and has been incorporated in modern medicine.
- **Procedures and complexities**
- **Indian Medicine Central Council (Post Graduate Ayurveda Education) Amendment Regulations, 2020:** It authorises an MS (Ayurveda) Shalya Tantra, or General Surgery postgraduate degree holder on completion of his course to perform 58 surgical procedures.
- Some of the procedures in the list are rather complicated. For example, removal of the gallbladder called cholecystectomy.

What can be done?

- **Proper training:** Ayurveda graduates including surgeons are a large workforce in search of an identity. If they are creatively and properly trained, they can play important roles in our health-care system.
- **IMA needs to be constructive:** AYUSH, or Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy, is a priority area for the present government. The IMA in its opposition needs to be precise and constructive.

Way forward

Serious discussion about utilising India's large workforce of non MBBS doctors to improve access to decent health care for our ordinary citizens is required.

13. India's malnutrition challenge

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Context: There is need for an immediate universalisation of the PDS, distribution of quality food items and community kitchens.

What does the recent survey of the Hindu say?

- In this report, a schoolteacher had highlighted how girl students, who took admission in Standard five were relatively **shorter in height** than the previous year's batch of students.
- It was largely integrated with **malnutrition** that is burgeoning.
- Children from impoverished households not being able to have the mid-day meal many a time because of stomach-related problems.

What does the global reports say about malnutrition?

- The annual report on "The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020" by the Food and Agricultural Organization and the 2020 Hunger report, "Better Nutrition, Better Tomorrow" by the Bread for the World Institute have stated staggering facts about **Indian food insecurity and malnutrition**.
 - As per PoU and PMSFI India is one of the **most food-insecure countries**, with the highest rates of stunting and wasting among other South Asian countries.
 - The **Prevalence of Undernourishment(PoU)** measures the percentage of people who are consuming insufficient calories than their required minimum dietary energy requirement.
 - The **Prevalence of Moderate or Severe Food Insecurity (PMSFI)** identifies the percentage of people who live in households that are severely or moderately food insecure.
- **Food Insecurity Experience Scale survey**, which covers almost 90% of the world's population but not allowed to be conducted in India.
 - It indicates that between 2014-16, about 29.1% of the total population was food insecure, which rose up to 32.9% in 2017-19.
 - About 375 million of the total population was moderately or severely food insecure in 2014, which went to about 450 million in 2019.

What are the issues currently existing?

- **High incidence of malnutrition:** The reduction in poverty has been substantial going but malnutrition has not declined.
- **Poor performance:** In terms of percentages, the PoU has declined 24.7% between 2001 and 2018 for India; other data are China (76.4%), Nepal (74%), Pakistan (42%), Afghanistan (37.4%) and Bangladesh (18.9%).
- **Low consumption:** "Hunger Watch" survey by the Right to Food Campaign says with close to one out of every three respondents reporting low food consumption and massive compromise on food quality.
- **Double-whammy:** States have temporarily expanded their coverage in the wake of the crisis, the problem of malnutrition is likely to deepen in the coming years with rising **unemployment and the deep economic slump**.
- **Non inclusive National Food Security Act, 2013:** there is non-inclusion of nutritious food items such as pulses and exclusion of potential beneficiaries.

What need to be done?

- **Universalisation of the Public Distribution System:** It should focus on the distribution of quality food items and innovative interventions.
- **Focus on nutrition:** United Nations World Food Programme should bring focus back on pressing issues of undernourishment and hunger in India.

The need of the hour is the right utilisation and expansion of existing programmes to arrest at least some part of this burgeoning malnutrition in the country.

14. Post Truth politics

Source: The Hindu

Syllabus: GS-2- Democracy

Context: Untroubled by factuality and diversity, privilege and power are shaping public opinion in troubled democracies.

What is the relation between truth and politics?

- **“Factual truth”:** It is a reference to observations by living subjects of constantly changing reality. But factual truth was always prone to challenge as being no more than opinion.
- **“Formal truths”:** On the contrary, it is a part of the received wisdom, such as the proposition that two and two made four.
- **Truth and politics:** Both of them had always been “on rather bad terms with each other” and “truthfulness” was never counted “among the political virtues”.
 - This was a reality with a deep bearing on the practice of politics, since “facts and events”, the outcome of the collective life of humanity, were the “very texture of the political land”.

How is truth altered by deception?

- **Factuality:** The lie in normal circumstances is “defeated by reality”. However large the tissue of falsehood, even when twisted with the help of computers, it would be inadequate to “cover the immensity of factuality”.
- **Radical destruction:** A fact could be removed from the world if a sufficient number of people believe in its non-existence.
 - But this would require a process of “radical destruction”, an experiment that totalitarian regimes had undertaken with frightening consequences, though without the intended result of “lasting deception”.

What is the role of social media?

- **The role of social media:** Earlier modes of harvesting attention and securing assent for a particular perception of reality have been transformed in this intensely networked situation.
 - Since the events of 2016, notably the United Kingdom’s Brexit referendum and Donald Trump’s election as the U.S. President, social media has come in for intense scrutiny for its ability to create bubbles of political misinformation.
 - The economist, Raghuram Rajan, and the philosopher, Michael Sandel, have in recent times pointed out how daily lives in the U.S. today are increasingly about sameness, less about exposure to diversities of culture and social perception.
 - It is a context that enables particular population units to pretend that other worlds do not exist, that their perceptions, fortified in regular “check ins” with social media, are all that matter.
- **Customary deliberative processes have been dispensed with:** Parliament sessions conclude without the Question Hour and consultative meetings across party lines over significant legislative initiatives have been scrapped.

Way forward

Public opinion in democracies is now fashioned within cocoons of privilege and power, untroubled by factuality or diversities in perception. The U.S. seems to have tapped the sources of countervailing power to neutralise this drift towards a world of alternative truths.

15. Impact of COVID-19 on tribal communities

Source- [Down To Earth](#)

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

Context - The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on forest community and their spirited efforts to tackle it.

What are the problems faced by forest community during COVID-19?

1. **Losses of livelihood and shelter**-Due to sudden lockdown, the forest-dwelling communities who got stuck in the cities without any support system, shelter, food or water.
 - The lockdown measures have badly affected wage employment for tribal communities.
2. **Lack of health infrastructure**- The absence of healthcare facilities in tribal areas posing a serious threat to the tribal population.
3. **Problems accessing the PDS**- poor access to public distribution system among tribal people and other traditional forest dwellers during the lockdown.
4. **Loss of forest products collection season** - The other major challenge faced by tribal communities during the lockdown was the collection, use and sale of minor forest produce (MFP) with April-June being a peak season for generating their income.
 - According to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, around 100 million forest dwellers depend on MFP for food, shelter, medicines and having cash with them.
5. Tribals were not able to get direct cash benefits as they did not have bank accounts or banks were located in remote locations.

What are the government interventions to resolve the situation?

- **Revision in MSP** - The Centre recently revised the minimum support price for 49 MFPs to provide relief to tribal groups amid the lockdown. It urged states to speed up procurement operations for MFP
- FRA title holders are entitled to an additional 50 days of work under employment guarantee schemes.

How forest dwelling communities are braving the pandemic?

Examples indicate that these communities have coped with the crisis with remarkable resilience.

Case studies documented- Local communities and gram sabhas better understand the local complexities than local administrations while dealing with a crisis as presented by COVID-19.

- In each village, the Community Forest Rights Management Committees (CFRMCs) members identified families that were starving due to no income and provided ration to them.
- **Holistic COVID-19 governance plan**- Gram sabhas encouraged local and forest-based food security, thereby preventing crowding in market places.

- **Use of local knowledge** - Many communities were able to survive on a diverse range of forest foods during the lockdown as they had been regenerating their natural forests for over four decades.
- Women played the leading role in the gram sabhas, organising systems to work with social distancing.
- In many tribal communities, they made face masks of leaves to cover their faces due to non-availability of protective masks in the areas.

Way forward

- The above examples lead to an understanding that community empowerment, particularly by ensuring tenure security and devolving natural resource governance and management power, can restore ecosystems, create sustainable economies and community resilience to cope with the natural and human-induced calamities such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Government need to learn from these stories of resilience and works towards effective implementation of the FRA.
- The Centre should provide state governments with adequate financial resources to ensure tribal communities and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers receive cash entitlements.

16. Social registry, for better targeting of welfare schemes

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Gs2: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes

Context: A social registry linking Aadhaar to residence info can target aid to the vulnerable during a pandemic.

What is the need for Social registry?

- Recent estimates from the World Bank suggest that 88 to 115 million people could slide into poverty in 2020, which presents a tough challenge for targeting welfare beneficiaries.
- It also emphasises the need for post-disaster revalidation of any existing social registration database.

Case study: challenge of targeting welfare beneficiaries: Examples from India and US welfare programs

The case of US:

- Few months back, the US government enacted the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act that sends \$1,200 to each individual below the income threshold of \$75,000 to provide relief on account of the COVID-19 to poor and middle-class individuals and to stimulate the economy.
- However, according to The Washington Post millions of households were yet to receive their stimulus payments.
- The reason is, account information was available only for taxpayers who received their refunds in their bank accounts whereas, for the poor, whose incomes were below the income threshold, the authorities find difficulty in reaching them leading to exclusion from safety nets.

India's Case:

- Under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY), an ex-gratia payment of Rs 500 was credited to women Jan Dhan account holders.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of November (Fourth week), 2020

- Similarly, Farmers registered for PM-KISAN also received Rs 2,000 in their accounts immediately.
- However, the money did not reach the most vulnerable households. For example, recipients of PM-KISAN were not amongst the poorest households. Data from round-3 of the NCAER Delhi Coronavirus Telephonic Survey (DCVTS-3), suggests that 21 per cent of farm households received transfers through PM-KISAN. However, 42 per cent of such households belonged to the wealthiest.
- Similarly, for the PMJDY payment, BPL and non-BPL households record similar receipt transfers. For example, nearly half of poor women are unlikely to receive PMJDY transfers.

What can we learn from these observations?

- Authorities need a registry containing data about individuals and the individual must have a functioning bank accounts for money to be transferred expeditiously.
- However, registries based on specific criteria (for example, identified BPL households) may not identify individuals most vulnerable to crises.
- The reason for this is, factors that contribute towards alleviating poverty may differ from the ones that push people into it that pose a challenge of targeting welfare beneficiaries.
- For example, about 40 per cent of the poor in 2012 were pushed into poverty by special circumstances and would not have been classified as being poor based on their 2005 conditions.

Can, the Universal social protection schemes can solve the problem of exclusion errors in welfare targeting?

- It will lead to serious fiscal impacts if expanded nationwide because most disasters are geographically clustered.
- For example, Floods or earthquakes often devastate a few districts not all, similarly pandemics may affect densely-populated cities more than villages.
- Hence Universal social protection schemes can benefit the well off more than the needy.

What is the way forward?

- Need to set up social registries that identify individuals, their place of residence, and their bank accounts, these linkages can be used to transfer funds to everyone living in the affected area quickly.
- Aadhaar linkages of individuals and bank accounts already exist. If residential information in the Aadhaar database can be efficiently structured, this would allow for geographic targeting.

Any social registry that can serve as a potential beneficiary platform for safety nets inherently runs the risk of violating individual privacy. To avoid privacy issues, such social registries can be allowed to store only basic information such as location, instead of more sensitive identifiers.

17. Supreme Court on Protecting Rights of People

News: The Supreme Court has pronounced its reasons for granting interim bail to Republic TV editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami in connection with the abetment of suicide case against him.

Facts:

Key Takeaways from the Judgement:

- **Protect Personal Liberty:** The Supreme Court called on judges to protect personal liberty and the right of ordinary people to bail saying liberty is not a gift for the few and deprivation of liberty even for a single day is one day too many.
- **Importance of Bail:** The apex court invoked the case of State of Rajasthan, Jaipur v Balchand and referred to Justice Krishna Iyer's statement that "basic rule of our criminal justice system is bail, not jail".
- **Courts as first line of Defence:** The Courts must ensure that they continue to remain the first line of defence when citizens' liberty is deprived. But in reality, undertrials remained behind bars while their bail applications were lobbed from one rung of courts to another.
- **Pending Bail Pleas:** The court highlighted that 91,568 bail pleas were pending in High Courts, while 1.96 lakh bail applications continued to wait for a hearing in the district courts. Hence, it urged the judges in charge of these courts to utilise tools at their disposal to address this pendency.
- **Importance of District Courts:** The district courts are only subordinate in hierarchy. It is less to none when it comes to saving the lives of citizens or doing justice for them. Hence, the district judiciary must be alive to the situation as it prevails on the ground – in the jails and police stations where human dignity has no protector.

General Studies Paper - 3

General Studies - 3

1. Relook agriculture subsidies

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 dire need to shift the nature of support to farmers from input subsidies to investment subsidies.

What are the main reason of air pollution in India and its impact?

- 1. Stubble Burning** - Practice of farmers setting fire to plant debris that remain in farms after harvest.
 - It emits large amounts of toxic pollutants in the atmosphere which contain harmful gases like methane, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds (VOC) and carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.
 - Farm fires have been an easy way to get rid of paddy stubble quickly and at low cost for several years.
- 2. Atmospheric Ammonia** - Ammonia is a gaseous compound of nitrogen that combines with other pollutants in the air to form aerosols which affect public health and the climate.
 - The **Indo-Gangetic Plains** are global hotspot of ammonia emission due to intense agricultural activities and a large concentration of fertilizer industries.
 - Chemical fertilizers are the largest contributors to nitrogen emission.
 - Researchers found that fertilizer consumption was directly linked to the amount of ammonia in the air.
- 3. Other factors** causing air pollution includes vehicular pollution, dust, and dip in temperatures, firecrackers, construction activities and open waste burning.

What are the impacts of Agri-subsidies?

- Power subsidies have not only led to an alarming overuse of groundwater, but also it has severely damaged the health of power distribution companies.
- Increase in the stock piles of grains.
- Rising ammonia pollution.
- Subsidized Urea has led to massive overuse of nitrogenous fertilizers, leading to damaged soils and pollution of local water bodies.

What is the way forward?

- 1. Crop diversification-** The conversion of paddy areas in this belt to orchards with drip irrigation, vegetables, corn, cotton, pulses and oilseeds, that consume much less water, much less power and fertilizers and don't create stubble to burn.
 - The approach to diversification has to be demand-led, the role of the private sector in building value chains will be critical.
- 2. Direct cash transfer to farmers-** Instead of subsidizing fertilizers, direct cash transfers can be made to farmers. With fixed amounts, farmers will likely cut down their usage of fertilizers in the interest of soil health as prices of fertilizers will be decontrolled.

These measures could double farmers' incomes, promote efficiency in resource use, and reduce pollution.

2. Trade openness and globalization

Source-[The Hindu](#)

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

Context- India's External Affairs Minister believes that the economic growth that has accrued from globalization is not a good enough outcome for India.

What are the views of External Affairs Minister on globalization and trade pacts?

1. Trade pacts and globalization have allowed other countries 'unfair' trade and manufacturing advantages "in the name of openness".
2. The effect of past trade agreements has been to de-industrialize some sectors.
3. The consequences of future ones would lock us into global commitments, many of them not to our advantage.
4. Employment challenge was created by trade.
5. Trade agreements have made India over-dependent on imports.

Views of critics-

- Between 1995-2018- India's overall export growth averaged 13.4 percent per year.
- India's manufacturing exports (in dollars) grew on average by 12.1%, nearly twice the world average.

What are the proposed reasons for India's slowed down exports?

1. **Strong rupee approach** - The current government "strong rupee" approach is among the chief causes that have been shown to have slowed down exports. The real effective exchange rate has appreciated by about 20% since 2014.
2. **Low export competitiveness**- India's own supply side constraints and bottlenecks, i.e., its difficult regulatory environment, poor logistics quality, inadequate and inefficient trade infrastructure, and high transactions costs, among others, all of which hurt export competitiveness.
 - This low ease of doing business relative to other exporting countries has further eroded the competitiveness of Indian exports.
3. **Policy errors**- India's share in industrial production and manufactured exports in the world economy has declined steadily in last six years, coinciding with the phase of corruption scandals, a severe banking crisis, demonetization and a badly designed GST.

How trade openness and globalization can solve these problems?

1. **Generating employment**- Openness to trade is important to India for generating employment in the post-COVID-19 world.
2. **Globalization and India**
 - India has been one of the major beneficiaries of economic globalization — a fact attested by IMF.
 - Post-1991, the Indian economy grew at a faster pace, ushering in an era of economic prosperity.
 - Poverty in rural and urban India, which stood at close to 40% in 2004-05, almost halved to about 20% by 2011-12.

Way forward-

- To denounce trade openness and globalization at this point is also poor timing.

- **Strong rupee policy-** led to the surge in imports of goods and services preferred by non-rich Indians, and a measurable loss of competitiveness in labor-intensive exports. On the flip side, the disadvantages Indian exporters have long struggled against the substantially higher logistics remain as burdensome.

3. Controlling AMR

Source: Down to Earth

Syllabus: GS-3- Science & Technology

Context: A One Health approach is necessary to control antimicrobial resistance.

More on news:

- **India an important locus for the generation of resistance genes:** The multi-drug resistance determinant, New Delhi Metallo-beta-lactamase-1 (NDM-1), emerged from this region and spread globally.
- **The containment of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in India:** It is central to the global effort to address this threat.
- In India, over 56,000 newborn deaths each year occur due to sepsis, caused by organisms that are resistant to first line antibiotics.

How are antibiotics categorised?

- **Categories:** WHO has categorised antibiotics into
 - “Access” which should be widely available,
 - “Watch” to be limited to specific indications,
 - “Reserve”, to be used as a last-resort.
- In 2015, India had the highest consumption rate worldwide for oxazolidinones, which have been defined by WHO as “Reserve” antibiotics.

What are the reasons for prevalence of AMR in India?

- **Lack of formal training:** Many medical practitioners lack formal training in India and 70 per cent of primary healthcare is delivered by such individuals.
- Sales companies target both doctors as well as those acting in a medical capacity without required qualifications.
- **Biased information:** Pharmaceutical sales representatives are a key source of updates and information for prescribers, but the information they provide may be biased and motivated by commercial considerations to promote antibiotic sales.
- **Sale of antibiotics without prescription:** The sale of antibiotics without a prescription is prohibited under Schedule H1, which has been supported by the red line campaign but it is not widely enforced.
- **The lack of access:** The lack of access, due to geographical distance or affordability, to medical professionals and prescribers, in rural areas of India, leads 50 per cent of people to buy antibiotics directly from the pharmacy as a first choice.
- **Falsified, substandard or counterfeit antimicrobials:** It can worsen AMR in several ways. They can leave patients under-dosed and bacteria that are only partially suppressed may be more likely to evolve resistance.
- **Contamination:** Effluents from multinational pharmaceutical companies contain active antibiotics, resistant bacteria and resistant genes.
 - They contaminate rivers, streams and wells, including waters which are used for drinking and bathing. This increases both the emergence of resistant bacteria in local populations and also their spread.

What can be done?

- **Access to basic antibiotics:** An estimated 170,000 deaths from pneumonia in children under five can be prevented with timely access to effective antibiotics.
- **Balance excessive and inappropriate use:** It is a key driver of antibiotic resistance, while ensuring life-saving medicines are available to those who need them.
- **Adequate sanitation:** Half of the South Asian population lacked access to basic sanitation in 2018. The Swachh Bharat Mission in India has improved access to toilets in many areas.
- **Improvement in infrastructure:** Improvements in the infrastructure required for and access to clean water, adequate sanitation and quality hygiene in India could result in a reduction of 590 million diarrheal cases by 2020 that would have been treated with antibiotics.
- **Vaccination coverage:** Vaccination has shown to reduce the transmission of AMR infections and the volume of antibiotics consumed.
 - Mission Indradhanush to address low vaccination coverage strengthened micro-planning and additional mechanisms to improve monitoring and accountability.

Way forward

- One objective of the Indian National Action Plan (NAP) on AMR is to develop standards to ensure that access to effective antibiotics.
- Sustainable antibiotic production methods need to be developed and adopted by manufacturers.

4. One Health Approach

Source: The Hindu

Syllabus: GS-3- Environment

Context: 'One Health' is the optimum approach to counter the impact of antimicrobial resistance.

Discuss antimicrobial resistance.

- **Antimicrobial resistance (AMR):** It is the resistance acquired by any microorganism (bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasite, etc.) against antimicrobial drugs such as antibiotics that are used to treat infections.
- **Reason for AMR:**
 - The ingenuity and survival instinct of germs.
 - The irrational use of antibiotics in humans and animals.
- **The long-term impact of AMR:** AMR is estimated to cause 10 million deaths annually by 2050, unless concerted actions are initiated now. It will result in 7.5 % reduction in livestock production and negatively impact the global GDP by 3.5%.

How can we tackle the AMR challenge?

- **Solutions to combat the AMR threat:**
 - Discovery of new drugs, before the emergence of resistance in germs.
 - Prudent use of available antibiotics
- **Challenge in producing new antibiotics:** it is an expensive and unpredictable process. No new class of antibiotics has been developed since 1984. The estimated cost for developing a new antibiotic exceeds \$1 billion.
- Only one option: to use the available antibiotics carefully to ensure their efficacy for as long as possible.

- **The World Health Organization Global Action Plan:** it provides a road map for tackling this challenge. Almost 80 countries have developed their respective national action plans in alignment with this Plan.

Elaborate on how the one health approach supports focussed actions on the human-animal-environment interface.

- **The 'One Health' approach:** The rational use of antibiotics in humans, animals, and agriculture warrants coordinated action in all sectors. These multi-sectoral, multidisciplinary and multi-institutional actions constitute the 'One Health' approach.
- It is reinforced by the fact that all the epidemics in the current millennium (SARS, MERS, bird flu and COVID-19) have originated from animals because of unwanted excursion of humans into animal domains.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised the urgency of implementing One Health.
- **One platform for experts:** This effort utilises existing expertise and infrastructure in various sectors with a focus on inter-sectoral coordination, collaboration, and communication.
- **Human-animal-environment interface:** The approach supports focussed actions on the human-animal-environment interface for the prevention, detection and response to the public health events that influence global health and food security.
- **Implementation of One Health:** It permits a strong and continuous national narrative on zoonoses. It advocates a multi-sectoral response to public health problems, particularly pandemics, as also to address issues related to AMR.

Way forward

- There is a need to optimally utilise emerging technologies to improve human health and development. One Health has been acknowledged as the optimum approach to counter the impact of AMR and future pandemics and must be adopted expeditiously.

5. Corporate houses in Indian banking

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context: Recently, an Internal Working Group of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended that corporate houses be given bank licences.

Background

- Earlier, in 2013, the RBI had issued similar guidelines permitting corporate and industrial houses to apply for a banking licence. However, no corporate was given a bank licence as none of the applicants had met 'fit and proper' criteria.
- In 2014, the RBI, reversed its earlier decision and prohibited the entry of corporate houses into banking based upon the Committee on Financial Sector Reforms (2008) suggestion that opined it is premature to allow industrial houses to own banks.
- Now, an Internal Working Group of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has once again recommended for providing bank licences to corporate houses.

What are the Pros and Cons of letting corporate houses to operate banks?

Pros:

- Corporate houses will bring capital and expertise to banking.
- In many countries corporate houses were not barred from banking.

Cons

- **Interconnected lending:** They can use banks to provide finance to customers and suppliers of their businesses.
- **Concentration of economic power.**
- **Exposure of the safety net** provided to banks to commercial sectors of the economy.
- **Fund diversification:** by turning banks into a source of funds for their own businesses.
- **Impact of Non entities on banks growth:** Banks owned by corporate houses will be exposed to the risks of the non-bank entities of the group.
- **Privatisation of Public banks in the long run:** For example, Public sector banks need capital that the government is unable to provide. The entry of corporate houses will result in the possibility of cash rich corporate bank acquiring cash trapped public sector banks which is a serious concern about financial stability.

Why Tracing interconnected lending will be a challenge?

- The Internal Working Group suggests that, before corporate houses are allowed to enter banking, the RBI must be equipped with a legal framework to deal with interconnected lending and a mechanism to effectively supervise conglomerates that venture into banking.

However, there are challenges while dealing with interconnected lending.

- **Multi sector cooperation required:** Monitoring of transactions of corporate houses will require the cooperation of various law enforcement agencies.
- **Crony capitalism:** Corporate houses can use their political clout to thwart such cooperation.
- **No prevention possible:** The RBI can only react to interconnected lending ex-post; it will not be able to prevent such exposure.
- **Complex process:** In case, even if RBI could trace interconnected lending, any action taken on corporate will only cause a flight of deposits from the bank concerned and precipitate its failure.
- **Regulator credibility at stake:** The regulator would be under enormous pressure to compromise on regulation. Pitting the regulator against powerful corporate houses could end up damaging the regulator.

Why the Internal Working Group of the RBI has recommended so?

- Under the present policy, NBFCs with a successful track record of 10 years are allowed to convert themselves into banks.
- There are corporate houses that are already present in banking-related activities through ownership of Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs).
- The Internal Working Group believes that NBFCs owned by corporate houses should be eligible for such conversion.
- The Internal Working Group argues that corporate-owned NBFCs have been regulated for a while. The RBI understands them well. Hence, some of the concerns regarding the entry of these corporates into banking may get mitigated.

India's banking sector needs reform but corporate houses owning banks will not be the one that is required as of now.

6. Central Trade Unions strike

Source- [The Hindu](#)

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Syllabus- GS 3 - Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Context- Trade unions called for nationwide strike to protest government policies.

Why Central Trade Union (CTUs) have called for a nation-wide strike and what are the demands

Central Trade unions called for national wide strike to protest against anti-farmer laws, anti-worker labour codes, privatization of public sector and the corporatization policies of the government.

Trade union's demands-

- The demands of the joint platform include cash transfer of Rs 7,500 per month for all non-income tax paying families and 10 kilograms free ration per person per month to all needy people.
- **Expansion of MGNREGA**, the rural employment guarantee scheme, to provide 200 days' work in a year in rural areas at enhanced wages and also extension of the employment guarantee to urban areas.
- Withdrawal of the "draconian circular on forced premature retirement of government and PSU employees".
- **Pension to all-** scrapping NPS (National Pension System) and restoration of earlier pension with improvement in Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 [EPS-95].

What are the key concerns with new labour codes?

1. **Against the Interests of Employees-** The codes provide the liberty to industrial establishments to hire and fire their employees at will.
- The new labour codes dilute workers' rights in favour of employers' rights.
2. Inspection system has been diluted in the Wage Code.

What are the other options that trade union have to dilute this resolution?

Trade unions have six options-



However,

- Central government did not conduct an effective and sustaining social dialogue and at the State level, social dialogue institutions are largely absent or weak.

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- The new Labour codes ignore the recommendations of Parliamentary Standing committee.
- And the labour reforms bills passed in the absence of the Opposition.
- **International Labour Organization's intervention-** Trade union did write to ILO, seeking its intervention to protect worker's rights but the ILO's intervention only provide provided a temporary respite to trade unions as the government did what it has been doing.

Way forward-

- **Approaching the judiciary-** Trade unions must shed their judicio-phobia and approach to judiciary provided they have strong legal grounds to challenge reforms introduced by Central or State governments.
- **Strike alone will not make much difference-** Trade unions must explore other avenues such as seeking the ILO's intervention, judicial action and social dialogue
- This strike is a reminder of this potential, positive reconstruction of laws.

7. Present State of economy

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Gs3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context: The pandemic has delivered a "scissor cut" to the government finances.

What is the current scenario?

- Economic output and government revenues are shrinking.
- The government has to spend more to safeguard lives and livelihoods.
- Widening deficit.
- Most of state's revenue come from center which changes their debt servicing ability for the worse.

What are the recent issues?

- **Revenue side:**
 - In the first half of fiscal the center's net revenue (tax and non-tax) collection stood at 27.3% of budget for the full fiscal year compared to 41.6% of previous fiscal year.
 - Revenue collections in the first half of the year were down to 32.5% as compared to an average 15% growth over the same period.
- **State's fiscal issue:**
 - Fiscal data for the year is available only for the eleven non special category states.
 - Revenue of these states is down by 21.5%.
 - Adding center's transfer to the states then the decline in revenue reduces to 16.5%.
 - Shortfall in states' revenue is much steep than that of center.
 - For the eleven states total expenditure and capital spending have contracted by 1.5% and 23.4 % respectively.
 - Allocation for pension and subsidies down by 10% and 20%.
 - Since health is State subject, state will have to shoulder major part of health expenditure burden on account of the pandemic.
- **Cutting capital expenditure:**
 - Both center and state have cut their capital expenditure.

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- This is worrying as states undertake more as they have more than 60% of the overall general government capital expenditure.
- For instance, in 2019-20, capital expenditure by states stood at rs 4.97 lakh crore down by 20%.
- **Low capacity utilization:** for instance, it was 71.9 % in the previous year which is down to 58.6 %.

What are the consequences?

- Reduces Center's and states' ability to invest and lift the economy.
- Need of more borrowing.
- Centre's total expenditure has been declined by 0.6 % which led to 11.6% decline in capital expenditure with revenue expenditure by 1 %.
- To maintain states 'spending government has forced them to increase borrowing which has led to increase in market borrowing by 50%.
- Rising debt level of states. For instance, overall government general debt stood at nine year high.
- Centre's debt to GDP is declining.
- Ratio of interest payment to revenue receipts is also declining which raises question on sustainability of debt.
- The private sector will remain wary of investing as demand uncertainty continues.

8. Push for Exports

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context: India needs to shed its exaggerated fears of trade agreements to create new jobs.

What are the challenges facing by Indian economy?

Case Study: Importance of investing in labour intensive industries

- Let us suppose that the government makes available ₹10 lakh as a loan to four companies for capital investment.
- The first company, a steel manufacturing company, will create one new job with this amount.
- The second, an automobile manufacturer, will create three new jobs.
- The third, a producer of leather goods, will create 70 new jobs.
- And the fourth, an apparel and garment maker, will create 240 new jobs including 80 for women (Economic Survey 2016-17).

- **Contracting Economic growth:** India is in an economic recession for the first time in its independent history.
- **Rising Unemployment:** Thousands of people lost their jobs due to the slowing economy in 2018-19 and 2019-20. Unemployment had reached a 45-year high. Added to this worry, more than 2 crore people lost their jobs during the lockdown.

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- **Rising demand for right to work:** During the seven-month lockdown period, there were 11 crore people who asked for work under MGNREGA.
- **Stagnating Merchandise Exports:** Merchandise goods exports were \$314 billion in 2013-14 and remained stagnant for the next five years touching \$313 billion in 2018-19.

What are the reasons for stagnating Merchandise exports?

- Reversal in the direction of India's foreign trade policy with higher tariffs, non-tariff barriers, quantitative limits.
- The return of licensing.
- Border country restrictions.
- The appreciating value of the rupee.

How to boost exports and produce jobs for Indian workforce?

- **Investing in labour intensive sectors:** Good quality jobs can be created only in sectors that are labour intensive, and where India has a comparative advantage, such as apparel, leather goods, value-added agriculture etc.
- **Find more export markets:** The job-creating sectors depend not only on the domestic market but, significantly, on export markets. For example, more than one-half of the leather goods and one-third of the apparel produced in India are exported to other countries.
- **Encourage and Incentivise exports:** Merchandise exports helps to create supporting jobs in warehousing, transport, stevedoring, container stations, shipping, ship chandling, ports and export financing.

Why India cannot persist with protectionism policy?

- **Trade is reciprocal:** India cannot 'protect' its domestic industry with high trade barriers while aspiring for bilateral trade treaties to promote exports. Also, no country will allow import of Indian goods and services unless that country is able to export its goods and services to India on reasonable and fair terms.
- **FTA has Benefited its members:** More winners than losers because of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements in the recent past witnessed through proliferation of FTA's such as ASEAN, NAFTA, MERCOSUR, RCEP recently.
- **To promote exports:** Most manufacturing today has a long supply chain that cuts across many countries. To be able to export goods, India must import raw materials or equipment or technology from other countries in the supply chain.

What are the issues in signing FTA's?

- FTA provisions were misused by some countries to question the foreign investment policies and tax policies of other countries.
- Purely trade and commercial disputes were dragged to international arbitral tribunals on the pretext of violating FTA provisions.

Exports are one of the main engines to revive economic growth and create many new jobs. India has the immediate opportunity to export goods worth \$60 billion in labour intensive sectors which can then create lakhs of new jobs. To revive exports, India needs greater access to global markets. Hence, we must re-learn to engage with other countries and negotiate favorable trade agreements through the bilateral and multilateral routes.

9. Permitting industrial houses to own banks

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Gs3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context: Permitting industrial houses to own banks could undermine economic growth and democracy.

Background

- Recently, an internal working group of the RBI has made a far-reaching recommendation to permit industrial houses to own and control banks.
- According to the report, the reason for permitting industrial houses to own and control banks is that industry-owned banks would increase the supply of credit, which is low and growing slowly.
- However, many believe that this step would be a grievous mistake, and it will be a setback to Indian economic and political development.

Why it is a concern?

- **Against the recommendations of the experts:** The report states that majority of the experts were of the opinion that large corporate/industrial houses should not be allowed to promote a bank.
- **The problem of connected lending:** This can lead to Over-financing of risky activities, encouraging inefficiency by delaying or prolonging exit and entrenching dominance.
- **Regulation of Connected lending is difficult:** It is clear from the experience of Indonesia and most advanced countries that regulating connected lending is impossible and the only solution is to ban corporate-owned banks.
- **Overburdened RBI:** RBI has encountered much difficulty in dealing with banking irregularities at Punjab National Bank, Yes Bank, ILFS and Lakshmi Vilas Bank. Regulation and supervision need to be strengthened considerably to deal with the current problems in the banking system before they are burdened with new regulatory tasks.
- **Can delay exiting of inefficient firms:** This makes it impossible for more efficient firms to grow and replace them. If industrial houses get direct access to financial resources, their capacity to delay or prevent exit altogether will only increase.
- **Can stimulate growth of Monopolies:** Already, The Indian economy already suffers from over-concentration. The COVID-19 crisis is aggravating this picture because those with greater resources will not only more easily survive the crisis and they will be able to take over small, medium and large enterprises that have not had the resilience or resources. In this scenario, if large industrial houses get banking licences, they will become even more powerful.
- **Will dampen rules-based well-regulated market economy:** The power acquired by getting banking licences will not just make them stronger than commercial rivals, but even relative to the regulators and government itself. This will aggravate imbalances leading to a vicious cycle of dominance.
- **Affect credit Quality:** Indian financial sector reforms have aimed at improving both the quantity and the quality of credit. If India now starts granting banking licences to powerful, politically connected industrial houses, allowing them to determine how credit is allocated, it will effectively abandon the principle of ensuring that credit flows to the most economically efficient users.
- **Alternative options do exist:** The other powerful way to promote more good quality credit is to undertake serious reforms of the public sector banks.

Mixing industry and finance will set us on a road full of dangers for growth, public finances, and the future of the country itself.

10. Urban planning

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- GS 3 - Disaster and disaster management.

Context- A radical shift is needed in our approach towards disaster mitigation and management. Government can handle cyclones better by investing in town planning and infrastructure.

What are the reasons of no major casualty or lesser destruction by cyclone Nivar?

Cyclone Nivar- It is the fourth cyclone that has taken shape in the North Indian Ocean region this year. The reason for lesser destruction are-

1. **Correct weather forecasting-** IMD has pointed the track of the cyclone very early and his help with adequate warnings and evacuation from the coast.
2. **Disaster preparedness** - The NDRF deployed 25 teams and disaster management equipment in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Andhra Pradesh.
3. **Government readiness** - The Tamil Nadu government has shown brisk readiness in handling the acute challenge of a severe weather event.

What are the concern concerns?

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.
- Indiscriminate encroachment of waterways and wetlands, inadequate capacity of drains and lack of maintenance of the drainage infrastructure.
2. Governments have not shown the rigour to collect and publish data on annual flooding patterns, and measure the peak flows in the neglected rivers and canals to plan remedies.

Way forward-

- The aftermath now presents an opportunity to make a full assessment not just for distribution of relief but also to understand the impacts of extreme monsoon weather.
- Governments and local bodies should hardwire urban planning and invest heavily for a future of frequent disruptive weather.

11. Women in science

Source: The Indian Express

Syllabus: GS-3- Science & technology

Context: The new Science, Technology and Innovation Policy is currently being drafted by the Department of Science and Technology (DST)

More on news:

- Its aim will be to increase the participation of women in science.
- The DST will incorporate a system of grading institutes depending on the enrolment of women and the advancement of the careers of women faculty and scientists.

What is Athena SWAN?

- **The Athena SWAN Charter:** It is an evaluation and accreditation programme in the UK enhancing gender equity in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM).

- **Function:** Participating research organisations and academic institutions are required to analyse data on gender equity and develop action plans for improvement. The programme recognises such efforts with bronze, silver or gold accreditation.
- **Institutions that sign up commit to:**
 - Addressing unequal gender representation.
 - Tackling the gender pay gap.
 - Removing the obstacles faced by women in career development and progression.
 - Discriminatory treatment often experienced by trans people.
 - Gender balance of committees and zero tolerance for bullying and sexual harassment.

How well has it worked?

- **In 2019, a report by Ortus Economic Research:** In partnership with Loughborough University found that 93% of participants believed the programme had a positive impact on gender issues.
 - 78% said it had impacted equality and diversity issues positively, and 78% noted a positive impact on the career progression of women.
- **A study in BMJ:** It found that in the five-year period since the scheme was started, participating institutions had a higher number of female leaders than non-Athena institutions, and gender diversity in leadership positions also improved.

Why does India need such a programme?

- **GATI:** In India, it will be called GATI (Gender Advancement through Transforming Institutions). India is ranked 108 out of 149 countries in the 2018 Global Gender Gap report.
- **According to DST figures:** In 2015-16, the share of women involved in scientific research and development was 14.71%.
 - The DST has also found that women are either not promoted, or very often drop out mid-career to attend to their families.

What are the challenges ahead?

- **Institutions lack control:** To get as many institutions as possible to sign up, the DST will need to manoeuvre around government red tape as most universities, barring the IITs and NITs, are run and funded by the government as well.
 - This means that these institutions don't have direct control over institutional policies, recruitment and promotions.

What are the steps of DST towards ensuring gender equity?

- **Gender equity:** The DST has tied up with National Assessment and Accreditation Council, under the UGC, aiming to push gender equity through them.
- **Gender sensitisation:** The DST plans to run intensive gender sensitisation programmes, especially for the top leadership of institutions, and work within existing rules such as pushing for women members on selection committees during recruitment processes.
- **Policy changes:** In the future, the DST is likely to consider policy changes such as those brought about in the UK providing financial incentives through grants to institutes.

Way forward - For the pilot, 25 institutes will be shortlisted to carry out self-assessment on gender equity in their departments. The British Council is assisting the DST and will

facilitate collaboration between selected institutions under GATI with Athena SWAN-accredited institutions in the UK, with each institute here having a partner institute in the UK for guidance.

12. India's digital strike

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- GS 3 - Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.

Context- The government of India has blocked 43 new Chinese app which are prejudicial to sovereignty and Integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order.

Why Indian Government ban these apps?

1. **Defence and security concern-** These apps are involved in activities against India's sovereignty, integrity, defense, security and law and order.
2. **Data Privacy Issue** - The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) banned apps on reports of stealing and transmitting user's data in an unauthorized manner to servers which have locations outside India.
 - Strong move by the government that sends out a strong message that Indian data cannot be compromised.

Benefits-

1. **Opportunity for Indian-** The recent ban on Chinese app is a good opportunity for Indian entrepreneurs to quickly rise to fill market gaps.-
 - This opportunity has also opened up the job market under the segment which will eventually have an added boost to the Indian economy.
2. The ban may be useful for India to use its vast market for Internet services as leverage in its attempts to keep China in check at the border.

What are the concerns related to Chinese apps ban?

There are issues with the government gag against Chinese apps-

1. This can trigger an unconventional battle between the two countries in the larger technology realm.
2. **Create negative image-** This creates a big uncertainty for the foreign investors, and often results in reduces outflow of foreign investment.

What is the way forward?

- **Need for A Data Protection Law:** Data privacy and security remains to be major challenges emanating from the ongoing digital revolution. Thus, a data protection law is long overdue.
- India must stick to a rules-based approach in regulating the Internet.

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1. Ethical democracy

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- GS 4 – Ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding; corporate governance.

Context- The elected must protect all the unelected instruments of democracy- – judiciary, media and civic organizations.

What is check and balance in the democracy?

Checks and balances, principle of government under which separate branches are empowered to prevent actions by other branches and are induced to share power.

- Democracies have developed systems of efficient checks and balances — elected and unelected institutions. Such a balance is critical to their success.
- Democracies can be harmed if the rulers succeed in jeopardizing the other pillars like the judiciary and free press.

What were Aristotle [ancient Greek philosopher] views on different models of government?

According to Aristotle-

- Monarchies were for the benefit of the monarchs.
- Oligarchies for the benefit of men with means.
- And democracies were for the benefit of men without means.

What were Mahatma Gandhi and Ambedkar views on democracy?

1. Gandhi's View

- He was a firm believer of Ahimsa based stateless ruled based on self-regulation by individual. He considered democracy as a means to achieve his "Ram Rajya". While this would make the country an ideal state, the notion was utopian.
 - He believed in decentralization of power and self sufficiency of villages which shall be brought in by democracy.
2. And laid stress on the individualism provided by democracy. Individualism was important encouraging the individual to surrender to society to achieve his selfless society.

Ambedkar's views-

- He belonged to a backward caste and from his early childhood faced various forms of discrimination in the society.
- For him democracy was not limited to only political spheres but extended to social, religious, economic spheres of life as well, that no person should be arbitrarily discriminated against and for this he fought for his entire life.

For Gandhi, democracy meant the weak getting the same chance as the strong and for Ambedkarji, it was about giving voice to voiceless.

3. For successful democracy - Both believed that the parliamentary majorities need to be restrained through constitutional ethics and public morality.

- Constitutional ethics is about leaders respecting constitutional order, conventions and institutions.
- Gandhi's final message to the congress to convert itself into a **lok Sevak Sangh** and work at the grassroots for social, economic and moral independence.

Conclusion-

- India's democracy, as envisaged by the makers of the constitution, thrived essentially because of the respect of the leaders for the ethical constitutionalism and moral activism of the grassroots activists.
- Indian democracy has been immensely benefitted from such diverging viewpoints. The core values which our freedom fighters stood for are still the basic structure on which our constitution proudly stands.

2. Vaccine nationalism

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- GS 4 - Strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding; corporate governance.

Context- Problems posed by vaccine nationalism and the possible solutions.

What is vaccine nationalism the problems posed by vaccine nationalism?

Vaccine nationalism occurs when a country manages to secure doses of vaccine for its own citizens or residents before they are made available in other countries.

- This is done through pre-purchase agreements between a government and a vaccine manufacturer.

The problems posed by vaccine nationalism-

- It undermines equitable access to vaccines.
- **Issue for countries with fewer resources-** The most immediate effect of vaccine nationalism is that it further disadvantages countries with fewer resources and bargaining power.
- **Deprives access to public health-** It deprives populations from timely access to vital public health goods.

What needs to be done?

1. **Global framework for equitable access-** International institutions, including the WHO, should coordinate negotiations to produce a framework for equitable access to vaccines during public health crises.
2. **Governments should be the custodian of public goods-** Governments must step in to regulate vaccine development, innovation, manufacture, sale, and supply ultimately to the public.
3. **Prioritization for high risk groups-** The first batch of the vaccines should be made available to all frontline, health and social care workers, police and others who are at high risk of getting the infection.
4. **Ensuring equity-** Equitable distribution and access should be ensured. Equity entails both affordability of vaccines and access opportunities for populations across the world, irrespective of geography and geopolitics.
5. Pre-purchase agreements and contracts should not trump equitable access to global public health goods
6. It was important for WTO members to work together to ensure that intellectual property rights such as patents, industrial designs, copyright and protection of undisclosed information did not create barriers to timely access to affordable medical products.

Way forward-

- Countries around the world should stop engaging in overly nationalistic behaviors. Failure to do so will harm patient populations across the globe.
- The WTO has a role in getting pharmaceutical firms and countries to treat vaccines and life-saving medicines as a public good.