

9pm

Compilation

January, 2021 (First Week)

9 PM Compilation for the Month of January (First week), 2021

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General Studies Paper -1

General Studies – 1

1. What are the implications of Emigration of India's brightest youth?

Source: [Indian Express](#)

GS-1: Issues associated with population

Synopsis: recent trends that suggests increasing emigration of brightest youth from India, have implications for India.

Background

- Even after the renewed calls from the PM Narendra Modi for an **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, emigration of India's best and brightest has not stopped.
- Recent findings by Indian Express have shown that, during the two decades of 1996-2015 the toppers (i.e., first rankers in Class 10 and Class 12 examinations from CBSE and ISC) had migrated and were studying or employed overseas, mostly in the US.
- Also, according to most recent data collected from high-profile private schools in New Delhi, has shown that post-2015, that the trend of out-migration of Indian talent (around 70% of their students) and wealth has accelerated.
- Apart from the CBSE and ISC students, there is now a growing number of **International Baccalaureate (IB)** students (who, study and prepare only to pursue their higher education abroad).

What are the implications of rising Emigration from India?

- **First**, there is a **flight of financial capital to overseas**. The Reserve Bank of India's **liberalised remittances scheme (LRS)** for "studies abroad" has increased more than threefold, from US\$ 1.54 billion in 2016-17 to US\$ 4.99 billion in 2019-20.
- **Second**, it leads to the "**secession of the successful**" when wealthy families from big cities send their children to schools that in fact equip them only for further studies and life overseas
- **Third**, with flight of human capital, as the data suggests that an increasing number of non-resident Indians (NRIs) have become "**not-returning**" **Indians**, and are contributing more to their host countries than to their home country the PM's belief that "**brain drain**" could help create a "**brain bank**" for India's development is not going to happen.
- **Fourth**, there is now an emerging category of Indians migrating out and opting to stay out of India because they feel the sense of **alienation in their motherland** and this perception has grown especially among minorities which disturbs the very **cultural fabric of India**.
- **Fifth**, an equally worrying trend is the increasing number of India's super rich is opting for the dual status of owning and managing business in India while living overseas.

It is high time that instead of attracting foreign nationals to work here, India focus on retaining its brightest minds, who are assisting other countries in achieving technological and economical breakthroughs.

2. The proposal to demolish the Louis Kahn's IIMA building is an act of cultural vandalism

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- GS 1

Synopsis- IIMA decision to demolish historic dormitories designed by architect Louis Khan, this would constitute an act of cultural vandalism.

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Background-

- Louis Kahn, a world-famous architect, called in 1960s to Ahmedabad to design various buildings, and the IIMA was one of the iconic structures built by him.
- Works of this excellence belong to both national and universal heritage.
- However, the administration of the Indian Institute of Management decided to demolish 14 dormitories on the IIMA campus as they turn unsafe.
- It led to the protests in the campus and reconsideration of the decision.

Why the proposal to demolish the dorms of IIMA represent as a cultural vandalism?

Having supported the restoration of the entire campus for years, the administration claimed that as this work was **not 'satisfactory'** the whole lot should be pulled down, which is an act of **cultural vandalism** against an architectural masterpiece which is not only of great importance to India but to the world.

- Current laws in India provide national heritage **protection only to buildings and sites more than 100 years old**. This leaves Kahn's IIM- Ahmedabad in extremely vulnerable positions.
- capitalism, political corruption and land speculation pose threats to ancient and modern works of quality.

Fortunately, many organizations and individuals both within the country and abroad have written to the institute, urging the management to reconsider the decision.

What is the significance of Louis Kahn Architecture?

Kahn built two projects on the Indian subcontinent, **the Assembly Complex in Dhaka, Bangladesh** and the **Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad (IIMA)**. Both reflect his response to the cultures, climates and traditions of their respective places.

Significance of IIMA building-

- The complex is built mainly in brick, with some interventions of concrete for lateral bracing and tie bars.
- With its interweaving of space and form, light and shade, orthogonal and diagonal geometries, the dormitory complex is a virtuoso demonstration of Kahn's immense skill as a designer.
- A citadel of learning, replete with cylindrical towers, shaded streets and squares, it is not unlike a tight-knit Indian fortified town.

Way forward-

- **First**, there is need to reshape national heritage laws to protect 20th century buildings.
 - Heritage should be assessed on the basis of long-term quality rather than the cut-off date of a hundred years.
- **Second**, IIMA Director and Board need to live up to their responsibilities by restoring and protecting Kahn's work in its totality, so that the future generations may be inspired by it.

Thus, the leaders of IIMA should be persuaded to complete the restoration of Kahn's buildings at the highest possible level, and perhaps attain the same World Heritage status

General Studies Paper – 2

General Studies – 2

1. Examining the Strategies involved in Distributing Vaccines

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis: The government must examine the principle underlying the triage scheme for optimised use of resources.

Background:

- Over the next 6-7 months, India plans to vaccinate 300 million people against COVID-19 by prioritizing healthcare workers, other **front-line workers** and everyone who is above 50 years of age.
- To vaccinate 300 million people, India requires 600 million doses as two doses are required per individual.
- However, government will not have problems in acquiring the required number of doses as it has already struck a deal with the **Serum Institute** to acquire 500 million doses of the **AstraZeneca vaccine** and also the availability of other vaccines such as **Bharat Biotech's Covaxin** and the Russian **Sputnik V** are also high.
- But the strategies that they have planned for distribution of vaccines needs to be examined.

What are the Issues and dilemmas in the triage scheme?

- **First**, government's strategy of prioritizing the elderly people need to be re-examined because,
 - Vaccination drive should have two distinct objectives, one, providing protection to those vaccinated, and two to slow down the speed and spread of the viral transmission.
 - Providing vaccination to healthcare professionals is not in conflict with the above objective because these are individuals who have high levels of exposure and they also act as active disease vectors since they interact with large numbers of people.
 - But, prioritising the elderly people needs to be re-examined because the elderly is **less mobile** and have a **lower level of social interaction**, they are less likely to spread the virus. So, in the long run, prioritising the elderly people may not actually minimise the total **social and economic cost** inflicted by the virus.
 - This suggests that densely populated areas for instance, the **Dharavi slum** should receive far more attention than they are likely to get under the current strategy.
- **Second**, the government should permit private suppliers to import and distribute the vaccine in India because,
 - Currently, government's procurement strategy relies entirely on public resources for distribution and the government plans to bear the entire cost of vaccination without involving private hospitals.
 - But, allowing the private sector to provide additional supplies of the vaccine would not really be a bad policy decision if it would not decrease the availability of the vaccine to the poor.
 - With more and more vaccines getting approval such as the **Moderna vaccine** in US, there will be a significant boost in the global supply of COVID-19 vaccines which mandates the need for involving private suppliers.
 - Benefits that accrue owing to such decisions are, less waiting time for the less affluent as some of the richer individuals in the target group will opt out of the government distribution system and prefer to get vaccinated at some private outlet owing to increase in supply.

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- Another potential benefit accruing to the entire population is that the larger the numbers who get vaccinated, the lower will be the speed of **virus transmission** amongst the non-vaccinated.
- Also, there are some **cost benefits**, for example, Belgian Minister has revealed that the European Union has agreed to pay for leading COVID-19 vaccines is substantially lower than the prices of **Moderna and Pfizer**. Given the large size of India's market India has the **bargaining power advantage** too.

2. Essentiality of Dry run for COVID vaccines

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors

Synopsis: Dry runs aimed at testing the planned operations are essential for Covid 19 vaccination process.

Background

- In the coming weeks, the Phase-3 data of two **COVID-19** vaccines tested by Indian manufacturers are expected to be submitted for **emergency use approval**.
- A countrywide rollout to immunize the **four high-risk groups** will begin soon in India if any of the vaccines gets the approval.
- So, to be prepared in hand the government has rightly decided to undertake a **dry run** for **vaccine administration**. The dry run is expected to be initiated this week in four States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, and Punjab.

Why the Dry run is essential?

- Though, India has been vaccinating millions of young children with a variety of vaccines each year the aspects of the COVID-19 vaccination Programme are new.
- **Firstly**, this is the first time a vaccine to be administered outside the **universal immunisation Programme** and specifically for **adults belonging to specific groups**.
- **Second**, there is a need for administering two doses of the vaccine a few weeks apart and enrolling the recipients which is different compared to our running vaccination drives.
- **Third**, it will allow the administrators to check the usage of the **Co-WIN IT platform** for management of the entire vaccination process including data entry, allocation of date and time and a drill of session sites with test beneficiaries.
- **Fourth**, it will also help to test the linkages between planning, implementation and reporting mechanisms.

What are the measures that needs to be ensured during Dry run exercise?

- The first task is to register the recipients of vaccine identified from the from the **high-risk groups** on the **Co-WIN platform** to **avoid inclusion and exclusion errors**.
- When more than one vaccine becomes available, it is essential to ensure that people receive the same vaccine twice and the exercise should confirm that the Co-WIN platform is able to generate the date and time when people can receive the second dose.
- As no COVID-19 vaccine has undergone long-term follow-up for safety during the trial it is very essential to Check and **report on all adverse events after the vaccination**.
- Regarding storage of vaccines, the existing facilities of the **universal immunization Programme** in most districts can be used for storing the vaccines since the vaccines that are at an advanced stage of testing in India do not require ultra-low temperature for delivery and storage.

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- Also, the exercise should look at creating additional storage capacity at these facilities to store millions of COVID-19 vaccines as the plan is to vaccinate 300 million people in the four high-risk groups for which it requires 600 million doses.

3. State of our prisons today

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS-2

Synopsis: The under trial prisoners in the Bhima-Koregaon case had to move the courts for the basic requirements such as to get a sipper cup and a straw because the prisoner is an 80-year-old man with Parkinson's and the other to take a pair of glasses to replace a broken pair.

Introduction

The prisons should be places of reform and rehabilitation but they have become a crowded warehouse for the vulnerable marginalised sections.

What is the state of prisons in our country?

- **Firstly**, around 70 per cent of the prisoners are under trial and more than 75 per cent come from marginalised sections that hardly have knowledge about the laws. Even if they are aware, they have little option and access to any complaints mechanism.
- **Secondly**, financial, infrastructural, and human resource shortages that range from 20 to 40 per cent also add to staff stress and prisoner despair.
- **Thirdly**, overcrowding in prisons between 2017 and 2019 shows that overcrowding increased from 116 to 119 per cent. Some of the prisons are more than three times crowded than their official capacity.
- **Lastly**, there is a serious shortage of judges which results in gathering of cases in courts, the number of cases rose from 3.5 crore to 4 crore between 2019 and 2020.
 - According to the India Justice report 2019, it takes an average of three years for the case to go across the high court and six years in the subordinate courts.

Did the attempts of prison reforms turn out to be fruitful?

The recent case of "Re Inhuman Conditions in 1382 Prisons, saw the need for systemic change in prisons as violations have become an everyday routine. There are pathways to accountability and to reform:

- Reform attempts like the constitution of under trial Review Committees directed by the Supreme Court work occasionally. In most prisons, the Board of Visitors meant to function as **an oversight mechanism are not even created.**
- **The neglect of reforms by the executive** and oversight bodies make sure they act as warehouses for the poor and the marginalised.

Discuss the various efforts previously taken by the court for the prisoners?

- The Bombay High Court observed that workshops should be conducted for the prison staff to sensitise them towards the prisoners.
- The responsibility of providing basic facilities to the prisoners is with custodial authorities as stated by **the law on provision of basic facilities.**
- **The Nelson Mandela Rules 2015** issued by the UN and **the Model Prison Manual 2016** by the Bureau of Police Research and Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, have detailed provisions regarding the care, treatment and rehabilitation of prisoners.
- The Supreme Court has asked state governments to take steps to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in prisons through a PIL filed in March 2020, which led to more than 68,000 prisoners being released.

So many Supreme Court and high court judgments have repeated that **prisoners are human beings with basic rights**. The law stresses that under trial prisoners, except for being prisoned cannot be deprived of any of their other rights.

4. India should be ready for a two-front challenge

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS2: India and its Neighbourhood- Relations.

Synopsis: The **two-front challenge** long ignored by India has become a reality, therefore there is an urgent need to develop both the doctrine and the capability to deal this threat.

Why India didn't perceive the two-front challenge as a real possibility for long?

The **collusive China-Pakistan military threat** (i.e., China-Pakistan military are working in cooperation to contain India on the northern borders) on Indian borders is known as the two-front challenge.

- Before **Galwan** Issue too, Indian military was firmly believed that the two-front challenge as a real possibility, but the political class and the country's strategic community called this threat as an issue, over-hyped by the military to justify the demand for additional resources and funds.
- As per them, China has never intervened militarily in any India-Pakistan conflict and the presence of strong economic, diplomatic, and political ties between India and China will prevent the rise of conflict between the two countries.
- As a result, Indian strategic thinking was overwhelmingly focused on Pakistan, as a real threat on the border.

Why, the two front challenge is seen as a reality now?

Present developments are enough evidences to perceive that the two front threat has become a real concern for India now.

- The most recent **Chinese intrusions in Ladakh**, the violent clashes between the Indian Army and the People's Liberation Army, and the deadlock in negotiations have now made the Chinese military threat more apparent and real.
- On the other hand, the **situation along the Line of Control (LoC)** with Pakistan has been steadily deteriorating. For example, between 2017 and 2019, there has been a four-fold increase in **ceasefire violations**.
- Also, according to Some media reports, **Pakistan had moved 20,000 troops into Gilgit-Baltistan**, matching the Chinese deployments in Eastern Ladakh which signifies that the China-Pakistan military are working in cooperation to contain India.
- Apart from this, the Military cooperation between the two countries have strengthened. For example,
 - China accounting for 73% of the total arms import of Pakistan between 2015-2019.
 - **Shaheen IX Pakistan-China joint exercise** to improve combat capacity of both air forces and to enhance interoperability between them.

What type of type of capabilities that India should built up to counter it?

- **First**, India needs to develop both the doctrine and the capability to deal with this contingency.
 - For Doctrine development, a **close interaction with the political leadership** is required as any doctrine without a political aim and guidance cannot stand the test when executed.
 - Moreover, a **detailed assessment of China and Pakistan's war-fighting strategies** needs to be done to strike a right balance in our approach to contain the two-front situation.

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- On the other hand, India **needs to build its capability** with more focus on future technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence, cyber, electronic warfare, etc.
- A **financial solution for allocation of quantum of resources** required by air force and military should also be developed, so that in the times of need India can engage both the states.
- **Second**, we need to **improve relations with our neighbors through Diplomacy** to contain the two-front challenge.
- On eastern front, India's new **Maritime strategies** such as the QUAD and the **Indo-Pacific might not be** helpful in easing the Sino-Pakistan pressure on the continental sphere. So, it's crucial for India to focus on gaining the trust of our neighbors.
- **On western front**, India should strengthen its **relationship with key powers in West Asia, including Iran** to ensure energy security, increase maritime cooperation and enhance goodwill in the extended neighborhood.
- **On the northern front**, India must ensure that its **relationship with Russia** is not compromised for good India-United States relations as Russia could play a key role in defusing the severity of a regional gang up against India.
- **Third**, a well-planned empathetic **political outreach to Kashmir** aimed at addressing the issues facing people of Kashmir, would be helpful in easing the pressure from either front.
- It will be helpful in potential reconciliation with Pakistan to persuade it to put an end to terrorist infiltration into Kashmir.
- Politically, India should do well to reduce the effect of a collusive Sino-Pakistan containment strategy aimed at India.

5. Need for Gated globalisation in India

Source: [Click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2, Effect of developed and developing country policies on India's interest

Synopsis: Post pandemic era will be giving rise to new world order and create uncertainties. India should use a "Gated Globalisation" framework to handle this change.

Introduction

The 3rd decade of 21st century will witness a multipolar world and the rise of this New World Order will be driven by reliability of partners, national interest, and economic factors. New developments are being witnessed with the development of vaccines. Nations are forging alliance for the vaccine supplies. Trust factor will also dominate these alliances as seen in the doubts raised over vaccines by China and Russia and this factor will not be limited to vaccines only.

Although security interest will continue to drive partnership but it will not be the sole criterion as seen in the Israel and Arabs relations and BREXIT

What is the gated globalisation framework?

Gated globalisation advocates selective trade policies with selective trade partners like creating walls with restrictive gates, opened on certain conditions.

The Gated Globalisation framework doesn't have a place for "Non-alignment" and will be a test of "strategic autonomy" of India. As per the framework, India need Solid boundaries but building new partnerships (like the Quad) based on trust and common interests is equally important, as necessitated by Doklam and Ladakh clash with China.

- **Firstly**, India will have to make **Partnership choices, beyond security, on the basis of trade, capital flows and the movement of labour**.
- For instance, India has chosen to stay out of RCEP and the UK has left the EU.

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- **Secondly**, technology flows and standards will also define gated communities. The Great Firewall of China has shut out many of the big tech players like Google, Facebook and Netflix.
- Instead, China has its Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent. The introduction of 5G technology, will deepen the issues of trust.
- **Third**, the EU-crafted General Data Protection Regulation (**GDPR**) is a brilliant example of Gated Globalisation. The EU has set the terms of engagement; those who do not obey will be kept out.
- The Indian law on data protection that is currently being discussed follows a similar sovereign route.
- **Lastly**, India and other countries have similar policies where they put restrictions on trade with nations who are unfavourable to their interest and build stronger financial relationships with other countries within their gated communities.
- For instance, India has imposed restrictions on trade with China but this does not stop enhanced capital flows from new partners. To prevent inflow of illegal funds, India has barred capital from poorly-regulated authorities.
- India's global scattering is now over 30 million and sends more through transfers (\$80 billion per year) than foreign capital inflows. The Indian diaspora is now increasingly impacting policy in countries like the US, UK and Australia where it has contributed politicians and technocrats, innovators and influencers, billionaires and cricket captains.

Way forward

- During these fast-changing post-pandemic realities, India has to be quick in identifying partners whom it can trust and who will help protect and further its national interests.

6. Opportunities for India in Anglosphere

Source: [Click here](#)

Syllabus: GS - 2, International relations

Synopsis: The Anglosphere is opposed as a colonial concept in India but colonial past should not be allowed to overpower India's present strategic benefits.

What is Anglosphere?

- **An Anglosphere is also called the world of English-speaking people** bound by common political beliefs, similar legal traditions, and shared geopolitical interests.
- The term was coined around late 19th century, when Britain was facing the challenges to its empire from within and outside. **A modest version of this idea was Commonwealth nations.**
- Later, stronger ties with EU resulted into the waning of this idea. But after cold war conservatives in UK started favouring the idea of Anglosphere.
- **It is also the main idea behind the political movement in UK to pull it out of the European Union.**

Which countries constitute Anglosphere?

There are various theories around the countries that constitute the Anglosphere.

- For few theorists **UK, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand** are at the core of the Anglosphere.
- Others define it more narrowly as a **CANZUK group** that excludes the United States.
- A broader view sees rebuilding of Anglosphere as economic and strategic collaboration with other states like India, Ireland, Singapore and Japan.

- At present, only the **“Five Eyes” arrangement** for intelligence sharing between the US, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand, reflects the possibility of Anglosphere.

Why the Anglosphere could be in favour of India?

Some of the critics in India is against idea of Anglosphere due to India’s colonial past, but 5 arguments have been put forward in favour of the Anglosphere that go against any possibility of repetition of India’s past:

- **Firstly**, Britain and India today are at roughly \$2.7 trillion and occupy the fifth and sixth places in the GDP rankings. **India will be overtaking Britain in the few years** to become the third-largest economy in the world.
- **Secondly, Unlike Indian elites’** Indian middle classes have wholeheartedly accepted the English-speaking world as their favourite foreign destinations for study, work and emigration.
- **Thirdly**, The **Indian population is flourishing in these nations** and is very much part of their political system of Anglosphere, due to their relative openness. For instance:
 - **Kamala Harris** will soon be sworn in as US Vice President.
 - **Three of Johnson’s cabinet** rank ministers are Indian.
 - **Four of Justin Trudeau’s ministers** are of Indian origin.
 - Indians are among the **fastest-growing minorities in Australia and New Zealand**.
- **Fourthly**, the India and the Anglosphere countries has already developed greater bilateral commercial and security cooperation and they share geopolitical interest in the Indo-Pacific as well. Moreover, India is already engaged with Five Eye countries on selected issues.
- **Lastly**, the India is on an advantageous position, when compared to China.
 - The Chinese Communist Party has come close to winning over entire Anglosphere in recent years through the absolute power of its sustained economic investments, political engagement, and elite cultivation.
 - Whereas India won’t need to invest that much and can build good relations on the terms, mutually beneficial.

7. India’s system of bail and personal liberty

Source- [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis- India’s bail system is facing in urgent need of reforms.

The refusal to grant of bail violates right to liberty of individuals undergoing criminal prosecution by confining them in jails without trial and conviction.

What is bail?

The bail is the security given by the defendant, it acts like a surety or guarantee for the defendant to show up in the court at a later date when summoned

- The surety may be cash, the papers giving title to property, or the bond of private persons of means or of a professional bondsman or bonding company.

What are the concerns regarding granting of bail in India?

- **First**, routine rejection of bail by subordinate courts for the simplest of an offence.
- Moreover, the majority of people arrested under excise laws belong to marginalized communities. More than two-thirds of the inmates are undertrials from Dalit, Adivasi and OBC communities, often accused of minor offences.

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- **Second, Pending bail pleas**– The Courts should decide regular bail application within a maximum time period of 7 days from filing. Sadly, in practice, it is observed accused languish in jails for months waiting for disposal of his bail application.
- The pendency of bail applications has increased during the pandemic due to the shutting down of courts and the exacerbation of arrests for minor offences by the police.
- **Third, High sureties to secure freedom**– The bail amount in session courts, even for petty offences is a minimum of ₹10,000 and ₹30,000 in the case bail before the High Courts and the Supreme Court.
- This is a form of injustice when a majority of regular wage workers, 57% Indians earn less than ₹10,000 per month.
- Common citizens without the means or resources to move the High Courts or the Supreme Court were languishing in jails as under-trials.
- A bogey of middlemen has also emerged due to these high bail amounts.

Example of absurd bail conditions-

- **CASE** – The Gwalior Bench of Madhya Pradesh High Court has granted bail to two accused in a criminal case on the condition that they install a non-China made LED TV screen at the Gwalior District Hospital.
- The same single-judge bench had directed the petitioners to register themselves with the district magistrate concerned as ‘COVID-19 Warrior’ so that they are assigned suitable work taking all prescribed precautions.

Grant of bail on condition to deposit cash relief fund is improper and unjust.

Way forward

- The courts while granting/disposing of bail applications ideally should draw a fine balance between the individual liberty and the interest of the society without compromising on either.
- While granting bail the court must also look at the socio-economic plight of the accused must also have a compassionate attitude towards them.

8. Policymakers must promote research under NEP

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- GS – 2, *Issues related to education in India*

Synopsis – The policymakers that finetuned the NEP and give shape to Atmanirbhar Bharat, must also nurture institutional frameworks that enable research.

Background-

- The NEP also fosters creativity, developing employability and inviting foreign institutions to set up campuses in India.
- We are working to make India a “knowledge economy” in the 21st century and the National Education Policy (NEP) will also tackle the issues of brain drain, said Prime Minister recently.
- However, there is an absence of much required cutting edge research system. The challenges this system facing are related to funding, academic autonomy, designing robust processes for recruitment of faculty, counselling arrangements for early-career researchers, and systems to help overcome the many barriers to equality and diversity.

Why India does not have cutting edge research framework?

- **First, Lack of research institutes**– Only few institutions like TIFR, IITs, across the country and are outside university systems, conducting cutting edge research.

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- **Second, Lack of freedom**– Most universities in India do not have the freedom to design courses, find creative ways to raise funds, lack of collaboration between industry and academia.
- **Third, Lack of collaboration between industry and academia** – India is lacking in conducting research that is both practically relevant and scientifically rigorous.

On the other hand, In US, Pfizer [premier biopharmaceutical company], and the University of California have created systems to combine academic thinking with drug development expertise.

What are the most effective strategies to generate cutting edge research ecosystem?

- **First**, there is need to shift university admission process for the success of New Education Policy (NEP),
 - Currently, non-viable high cut-offs speak of an education system that does not encourage creative learning.
- **Second**, there is a need for a strong collaboration between the universities and industries to come up with innovative ideas in research along with higher investments in R&D.

Therefore, policymakers should look after the institutional framework that enables research.

9. Importance of creating Resilient supply chains

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - international relations

Synopsis: The Covid-19 pandemic once again proved the importance of creating resilient supply chains that can survive the tough times.

Introduction

Creating supply chains that can withstand the disruptions is extremely important. Disruptions through the times is something inevitable as it can be manmade or natural. For example, The Tohoku Earthquake of 2011, followed by the Tsunami, led to a nuclear disaster caused a sharp drop in Japanese automobile exports to the United States.

State some examples of supply chain disruptions around the world

To avoid global disruption in supply chain system, robust framework is required. Causes of Supply Chain Disruption can be natural or man-made.

- **Saudi Arabia's oil refineries** were attacked by terrorist drones resulting in a drop of 5.7 million barrels of oil per day. This caused a sudden fall in Saudi Arabia's stock market and a rise in global oil prices.
- **China cut off exports of rare earths to Japan** after the arrest of their fishing trawler captain in 2010 near the disputed Senkaku islands by the Japanese officials.
 - Coronavirus had an immediate effect on supply chains emanating from China.
- **The United States government-imposed restrictions** on export of microchips to China's biggest semiconductor manufacturer. The US felt that there was an unacceptable risk that equipment supplied to it could be used for military purposes.

How vulnerable is India to this disruption?

China has weaponised its trade and investment. India's dependency on china for the following makes it vulnerable to supply Chain disruption for many imp. Goods and services in the near future;

- India's pharma sector depends on China's Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs). It creates vulnerabilities in the value chain.

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- **India imports 27% of its requirement of automotive parts from China** and after the pandemic it faced a huge difficulty given the sudden shortage of braking components, electrical components, interiors and lighting fixtures.
- **India has an import dependency of 80%** even after becoming the 4th largest market in Asia for medical devices. Among the biggest exporters to India in this field are China, the U.S., Germany, Singapore and Japan.

What are the steps taken by India and other countries to ensure SCR?

- **The Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** was started by India, Japan and Australia which tends to focus on automobiles and parts, petroleum, steel, textiles, financial services and IT sectors.
- **Japan aimed at diversification of investments** to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), India and Bangladesh.
 - 89 Japanese companies availed subsidies to diversify out of China. Of these, 57 companies relocated to Japan, 30 to Southeast Asia and two to India.
- **The Indian government is providing a big boost to defence manufacturing** under the 'Make in India' programme. It has identified a negative import list of 101 items.
- **Australia has demonstrated strong political will** in countering uninformed Chinese sanctions imposed on its key exports of grain, beef, wine, coal and much else.
 - Australia has demanded an **inquiry into the origins of the coronavirus** and advocated a strong Indo-Pacific vision.

Way forward

India has the capacity and the potential to become one of the world's largest destinations for investments after the pandemic gets over.

- There is a terrific opportunity for foreign companies to enter into tie-ups with reputed Indian defence manufacturers **to tap into the growing defence market in India.**
- '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**' is aimed at strengthening India's capacities to participate more robustly without being prey to supply chain disruptions.

SCRI can get strengthened in the future after the involvement of France, though this might depend on the European Union's position and the United Kingdom has also shown interest in the SCRI.

10. Approach of India and China on Nepal's political crisis

Source: [Click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2

Synopsis: Beijing and New Delhi are adopting different approach towards China after Nepal's prime minister decision to dissolve Parliament.

Background:

The Supreme Court has given Mr. Oli some time to explain his actions. It is yet to decide on putting stay on the election process.

- Ever since Nepal adopted its new Constitution in 2015, there have been quite a few **instances where the politics has reached a tipping point.**
- One of the examples is, Mr. Dahal's walk out of a coalition government with Mr. Oli in 2016.

What is China's stance?

- **Beijing's sent a senior delegation** of the Communist Party of China to Kathmandu shortly after Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli's decision to dissolve Parliament. **It indicates that China is prepared to interfere in Nepal's politics.**

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- Chinese delegation met political leaders of Nepal with a definite task of **trying to reverse the split in the party** and convince Mr. Oli and his rivals to patch up.
- This move of Chinese government flickered protests in Kathmandu. Though China is at a risk of losing popular goodwill in Nepal due to this move, it is equally surprising that **both groups in Nepal were willing to meet the Chinese delegation.**

What is India's stance?

It is evident that **India is not playing its traditional leading role** in Nepal but it is also not facing the hatred for spoiling the situation.

- **India has a historical understanding of the main players in Nepali politics;** thus, it has chosen to be more logical and controlled.
- **Mr. Oli and Mr. Dahal, both reached out to India** and are engaging with the government about the happenings in Nepal.
 - Mr Oli reached out to India months after the map controversy.
 - Mr. Dahal has been a close Indian confederate during this period.

The present positive situation gives New Delhi a little more space to consider its moves, to bring in stability. **Stability in Nepal's polity is crucial for their better relations** with India in the long term as their prosperity is closely interlinked.

11. Analysis of India's Foreign policy in 2020

Synopsis: An analysis of India's foreign policy for the year 2020 has been put forward.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS2: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.

Background

- The various developments that have **affected Indian foreign policy** decisions are,
 - The emergence of the **COVID-19 pandemic** that led to severe restrictions on travel.
 - Deadlock over the continuing occupation of Indian territory by China that witnessed violence at **Galwan valley.**
 - The **unsettled situation in the U.S.**, with only three weeks to go for Joe Biden to be sworn in as President.
 - The game-changing developments in West Asia, the progress in **Israel-Saudi bilateral relation.**

How impactful were the India's Foreign policy decision during the year 2020?

India's Foreign policy as a result of various global developments had its own pros and cons. Some decisions that we took raised our status in the global arena as a rising global super power whereas some decisions have invited criticisms.

- **First,** India's efforts towards pandemic recovery through India's **pandemic diplomacy** have made a positive impact.
 - India helped many countries with relief supplies, medicines and equipment during the pandemic. For example, supply of **hydroxychloroquine** and paracetamol to other countries.
 - India has also contributed immensely to **international mobility and migration** during the pandemic. For example, we supported the movement of more than 1,10,000 foreigners out of India to 120 countries while, more than 2.5 million citizens were facilitated to return to India.
- **Second,** India's **stress on multilateralism and international cooperation** have been appreciated.

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- Third, India has been increasingly involved in adequately **securitising foreign policy** by integration of foreign and defence policies, a new dimension to policymaking for settling border disputes. For example,
 - The visit of the Chief of the Army Staff and the Foreign Secretary to Myanmar.
 - The visits of the Chief of the Research and Analysis Wing, the Chief of the Army Staff, and the Foreign Secretary to Nepal.
- **Third**, in few examples India was seen as **distancing itself from globalisation** and moving towards **protectionism** as against the **rules of Free trade**. For example,
 - The concept of “**Atmanirbharta**” to reducing dependence on countries like China.
 - India’s decision to keep out of the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership** has stating that globalisation and trade agreements have resulted in **de-industrialisation** in certain sectors.
- **Fourth**, the visible **intolerance towards international criticism** had made other countries to express displeasure over India’s action. For example, two boycotts by Mr. Jaishankar have been seen as increased intolerance of external criticism.
 - The first was his decision not to meet Democratic Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal owing to her **critical view on the Kashmir issue**. Senator Bernie Sanders and Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris, now Vice-President-elect, criticised India for ‘silencing’ its critic.
 - The second was his decision to boycott **Ministerial meeting on COVID-19 convened by Canada**. The reason for the boycott was Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s statement on the agitation of Indian farmers which is significant to interference in our internal affairs.

However, India’s policy is to be supportive of our diaspora abroad and we need to showcase tolerance towards such criticism from abroad.

12. Implication of warming in Arctic region

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- GS 2

Synopsis- Warming in Arctic region has many implications and the geopolitics is also changing in the region.

Introduction-

- The **Arctic has been warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet**, with higher temperatures pushing sea ice into a loop of melting and thinning.
- Since 1980, the **amount of summer ice** in cubic kilometers has decreased **by an estimated 75 percent**.
- Climate change is increasingly **opening up the Northwest Passage**, an Arctic sea route north of the Canadian mainland.

These developments will have a critical impact in several sectors, most fundamentally on climate.

What are the adverse impacts of global warming?

A warming climate holds important implications for other aspects of the global environment.

- **First**, it had led to many changes on the planet, such as **a rise in sea level, massive melting of snow and land ice, salinity levels, and current and precipitation patterns**
 - Moreover, The Tundra is returning to swamp, the permafrost is thawing, sudden storms are ravaging coastlines and wildfires are devastating interior Canada and Russia.
- **Second, Arctic biodiversity under serious threat** from climate change- The distribution of flora and fauna is shifting northwards as the Arctic continues to warm.

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- Increasing human encroachment with its attendant stresses will only aggravate this impact and upset a fragile balance.

What are the opportunities due to opening the Arctic region?

Opening of the Arctic presents huge commercial and economic opportunities such as shipping, energy, fisheries and mineral resources.

- **First, new shipping route-** The shrinking of ice on the Northern Sea Route will open new possibilities for shipping companies.
- The distance from Rotterdam to Yokohama will be cut by 40 per cent compared to the Suez route.
- **Second, Raw materials underground-** The area above the Arctic Circle is underlain by sedimentary basins and continental shelves that hold enormous oil and natural gas resources.
- The Arctic holds about 22 percent of the world's undiscovered conventional oil and natural gas resource base along with mineral deposits including 25 per cent of the global reserves of rare earths, buried in Greenland.

What are the challenges in doing so?

- First, **Navigation conditions are restrictive and dangerous** due to-
 - extreme conditions: ice floes, fog, imprecise charts
 - Lack of search and rescue infrastructure and lack of deep-water ports.
- Second, **added cost of navigation in polar waters** –
 - more expensive shipbuilding and crew training requirements, need for ice-breakers, high insurance costs
 - Mining and deep-sea drilling carry massive costs and environmental risks.

These difficulties may provide the crucial window to work out norms that are focused on balanced and sustainable development. However, the Arctic is not a global common and there is no overarching treaty that governs it.

What are the impacts of Arctic warming on India?

The **extensive coastline of India makes it most vulnerable** to the impact of Arctic warming as-

- It is found that rising temperatures in the Arctic region is causing the sea-ice to melt faster than expected, **impacting a major ocean current** linked to extreme weather events.
- The global warming phenomena have resulted in a change in the **monsoon onset time and pattern**.

How Russia and china using Arctic geopolitics as a strategic posture?

- **First**, Russian priority is to ensure the **Northern Fleet's access** to, and passage along, the Northern Sea Route (NSR) from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.
- **Second, Russia has deployed substantive force** and capabilities along its northern border, including through an exercise with China in the eastern Arctic.
- **Third, China in the Arctic-** China's economic partnership with Russia in the Arctic with a focus on projecting the Polar Silk Road as an extension of the BRI, and has invested heavily in ports, energy, undersea infrastructure and mining projects.

Thus, an active China in the Arctic and its growing economic and strategic relationship with Russia need close monitoring.

13. India's foreign policy: Lessons from 2020 and challenges/opportunities in 2021

Source: [Click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - International Relations,

Synopsis: A quick flashback of 2020 suggested that India faced seven tough realities last year and has to deal with many possible challenges and opportunities in 2021.

Introduction

Last year was quite difficult for India; it fought Covid-19 and Chinese hostility. Next year is going to be all about facing the challenge of firming ties and building new ones with the US, EU, Middle East countries, and its neighbours.

What were the hard realities of 2020?

- **China's ambition to become number one**
 - China's which was consolidating its power since, 2013, saw an opportunity in pandemic and started flexing its muscles.
 - Chinese naval forces hit a Vietnamese fishing boat, droned a Philippines naval vessel and agitated a Malaysian oil drilling operation. It even put **trade restrictions on Australia**.
 - 20 Indian soldiers lost their lives in **the border stand-off with China** as they have changed the status quo along the border.
- **Trump Administration**
 - The Trump Administration targeted China and the Communist Party of China for disturbing the global order and **walked out of several multilateral bodies**.
- **Approval for Taliban**
 - **India is planning to re-engage with the Taliban** even though it is controlled by the Pakistan military because the US has made peace with them.
- **Middle East calculations**
 - New Delhi has been **nurturing ties with Israel as well as Saudi-UAE and the Iranians** with clever diplomacy but India should be mindful as at home religious politics could hamper its gains.
- **Russia-China closeness**
 - The US's anti-Chinese public speaking, downfall of oil prices and **Russia's dependence on Chinese consumption** is the reason of their bonding.
 - **Russia has a similar stance to china on the Quad and Indo-pacific** and India has taken note of it even though India shares strong ties with Russia.
- **Confident neighbours**
 - Bangladesh stressed on CAA-NRC, and then **Nepal claimed territory followed by issuing a new map**.
 - India seems to have accepted the participation of the US in Maldives and of Japan in Sri Lanka and Maldives.
- **Aspirational India**
 - During the pandemic, India supplied medicines and protective kits to more than 150 countries still it **didn't manage to appear as the global leader** the world needed; instead, it looked as an aspirational power because of lack of resources, a shrinking economy and its general politics.

What are the challenges and opportunities in the upcoming year?

- **Firstly, India has to counter China.**
 - India will need persistent support from the US, Japan, Australia, in addition with the support of France, Germany and the UK because India requires external aid in adequate measure to counter china.
- **Secondly, India is set to enter the UN Security Council for the 8th time.**

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- India will now have to take stands on several issues that it has avoided in the past such as the Iran-Saudi rivalry etc.
- **Thirdly, friendship with the US.**
- India will try to deepen its strategic and defence ties with the US, and would want to resolve trade and visa issues.
- **Fourthly, India will try to win over Europe.**
- There is a chance of an India-EU summit in the upcoming year and a potential European strategy. France and Germany have come up with their Indo-Pacific strategy.
- **Fifthly, India should engage with its neighbours.**
- India could use vaccine diplomacy to its benefit by supplying vaccines at affordable costs to neighbours in 2021 as almost all south Asian countries have stable governments currently.
- **Lastly, India should appear Global not aspirational.**
- New Delhi will host the BRICS summit in 2021.
- Begin preparations for the G-20 summit in 2023.
- The India-Africa Forum summit, which could not be held in 2020, could be held in 2021 or later.

India has opportunities to clear and be vocal on issues that matter to the world and be positive to promote its interests.

General Studies Paper – 3

General Studies – 3

1. Vital notes from the year 2020

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3

Synopsis: As 2020 is coming to an end, we should ponder upon the issues the country faced this year and ensure that 2021 does not become another wasted year.

What are the issues India faced in the year 2020?

- **Pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on every segment of Indian society and infected approximately more than a crore of its citizens (1.5 lakh fatalities).
- **Border stand-off:** India is facing an unexpected border stand-off situation with China in eastern Ladakh. The tensions even led to martyrdom of Indian soldiers. This has had a serious impact on India-China relations.
- **Internal Security issues:** The bitterness caused by the altered status of J&K and the custody of political leaders and the Naxalite violence have resulted in serious internal problems.
- **States:** There lies a grave concern for **violence in the upcoming elections of West Bengal.**
- **Economy:** The economy is in recession. India has fallen down the scale in the Human Development Index and in the Global Economic Freedom Index.
- **New bills on social issues**, for instance:
 - A law against forced conversion by marriage will intensify an already divisive society.
 - The farmers' agitation is another instance where official inflexibility has led to a situation in which the Supreme Court had to intervene.

What should India do in the upcoming year?

Series of electoral successes for the ruling party; the personal popularity of the Prime Minister; and the absence of any strong competitor on the national stage gives the current government an opportunity to bring solid changes.

- **Firstly**, India should come up with a new model of ideas for foreign policy which can be implemented. This would enable India to be viewed as the only nation in Asia that can stand-up to the China challenge.
- **Secondly**, the idea that says India should look inward rather than outwards to enlarge its economy needs to be rejected, and India should enhance its export capacity.
- **Thirdly**, the government should take crucial steps to resolve the troubles in the labour market caused by the pandemic and other contributory factors.
 - Creating new jobs in new industries should be a critical requirement.
 - Stimulating demand would ensure growth in job opportunities.

Way forward

- Effective cooperation between the Centre and the States must be restored to impart confidence about India's democratic future.

2. Lack of fiscal support could stoke inequality

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

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

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Context- India's low level of fiscal spending could leave behind other problem and leads to inequality.

India has stood out in three distinct ways.

- Firstly, India seems to have broken the link between rising levels of mobility and COVID-19 cases. As of now the fear of increased mobility around the festive season stoking cases has not come to bear and the fatality rate continues to fall as the recovery rate rises.
- Secondly, India has seen amongst the smallest fiscal support packages globally, government expenditure has not grown in the year so far.
- Third, inflation is now a big problem, CPI inflation has been outside the 2-6% tolerance band for seven months in a row.

How small fiscal support link with inequality?

1. The government's fiscal packages were far too modest and indirect to achieve much, some part was not covered (like the urban poor), and overall outlays were small.
2. **Rise in inequality between large and small firms** - Large listed firms saw a larger rise in profits and the smaller listed firms did not do as well.
 - A combination of cost-cutting, lower interest rate environment, access to buoyant capital markets, and formalization of demand could also be a driver of the rise in individual-level inequality.
 - **Impacted larger number of people**- small firms are more labour-intensive than large firms. Data shows that small firms have cut staff costs by much more than large firms.
3. **Widening wealth gap**- The coronavirus pandemic has dealt a huge blow to India's middle and low-income groups. This is likely to further widen the wealth gap between India's rich and poor.
 - **For instance**- Expensive passenger vehicle sales doing better than two-wheeler sales.

What are the negatives of rising inequality?

1. **Inequality could elevate inflation**- People with higher incomes can offset rising inflation with rising incomes. Sadly, though, income inequality and rising inflation can entrap lower-income households in poverty.
 - **For example**- India has had a troubled past with services inflation. once it takes a stronghold (for instance, in 2011), it remains elevated for a prolonged period (it averaged 7.7% in the 2011-13 period).

There are three possible reasons that services inflation rises quickly in 2021-

1. **Inequality could stroke prices**- The large firms and their employees do relatively well through this period, they are likely to demand more services, stoking services inflation.
2. **Pent up service demand**- As a vaccine comes into play, there could be a wave of pent-up (high-touch) services demand.
3. The service providers did not do the regular annual price reset in 2020, and may do it jointly for two years, once demand picks up.

What need to be done?

1. Inflation control could be the main task cut out for policymakers in 2021.
2. RBI have to take steps to gradually drain the excess liquidity in the banking sector, provide a floor for short end rates and finally narrow the policy rate corridor by raising the reverse repo rate.

3. Possibility of China's 5G warfare and India

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Gs3: Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology.

Synopsis: China is preparing to dominate the world by rolling out its 5G technology warfare across countries, India needs to fast the pace of its 5G implementation to contain the digital threat of China.

What is 5G warfare?

- **5G technology** will enable **IOT (Internet of Things)** and IOT is driven by data and Information.
- It will aid the providing country with the power to access and control the data of individuals, groups or even nations.
- Moreover, 5G technologies are main enabler of AI technologies and the recent example of use of AI in warfare, like drone killing machines, multiply these threats.

Implications of Chinese 5G warfare?

China, as one of the foremost countries to roll out 5G technologies with huge investment worldwide, posing the risks of digital encirclement of the world. An invasion by Chinese 5G technology in to other nations will make them completely dependent on China

- **First example** is the recent cooperation of measurement of Mt. Everest between China and Nepal may enable the launch of Chinese 5G technology in Nepal, with the following implications.
 - It will provide china the ability to control Nepal's business interests, its **mountaineering and tourism industry**.
 - It will make locals or visitors to Nepal dependent on China for **Real-time information** on weather, routes, map/terrain details, logistics and rescue programmes, etc.,
 - There is a significant chance that, with lower incomes, the Nepal's tourism industry might get lured into Chinese cheap loans, leading to a **strategic debt trap**.
- **Second**, Militaries who do not have indigenous 5G capabilities for IOT platforms might allow Chinese 5G infrastructure, leading them to become a hostage to Chinese technology. For example, The **CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor)** is a clear example. Pakistan today has become the **virtual vassal state** of China.
- **Third**, with Chinese companies having made huge investments across the world to spread a 5G it would lead to complete **digital encirclement of the world** when combined with **BRI (belt and road initiative)**

How should India prepare to fight the onslaught of the Chinese 5G invasion?

- First, India is already working on **Indigenous 5G technology** that would run **IOT platforms** for civilian as well as military applications, it needs to accelerate the launch of Indian 5G.
- Second, the **Counteroffensive measures** such as banning of Chinese apps and blocking of hardware supply chains will be able to protect the business and security interests of the country.

There is an urgent need to fasten the pace of 5G technology development in India which is suffering due to slow adoption, entangled **policy processes** and bureaucratic processes.

4. Striking balance between interest of different section of farmers

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.

Synopsis - present market structure is not favorable for marginal farmers, government should adopt a balanced approach to reach a solution on farm bills.

Background

- A set of three laws passed in September aims to deregulate India's enormous agriculture sector aimed at "liberating" farmers from the tyranny of middlemen.
- But many farmers fear that they stand to lose more than they could gain from the new regulations and these are the following concerns of farmers-
- **End of MSP-** Their main worry is about a possible withdrawal of the MSP and a dismantling of the public procurement of grains.
- **Promote corporate control-** The farmers contend the federal government is making ready to withdraw from the procurement of food grain and hand it over to the company gamers.

Although all of the concerns of farmers are not misplaced, but these concerns have definitely been blown out of proportion for political reasons.

What are the issues in present Agri. Market structure?

Present Agri. Market structure which suffers from the lacunas of MSP system, restrictive Mandi system and APMC market structures, is doing more harm than benefits to the marginalized farmers.

- **First, CRIER-OECD study on agricultural policies** showed that over the period 2000-01 to 2016-17, Indian agriculture was implicitly taxed to the tune of almost 14 per cent of its value.
- What this implies is that Indian farmers have been implicitly taxed heavily through restrictive marketing and trade policies [export controls, stocking limits and restrictive mandi system]
- **Second, the procurement system and MSP mechanism** are beneficial particularly for the rich farmers of Punjab and Haryana
- The NSSO's Situation Assessment Survey [2012-13] revealed that Only 6 per cent of the farmers in India are fully covered and benefitted by the MSP, and 84 per cent are located in the states of Punjab and Haryana.
- The MSP and APMC system primarily helps those who have large surpluses, mainly the large farmers.

How FPOs can be helpful for small and marginal farmers?

In India, 86 per cent of farmers are small and marginal (less than 2 ha), who do not get the benefit of MSP system.

- Farmer's Producer's organizations (FPOs) at village level, consisting of small farmers, supplemented by the mechanism of new farm laws will benefit them.
- The creation of an additional 10,000 FPOs and the promised Agri-infra Fund of Rs.1,00,000 Crore will aid this process.

How government can eliminate the fears of agitating farmers?

- **First, MSP to be continued-** The government need to assure farmers in writing that the new laws discontinue APMC and MSP system.
- **Second,** Government needs to **clarify about the contract farming** that that the contract will be for the produce, not the farmers land.

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- **Third, farmers can take disputes to district courts.**
- Forth, Government can also approve **Rs.25,000 Crore alternate fund under the Price Stabilization Scheme** to support market prices in case when prices fall below 10 percent the MSP

However, The Food Corporation of India is already overloaded with grain stocks that are more than 2.5 times the buffer stock norms.

- To deal with such situation, Government can either limit the quantity of procurement or go for Price deficiency Payment system for those who buy “put options” at MSP to address the gaps in MSP based procurement of crops.
- An expert committee will have to be set up to look into its operational guidelines and further announcement of a diversification package for the Punjab-Haryana region can be done.

Conclusion

- On the one hand, repealing of new farmer’s law would be unfair for small and marginal farmers as they never got any benefit from the MSP system. On another hand, High price to farmers also mean high food prices for consumer.
- Thus, there is a requirement to strike a balance between the interest of various stakeholders of Indian farming system and its consumers.

5. Inequality of emission targets among developed and developing world

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation,

Synopsis: The current Climate change policy is designed to favour the interest of developed world over the interest of countries in the process of development, like India.

Background:

- India, during the **Climate Action Summit in Paris** avoided the commitments to **cap emissions** but agreed on **intended nationally determined contribution** to reduce global temperature below 1.5degree Celsius.
- Currently, with India’s **per capita emissions** at one-third of the global average, India is set to meet its Paris Agreement target for 2030.
- Whereas the western and EU countries which are responsible for majority of the resources use, and have achieved well-being of their people, are not committed in the proportion of their contribution to climate change.

Why India’s stand on not committing to cap emissions is justifiable?

Main problem doesn’t lie with the Indian model of development but with the colonial model of Industrialisation and urbanisation i.e., overly resource-intensive and defining progress as material abundance. This model has created the inequality, which western countries are not acknowledging.

- **Firstly**, Inequity is built into the climate treaty, which considers total emissions, size, and population, making **India the fourth largest emitter**, not the per capita emission.
- For example, China, with four times the population of the U.S., accounts for 12% of cumulative emissions while India, with a population close to that of China’s accounts for just 3% of cumulative emissions, have almost same commitments.
- According to the United Nations, the richest 1% of the global population emits more than two times the emissions of the bottom 50%.

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- **Second**, North America and Europe were responsible for half of the global construction material use before 1970s, the share declined after the development started in Asia
- Reconstruction in the West after World War II led to acceleration of material use, resulting emissions and sharp rise in global temperature around 1970, before growth commenced in Asia.
- **Third**, Targets of 'carbon neutrality' are not justified for the countries like India, which are already on the path of less energy-intensive development and is on the pathway to reach comparable levels of well-being of the west.
- **Fourth**, India is already performing better than the West in certain sustainability benchmark like housing size and density, public bicycle transport and eliminating food waste.
- For example, the meat industry, especially beef, contributes to one-third of global emissions. Indians eat just 4 kg of meat a year compared to those in the European Union who eat about 65 kg and Americans who eat about 100 kg.
- Also, it is to be noted that the average American household wastes nearly one-third of its food.
- **Fifth**, While the Transport emissions which is one of the fastest-growing emissions worldwide and regarded as the **symbol of Western civilisation** account for a quarter of global emissions they are not on the global agenda.
- **Sixth**, India is under pressure to stop using coal, which powered colonialism, even though India's per capita coal use for electricity generation is one-tenth that of the U.S.. Also, India's measures to shift to electric vehicles and eliminate oil has not been recognised.

Way forward

India should push for an alternate 2050 goal in the UN for the countries with below average per capita emission by utilising its credibility based on its civilisational and long-standing alternate values for the transition to sustainability.

The goals should be aimed at **well-being of people within ecological limits, Sustainable Development Goals** and multilateral technological knowledge cooperation around electric vehicles.

6. Impact of Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) on the rights of people

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- **GS 3** - Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Synopsis- The rapid use of Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) by law enforcement without proper guidelines and regulation, will have many negative impacts on people.

Introduction-

- In recent times the facial recognition tracking (FRT) systems has seen rapid development. **Central and State governments across India are using 16 different facial recognition tracking (FRT) systems** for surveillance, security or authentication of identity.
- FRT uses algorithms to **extract data points from a face** to create its digital signature. This **signature is compared with an existing database** to find possible matches.
- Still there are no specific laws or guidelines to regulate the use of this potentially invasive technology.
- As facial recognition technology use grows, so do privacy fears.

As a result, the FRT system poses a huge threat to the fundamental rights to privacy and freedom of speech and expression.

How FRT invades the fundamental rights to privacy and freedom of speech and expression?

The rapid growth of this technology has triggered a much-needed debate. These systems need a huge amount of sensitive personal data and biometric information, and their existence is at odds with user's privacy. Here are some concerning points why people should worry about the use of facial recognition technology in public spaces.

1. **The FRT system violates right to privacy-** As per the Puttaswamy judgment, Privacy is a fundamental right, even on public spaces.
 - Large-scale recordings, storing and analyzing of images undermines this right because it means it won't be possible to anything in public without the state knowing about it.
2. **It operates without a clear legal or regulatory framework-** There is a lack of detailed and specific information as to how facial recognition is actually used.
 - The system has no legal backing, claims Internet Freedom Foundation [IFF], which has recently issued notices to the Union home ministry and NCRB over the legality of the system.
 - If the police has detained or arrested any person with the use of the FRT system, then there is not proper guidelines/set of SOP of what to do.
3. **Function creep surveillance-** Function creep" occurs when information is used for a purpose that is not the original intended.
 - Use of facial recognition software in India began benevolently for identify missing children. Now it is being used for all kinds of surveillance. This shift from locating missing children to identifying rioters happened without any legal sanction or due planning and procedure which it a function creep.
4. **It has a chilling effect on our democratic rights**
 - Blanket surveillance can deter individuals from attending public protests. It can stifle participation in political protests and campaigns for change. And it can discourage nonconformist behavior.
 - This chilling effect is a serious infringement on the **right to freedom of assembly, association, and expression.**
5. **It is often inaccurate-** It is not 100% accurate and there can be "misidentification (false positive) and failure to identify (false negative).
 - In case of a false positive- the algorithm said photos of two different people showed the same person
 - In case of a false negative- the algorithm failed to correctly detect that two photos showed the same person.

What is the International experience on FRTs?

US has taken steps to prevent The Facial Recognition Technology's weaponization by law enforcement against a section of people.

1. Many US cities and states have **banned public agencies** from using facial recognition and passed legislation to demand more transparency on how police use surveillance tools.
2. Microsoft followed **Amazon and IBM**, have decided to limit the use of its facial-recognition systems and **not to sell it to police departments** until there is a federal law regulating it.

What is the way forward?

With so many concerns about facial recognition technology and desperately need a more prominent conversation on its impact on people's rights and civil liberties. Without proper regulation such systems of mass surveillance will erode democratic liberties and threaten the rights of lakhs of Indians

7. More genome sequencing to study the spread of the variants

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- GS 3 - Science and Technology – developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Synopsis- There is need for more genome sequencing from samples from all over the world in order to come up with effective approaches to control and prevent COVID-19 infections.

Background-

- A new variant of the pandemic SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus is spreading rapidly in Britain and prompting high levels of concern.
- Six samples of the recent U.K. returnees have been found to be positive with a variant of SARS- CoV-2 virus.
- From 25 Nov-23 Dec, about 33,000 passengers landed at various Indian airports from the U.K. So far, only 114 have been found positive and samples have been sent to 10 INSACOG (Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium) labs for genome sequencing.

Thus, only through detailed epidemiological studies combined with genome sequencing data can we confirm the presence and spread of the variant in India.

What are the findings with related to new stain of coronavirus and will it cause concern in India?

The genomic analysis undertaken by the COVID-19 Genomics U.K. Consortium found that-

- **First. The new variant of coronavirus is named "VUI 202012/01"** and is defined by a set of 23 changes or mutations. Among the 23 mutations, the two of which are particularly worrisome and specifically N501Y makes it more transmissible.
 - It includes a genetic mutation in the "spike" protein that can lead to easy and immediate spread of the virus, making it deadlier. This new variant has 17 mutations that affect the shape of the virus.
- **Second, It is about 70% more transmissible-**The variant has the potential to increase the number of people a person can infect by over 0.4

However, it might not be able to spread wildly in India as a sizeable percentage of people are already infected.

Read more – [Mutation in Coronavirus](#)

Why it is important to undertake more genome sequencing of the virus?

The genome sequencing study would determine if the COVID patients are carrying the existing strain of SARS-CoV-2 or the mutant strain.

- **First, to understand the evolving nature of the virus-** So far, we are doing very less frequent genomic sequencing compared to western nations. For instance, in England, around 10 per cent of the infected virus samples are sequenced to study the nature of the virus.
- **Second, to find an immune escape variant** of the SARS-CoV-2, [which means a mutation in the virus that allows it to evade the immune system]
 - One of the immune escape variants found in genomes from India, **known as N440K variant** — was found to be in 2.1 per cent of the gene sequences in India.

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- **Third, The N501Y mutation** can arise independently here in India. Hence more genome sequencing and genomic epidemiology is needed.

Steps taken by Indian Government regarding this-

- The **genomic surveillance consortium (INSACOG)** has been recommended for laboratory and epidemiological surveillance of circulating strains of the SARS-CoV-2 in India.
- Under this initiative, **5 percent of the positive cases** will be tested for Whole Genome Sequencing, from all the States and UT.

What is the way forward?

Genome sequencing is very much important of the higher percentage of the samples to understand the evolving nature of the virus.

8. Path to economic recovery of India

Source: [Indian Express](#)

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

Synopsis: Government should adopt a fiscal stimulus Path **for the economic recovery of India**, to make our economy grow at 9% GDP in the coming years.

Background

- The impact of the **pandemic** has pushed India to impose stringent lockdown measures to save millions of lives of Indian citizens but it's after effect has caused massive **economic disruption**.
- This has resulted in fall of GDP by around 7.5 per cent for this full year which has dented our aspiration to become a **\$5 trillion economy by 2024**.
- Though nothing much can be done for what has happened, in the coming years India needs to get back to the trend line of growth (pre-COVID years) to sustain the aspiration of our young population.

How different sectors are performing currently?

- The sectors which have shown positive sign of recovery are
 - Pharmaceuticals and chemicals, the FMCG sector, the two-wheeler sector, Construction equipment's driven by rural demand from sales to individuals, Capital goods.
- In contrast, Sectors which are still struggling for a full recovery are
 - Mainly, the travel and tourism sector, real-estate and construction sector, and retail which are significantly high employment sectors.

So, what steps must government take?

Though the recovery underway is solid, but we need measures to sustain and deepen it. The government can do three things.

- **First, the government should resort to fiscal stimulus** by paying long overdue government bills. Few examples are,
 - Distribute the **pending tax refunds**, pay the bills of all companies (large and small), pay off the many **arbitration awards** pending where the government has lost cases, and pay state governments their **pending GST dues**.
- **Second, invest in public health infrastructure** and centre should finance state government efforts to build an extensive public health network.
 - While this will equip as to handle a possible second wave of the virus, on the other, it will spread confidence.

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- Also, it is essential for government to **work in partnership with private sector hospitals**.
- **Third, invest massively in infrastructures such as Roads, ports, logistics.** Areas where investment can be channelised are,
- By Providing decent, accessible housing to improve the living conditions in slums across our cities by providing right **public-private programme**.
- By providing cheap connectivity into our cities.
- Even, the **20 trillion infrastructure pipeline project** that requires massive funding can be considered.

How the funds for the above will be sourced?

- **To mobilise its resources** that are needed to finance the above measures, government can opt for a huge privatisation programme (**Disinvestment**)
- Under this program, government should intend to **reduce its share-holding to 26 per cent across** public-sector banks, steel companies, oil companies, and every manufacturing company and hotel it currently owns.
- This announcement might **trigger a big rally in the stock prices of PSUs**, increasing return.
- **To stem the protests due to big reforms**, we are witnessing currently, the government should **choose democratic methods for implementing** them such as use of **discussion papers for public comment, debate in Parliament**.

We need to act swiftly to regain from stunted recovery. We must use our **economic crisis as an opportunity** to set some bigger things right that we have ignored for too long.

9. Farmer welfare in Kerala, in the absence of Mandi system

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 -

Synopsis: Absence of Madi system in Kerala has not impacted the farmer's welfare in the state.

Background:

Thousands of farmers have assembled to protest against the 3 farm bills and have established a new way of life at Singhu, Tikri, Ghazipur, Noida and Shahjahanpur borders.

- Farmers have made all necessary arrangements for food, shelter, clothing, and sanitation. They have been **gathering a country wide support**.
- **A tussle among various political parties is also ongoing** on the issue of support or opposition to farmer's demand.
- Meanwhile in all this debate, **example of Kerala was used** by some big politicians that the states with no Mandi system is also siding with the farmers.
- However, ground realities and facilities for farmers in Kerala suggest that the **same model can be applied at other places** too for the welfare of farmers.

How Farmer's Welfare in Kerala assured?

Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) and mandis although do not exist in Kerala, the needs and interests of farmers are taken care of in the state.

- The central government's rate for obtaining rice is ₹ 18 a kg whereas the government in Kerala has fixed the price of rice from cultivators at ₹27.48 a kg. **This increased basic price is also applicable on fruits and vegetables**.
- **Basic prices (per Kg) of 16 items are assured** by the government. Few examples are tapioca ₹12, banana ₹30, garlic ₹139, pineapple ₹15, tomato ₹8, string beans ₹34, ladies' fingers ₹20, cabbage ₹11 and potato ₹20.

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- Dried coconut also has a much **higher procurement rate in Kerala** as compared to the rate announced by the central government.
- Apart from crop insurance, **paddy cultivators also get the royalty in Kerala** at the rate of ₹2,000 per hectare. They get pension as well, which is a very unique step in the country.
- **A debt relief commission** was introduced in 2006 by the left government when farmers' suicides were increasing, this initiative tried to help and save them.

Above facts prove that farmers in the Kerala are in a better condition compared to the state of farmers in other states after enacting Farm Laws. For ex; **40% of mandis in Madhya Pradesh have registered only zero transactions** after the passing of 3 bills.