

9pm
Compilation

March, 2021 (Second Week)

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

General Studies 1

1. Issue of Women rights in India

General Studies 2

1. Rise of Lateral Surveillance in India
2. Afghan Peace Process and India
3. The ill effects of Job reservation for locals
4. Concerns associated with Local Reservation Laws
5. Why India Should limit its Involvement With QUAD?
6. Flaws in New IT rules 2021
7. Increasing Cases of Gestational Diabetes in India
8. Lack of Gender sensitivity in the Court Judgments
9. India's new policy of proactive diplomacy
10. Addressing Systemic Issues in Higher Education
11. Working towards Climate Justice
12. Reasons Behind Participation of India in Desert Flag exercise
13. The Issue of Programme Code for Media outlets
14. Incentivising Women's Domestic Care and Associated Issues
15. Flaws in new IT Rules 2021

General Studies 3

1. Financial distress in Railways : Reasons and Way Forward
2. Why Criticisms of New IT Rules 2021 are illogical?
3. Why India should Focus More on Climate Change Adaptation?
4. Prerequisites for Developing Digital Health Data
5. The Advantages of Work from Anywhere
6. Revisiting the Reservation Laws in India
7. Cyber attacks on critical Infrastructure
8. Absence of Regular Chiefs in Central Security Forces
9. Need for Fire Safety training and technologies
10. Growing Food Subsidy Bill: Reasons and Suggestions
11. Importance of FPOs | (Farmer Producer's Organisations)
12. Why India Needs a Strong Regulatory Framework for Agriculture?
13. India's Rise as the new global manufacturing hub
14. Need of Specific Law for National Security Screening of Inward FDI

General Studies Paper - 1

General Studies - 1

1. Issue of Women rights in India

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS – 1: Issues linked to Women in India

Synopsis: March 8 is celebrated as International Women’s Day. While celebrating it, we also need to look back at how women’s rights upheld by the state in the last years.

Background:

- 8th march is being celebrated as International Women’s Day. It is celebrated to commemorate the struggles of women factory workers.
- It was first organised by socialist movements as “international women’s day” in the first decade of the 20th century.
- Later, from the 1920s, it began to be celebrated annually by communist parties, first in the Soviet Union and then in China.
- Much later, the United Nations “established” International Women’s Day in 1977 in the wake of the International Women’s Year in 1975.
- In India, the celebration of International Women’s Day on March 8 started in the 1980s.
- For the last few years, there are demands to celebrate the death of **Savitribai Phule** on March 10 as Women’s Day in India.

Contribution of Savitribai Phule

1. Savitribai Phule was colonial India’s first female teacher. She fought for the cause of “social justice” against women’s caste-differentiated enslavement. She was ousted from the family home for breaking caste codes.
2. Furthermore, she was instrumental in establishing the **Satyashodhak Samaj** in Maharashtra by her husband **Jyotirao Phule**.
 - It was a social reform society that focused on education and increased social rights and political access for underprivileged groups.
3. However, the legacy, of Savitribai Phule, long ignored in the history of women’s rights.

State’s response to the major women-centric movements in 2020

1. **First, Denial of right to protest.** For example, the Shaheen Bagh protest led by Muslim women against the discriminatory Citizenship (Amendment) Act. This protest ended with the arrests of many young women and students, on the charges of having incited violence.
 - In the recent farmer protests against the three farm laws, many women participated even during freezing weather in Delhi. However, the state didn’t show apathy towards their concerns.
2. **Second, denial of rights to live a dignified life. For example,** Lockdown imposed hardship on women migrants. They were left without basic survival needs – food, shelter and care due to lack of **social security**.
3. **Three, denial of economic rights to women.** For example, the lockdown witnessed increased domestic violence against women. Also, the burden of Women’s household care work increased due to the absence of paid domestic workers. Yet, there was no state response to recognize women’s care work and housework.
4. **Fourth, ineffective towards deterring gender violence based on caste.** For example, **Hathras rape case**. The state response in tackling this kind of crime not proved effective to deter future caste-based violence.

General Studies Paper - 2

General Studies - 2

1. Rise of Lateral Surveillance in India

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2

Synopsis: The notification on the IT rules 2021 promotes lateral surveillance. It has given a new meaning to 'Citizen watch'.

Introduction:

The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), launched the Cyber Crime Volunteers Program. It aims to allow citizens to register themselves as "Cyber Crime Volunteers" in the role of "Unlawful Content Flaggers".

- **The programme will help law enforcement agencies** in identifying, reporting and removal of illegal/unlawful online content.
- The programme will be launched all over the country. It is going to have its test run in Jammu and Kashmir and Tripura.

What is lateral surveillance?

- The surveillance in which citizens watch over one another is called lateral surveillance.
- **Main Features of lateral surveillance:**
 - It is different from typical surveillance. In the typical surveillance, there is a vertical relationship between those being watched (citizenry) and those who are watching (the state).
 - The lateral surveillance specifically ensures that the imbalance of power no longer exists.
 - It is a form of community policing.
- The United States had the neighbourhood watch scheme. It increased community policing in the 1970s. With the introduction of technology and **the development of applications such as Citizen and Next door**, monitoring of people and their behaviour has become easier.

What is the extent of lateral surveillance in India, and what are its impacts?

The state-sponsored lateral surveillance has been implemented in India earlier as well. For example, the C-Plan App in Uttar Pradesh launched for keeping a tab on anti-social elements. It is designed to receive inputs from certain identified individuals in villages across the State.

1. **Firstly, these individuals have been given the responsibility** to solve local problems such as providing information about boiling communal tensions or land disputes taking place in their own villages through the mobile application.
2. **Secondly, the scope of lateral surveillance expanded during the pandemic lockdown.** For instance, the Karnataka government released a PDF with the names and addresses of around 19,000 international passengers who were quarantined in Bengaluru.
3. **Thirdly, lateral surveillance may create a situation where privacy could get weakened** for the betterment of the community.
4. **Fourthly,** It can act as a tool for social exclusion. Lateral surveillance makes it easier to discriminate between those who do not conform to the social norms of the majority.
 - For example, the LGBT community in South Korea faced harsh comments from the homophobic majority when coronavirus cases were reported from the area where they resided.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

5. **Fifthly**, it is harmful because it **creates an environment of hate, fear and constant suspicion**. This method gives people a duty of keeping an eye out for their own safety which results in an increase in fear of crime in society.
6. **Sixthly, these threats will increase intolerance**, prejudice, racism and casteism in our society. It will also violate the fundamental right to privacy right of free speech.

What will be the outcome of the policy?

- The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 also promotes lateral surveillance.
 - For example, there is a provision relating to the user-directed removal of non-consensual sexually explicit content. It will enable mediators to remove or disable access to the information within a short period of time of being notified by users.
- This may result in taking down content and sharing user data without sufficient due process safeguards, violating the fundamental right to privacy and freedom of expression.

2. Afghan Peace Process and India

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: India and its Neighborhood- Relations.

Synopsis: The US is set to leave Afghan as per the mandates of the Afghan Peace process. India should step up to ensure a peaceful, stable, and democratic Afghan government

Background:

- The peace process in Afghanistan is witnessing a crucial moment in its history.
- In a recent development, Mr. Blinken's letter (U.S secretary of state) addressed Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani. It confirmed the US intention to fully withdraw all forces from Afghanistan as per the **Doha Agreement**.
- Moreover, The continuation of Zalmay Khalilzad as the Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation indicated that the US wants to proceed to a final settlement based on the Doha agreement.
- The withdrawal of the US from the state will worsen the security situation, and it would help the Taliban to make rapid gains.

Dilemma faced by the US

- The U.S. maintains that its objective is to bring about a just and durable peace through political negotiations. It wants Afghanistan to remain united, sovereign, and democratic.
- But withdrawing troops from Afghanistan to cut its expenses is a contradiction to its above-stated objectives.
- Also, the major problem for the US is that it cannot withdraw from Afghan **without accepting Pakistan's terms**.
- But acceding to Pakistan's terms will not be accepted by Afghan patriots who want freedom for Afghanistan to choose its political direction.
- Mr. Biden is of the view that Pakistan is strategically more important to the U.S. than Afghanistan.
- Thus, Instead of pressuring Pakistan, the US is seeking Afghan support for a power-sharing arrangement with the Taliban. It would help to enable the exit of U.S. soldiers.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

The current plan

- The U.S. Government is advocating 'a new, inclusive government' in Afghanistan. It supports an immediate 50% share for the Taliban in an interim government, as a quid pro quo for a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire.
- Ghani is now asked to work closely with a broad consultative group to build consensus for negotiations with the Taliban on power-sharing, governance, and essential supporting principles.

What are the implications for India?

- India remains fully committed to Afghanistan. The bilateral relations are growing irrespective of political instability in Afghan. For example, recent high-level exchanges between Indian and Afghan leaders.
- Invites to prominent elders and senior Afghan leaders by India helped it to reconnect with the political forces in Afghanistan.
- India's efforts in Afghanistan have attracted support from the Afghan people and government.
- The patriotic Afghan people have always supported their erstwhile leaders such as Ex-President Najibullah, who are committed to building the nation. And these leaders in turn look to India as a friend and expect solidarity.

What should be the way forwards for India?

- In the late 1990s when no country was willing to help the democratic forces in Afghanistan. India and Iran voiced their support. A similar situation is arising.
- India must step up to assist materially those who want to defend the Afghan republic.
- This will also mark the arrival of India as the super power and as an arbiter in settling international disputes.

3. The ill effects of Job reservation for locals

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States

Synopsis: Haryana has introduced a new law where it assures 75% Job reservation for locals. This could be a disastrous decision for the Indian Economy.

Introduction

The Governor of Haryana has approved a law that regulates job reservation in the private sector. This could possibly hamper India's investment climate and its socio-economic framework.

- The [Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act of 2020](#) seeks to **provide for a 75 per cent job reservation** for local people in private-sector jobs. The reservation is ensured on jobs having salaries **less than Rs. 50,000 a month**.
- Apart from Haryana, States such as Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh also tried to provide Job reservation for locals.

Few major provisions of Haryana's Law:

1. Firms and companies need to **register** all of their employees receiving a gross salary of Rs 50,000 or less on a **government portal** and update it at regular intervals.
2. An **exemption** can be claimed by employers when there enough number of local candidates are not available with the desired skills, qualifications, and proficiency. However, an officer of the rank of deputy commissioner or higher will evaluate such a claim.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

What are the issues with Job reservation for locals?

1. This law is not consistent with the provisions of the constitution. Especially Article 19(1)(g) and Article 16(2).
 - o Article 19 (1)(g): Right to freedom of profession or Right to carry on any occupation, trade or business
 - o Article 16(2): State cannot provide discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them. The law imposes difficult and argumentative responsibilities on key personnel of firms in the State.
2. The Law creates **barriers for businesses** by attaching severe monetary penalties for alleged non-compliance. The penalties can go up to Rs. 2,00,000 rupees.
3. Apart from that, the government will have the power to enter firms' premises for inspections. This could possibly **bring back the 'Inspector Raj' system**. This process **discourages employers from operating in the State**. Further, It will lead to decreasing local jobs and increasing the unemployment rate in the long run.
4. **Impact on the entire country:** The law will be an example for more such laws from State governments. This will lead to a mass departure of investors from India.
 - o For instance, a disturbance in the Gurgaon back-office operations of a global firm will damage India's reputation as a stable, trustworthy investment destination with a talented workforce.
5. The law is completely **against the Prime Minister's vision such as 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'** and **'One Nation One Market'**.

Way forward

- It is time the Centre discourages [job reservation for locals](#). Because these laws threaten to unleash a **'work visa' regime for Indians within the country** and also **damage crucial workplace diversity**.

4. Concerns associated with Local Reservation Laws

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States

Synopsis: Enactment of local reservation laws by states would have a negative impact on low-income internal migrants. Laws will also fail to go through the constitutionality test.

Background:

- There have been **numerous instances of subnational nativism** in the past:
 - o Mulki rules in Nizam-ruled Hyderabad in the late 19th century
 - o Anti-South Indian movements in Bombay in the 1960s
 - o Sons of the soil movement in Assam
- However rarely **we saw a formal law supporting local reservation** as:
 - o The politicians used subnational nativism just to woo voters
 - o Constitution prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of place of birth.
 - o The report of the **Working Group on Migration in January 2017** inferred the Supreme Court's decision in the **Charu Khurana v Union of India case, 2014. As per which** the restrictions based on residence for the purposes of employment are unconstitutional.
- Nonetheless, a rise in the enactment of local reservation laws is witnessed in India.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

Recent Local Reservation Laws:

- Andhra Pradesh became the first state to pass such a law in 2019. It reserved 75% private jobs across all categories in industrial units, factories, joint ventures as well as Public-Private Projects.
- In March 2021, the Haryana government notified its Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Bill, 2020. It provides for a 75 % job quota for local people in private sector jobs which offer a salary of less than Rs. 50,000 a month.

Problems with Local Reservation Laws:

- **Constitutionality Test: Article 16(2)** provides that there cannot be any discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them.
 - Further, it curtails the employer's choice of recruiting labour from anywhere in the country. It is against **Article 19(g)** that provides the freedom to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade, or business.
- **Flawed Objective:** One of the aims is to control interstate migration but census 2011 shows that the majority of migration is intrastate.
- **Depriving state of cheap labour:** Migrants offer better services at cheap prices. Further, the natives are reluctant to engage in some jobs which are taken by migrants. This is evident from Surat's power loom industry which employs workers from Odisha.
- **Plight of Low-income migrants:** He/she already faces the challenge of the uncertain job and portable job security. Now another obstacle of native laws is placed in front of them.
- **Discriminatory Criteria:** The income cut-off in Haryana's law conveys that the rich can move anywhere in India. However, similar opportunities are denied to poorer inter-state migrant workers.
- **Parallel Markets:** There is a fear of development of fake local residence certificate markets in order to get jobs within a state.

Way Forward:

- The **law passed by the Andhra Pradesh assembly is already challenged in court.** The decision would make it clear whether states can give any local reservation in jobs or not.
- Further, the **states must realize that a rise in interstate migration will definitely happen.** It is evident from the development trajectory of any other country. This was also seen in China during the last 3 decades of its growth.
- The **states shouldn't indulge in hypocrisy.** For instance, the residents of Haryana and Andhra Pradesh have benefited from internal and international migration in the past. But now is restricting migration in their respective states.

Discouraging protectionism has been the traditional stance of India as evident from the criticism of the Trump administration for enhancing barriers on H1B migrants. The change of Biden administration has brought hope to Indians who want to live the American dream, but local reservation policies at home have certainly discouraged the internal migrants.

5. Why India Should limit its Involvement With QUAD?

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: India and its Neighborhood- Relations.

Synopsis: The stand-off at Ladakh has shown the limits of India-U.S. security ties and India's involvement in the Quad. So, India should limit its involvement in QUAD and prioritize national security.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

How India joined the QUAD?

China's encroachment & India's response

1. China was expanding its footprint in South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region over the last few years.
2. Thus, India required an up-gradation of its naval capabilities and enhancement of ties with the Indian Ocean Region littoral states and other major powers in the region.
3. Later, due to the shared concerns relating to the rise of China, India-U.S. security ties deepened, For example,
 - o Focus on Interoperability of defence equipment and training based on defence purchases,
 - o Conducting frequent land and sea exercises,
 - o The signing of agreements to harmonize the two countries' military doctrines and operations.

India got dragged into the QUAD by the US

- The US wants to maintain its global hegemony and sees china's rise as a threat to the world order.
- The deepening relationship with the US gradually pulled India into the ambit of the **Indo-Pacific**. (Indo-Pacific is a concept that views the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean as an integrated geopolitical space.)
- This India joined the QUAD to expand its maritime ties with other regional states such as Japan, Australia.

What is the consequence of India's involvement in QUAD?

- By joining with the U.S.-led maritime coalition, India ignored the principal areas of its security concerns.
- In the words of Shivashankar Menon, by joining QUAD India emphasized more focus on maritime borders. But had no clues on how to protect its borders on the mainland.
- The shifting of India's alignment with the U.S. and its allies made china respond strongly by engaging in direct confrontation at our territorial borders.
- This resulted in the border face-off in Ladakh, from April 2020. By doing so China has reminded t India that its security concerns lie in its northern borders, not the west Pacific.

Why India should limit its involvement with QUAD?

1. **First**, India is the only Quad member that is not in the west Pacific. It is also the only one that shares an undemarcated 3,500-km land border with China. So, any developments will have more impact on India-China relation. For example, **Ladakh standoff**.
2. **Second**, Quad neither shares a strategic vision nor is it animated by a shared agenda. Its members despite being anti-china continue to forge ties with China. For example,
 - o in 2020 China became India's number one trade partner
 - o American investors hold \$1 trillion of Chinese equity, and 75% of U.S. companies in China continue to invest there.
3. **Third**, The Quad has a core structural problem. It revolves around the U.S. which is self-centred in defining and pursuing its interests and hardly serves the security interests of its members.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

What are the suggestions?

1. **One**, India needs to dilute its focus on the Indo-Pacific and the Quad. It should prioritise spending of resources on issues concerning national security. (The border, the neighbours and the Indian Ocean.)
2. **Two**, the rebuilding of ties with China will have to be a priority concern. Recent disengagement at LAC (Pangong Tso) is a step in the right direction.
3. **Three, the need** to assure our commitment to democratic pluralism by building back our national ethos. Foreign policy should be made in line with domestic affairs.
4. **Finally**, India's foreign policy has often been ad hoc, reactive and short-term, reflecting the absence of broad strategic culture. So, with the rising ambition of India, we need to build a cohesive strategic vision to aid India's interest in the long term.

6. Flaws in New IT rules 2021

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

Synopsis: The new Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021 suffers from numerous flaws. Due to this, experts have questioned their efficacy and legality.

Background:

- The online streaming industry has grown multifold in recent years and has made a unique space of itself vis-a-vis cinema and television.
- However, the intended government regulation under new rules deters the creative freedom of industry. It is a grave concern at a time when the industry is already facing multiple challenges.

Challenges prior to new regulation:

- **Multiple court petitions** have been filed against online streaming platforms due to inappropriate content. The concern generally pertains to religious sentiments or display of obscene sexual content. The result is restrictions on artistic expression and viewer choice.
- In some cases, **FIRs lodged directly** against the artists or company employees of platforms like Netflix and Amazon. This causes substantial harassment and undermines personal liberty of content creators.

Flaws in new IT rules:

- **Inconsistency with Parent Act (Section 69A of IT Act):** Powers under Section 69A can be exercised in the interest of “sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State etc. grounds.
 - However, a **ground of decency and morality is not mentioned** under the section. But rules allow the government to regulate platforms on such ground.
 - Similarly, Section empowers the central government to direct “any agency of the Government or intermediary” to block access to online content. However, **online video streaming platforms do not fall** into either of these two categories but still are covered under the new rules.
 - The Section allows the government to block access of any information to the public generated or transmitted on a computer. Nonetheless, rules give **greater power** of demanding an apology or re-classifying the content that breeds subtle censorship.
- **Lack of Independent Regulation:** The proposed three-tier regulatory framework falls short of independent functioning.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

- For instance, the Inter -Departmental committee which makes the 3rd tier will be mainly formed by bureaucracy. Further there is no compulsory judicial/civil society representation at this level.
- Similarly, the review committee constituted under Rule 419A of the Indian Telegraph Rules, 1951 for examining the government order, comprises only government officials.

Way Forward:

- Government should **release a white paper** stating the intended objectives to be achieved by regulating online streaming platforms. Prior to this, a meaningful public consultation involving all the concerned stakeholders should be done.
- Further if stringent regulation is desired, then it **must be done through the legislative branch**. As executive rule making power under Section 69A never contemplated the creation of such an elaborate regulatory framework.

7. Increasing Cases of Gestational Diabetes in India

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Synopsis: India registers a high number of gestational diabetes cases, which are bound to increase in the future. This coupled with low awareness and poor testing potential calls for immediate action.

Background:

- Diabetes is a metabolic disease that causes high blood sugar. The hormone insulin moves sugar from the blood into your cells to be stored or used for energy.
- If a person is having diabetes, the body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't effectively use the insulin it makes.
- India has 7 crore cases of diabetes and almost 3.5 crore prediabetes cases.
- Further, Type 2 diabetes is most common, it is preventable with some lifestyle changes. However, very less focus is placed on Gestational diabetes.

About Gestational Diabetes:

- It is a transitory form of diabetes occurring in pregnant women.
- South Asian women are at higher risk of development as shown by data from the International Diabetes Federation. It estimates that 25% of south Asian women would develop it.
- In India, it is assumed to be more prevalent in urban areas (30%) than rural areas (10%). Further, assuming a 10% rate of development, the figure for gestational diabetes comes around 27-30 lakh women every year.

Impact of Gestational Diabetes:

1. **First**, it enhances complications during pregnancy. This includes preeclampsia (fits during pregnancy), prolonged and obstructed labor, need for assisted delivery, postpartum hemorrhage, etc.
2. **Second**, the above complications can cause a spike in maternal and neonatal mortality rates.
3. **Third**, if not death, then the probability of developing other problems is quite high.
 - Type 2 diabetes gets developed in almost 50% of women.
 - Children also are at high risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.

Challenges in Managing Gestational Diabetes:

1. **First**, there is a lack of awareness regarding gestational diabetes due to which, it gets noticed after the complication has occurred.
2. **Second**, our health system also lacks the capacity for providing robust and timely testing.

Way Forward:

- There should be a prompt and adequate implementation of **national guidelines on the diagnosis and management of gestational diabetes**.
- The **single test procedure** suggested by Dr. V. Seshiah (a pioneer in the field of diabetes and pregnancy) and subsequently approved by the World Health Organisation should be adopted for better diagnosis.
- In order to spread awareness, the 10th march can be celebrated as **National Gestational Diabetes Awareness Day**.
 - The Diabetes Study Group of India recommended this step as it would be an act to recognize Dr. V. Seshiah's contribution towards the field of diabetes and pregnancy for more than 40 years.

8. Lack of Gender sensitivity in the Court Judgments

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis: Lack of gender sensitivity by the judiciary is one of the fundamental reasons for the worsening security of Women in India. The judiciary in many cases enforced societal attitudes towards women.

Worsening state of Security of women in India:

- India rated as the **most dangerous country for women**, as per Thomson Reuters Foundation survey 2018.
- According to a National Crime Records Bureau report (2019) as many as 32,032 rapes were reported in 2019 (88 incidents of rape a day).
- Every hour, 39 instances of crime against women including four instances of rape are committed in India.

Judgments lacking gender sensitivity:

- **First**, instances where marital rape was not acknowledged as a crime.
- **One**, SC recently granted bail to a government servant who is accused of repeated rape and torture of a 16-year-old child.
 - During this hearing, CJI questioned that "When two people are living as husband and wife, however brutal the husband is, can the act of intercourse between them be called rape?"
- **Two**, a few years ago, the supreme court orally asked a convict who had molested a girl 10 years ago to fall at her feet and that if she forgave him, the Court would limit his sentence of imprisonment to the period already undergone.
- **Three**, the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court also issued a similar order. It ordered that the sentence of the 'rape convict can be cut if he agrees to pay ₹1 lakh to the victim.
- Four, In Bhanwari Devi case (1995), the Rajasthan court acquitted the accused. The reasons given were not gender sensitive at all such as
 - Higher caste man cannot rape a lower caste woman for reasons of purity
 - Men who are 60-70 years old cannot commit rape
 - One relative cannot commit rape in front of another relative

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

- **Second**, instances when the court has upheld the superiority of society's attitude toward women against the rights of Women.
- **One**, in 2020 the Guwahati High Court said that refusal of applying sindoor (vermilion) and wearing conch shell bangles (shaka) as sufficient basis to grant a divorce to the husband.
- **Two**, the Madras High Court had earlier stated that divorcees too should maintain sexual purity to claim alimony.
- **Three, In Narendra vs K. Meena (2016)**, the SC said that under Hindu traditions, a wife after marriage is supposed to fully integrate herself with her husband's family.
 - Refusal of women to live with in-laws amounts to cruelty. Therefore, the husband would be entitled to divorce her under the Hindu Marriage Act.
- **Third**, instances when women protection laws are diluted without considering the sensitivity of the issue. For example,
 - **In Rajesh Sharma vs The State of Uttar Pradesh (2017)**, the complainant accused that her husband had harassed her for Dowry. And, the trauma faced by the victim has resulted in the termination of her pregnancy
 - It has to be noted that an offense under Section 498A is non-bailable and non-compoundable. Also, a police officer is legally allowed to make an arrest without a warrant from the court.
 - However, the court issued a number of directions in favor of the accused, Such as
 - there should be no automatic arrests on charges of cruelty.
 - Also, no arrest should be done till the newly constituted Family Welfare Committee submit its report.
- **Fourth**, instances when the court has intervened against the right of a woman to marry according to her will. For example, the infamous Hadiya (2017) case.
 - The woman's father accused that she was forcefully converted to Islam. Though, Hadiya had denied it repeatedly.
 - The court ordered an investigation by the National Investigation Agency for looking into the matter of marriage of two adults.

9. India's new policy of proactive diplomacy

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2

Synopsis: India's new policy of proactive diplomacy and strong ground posturing is working well.

Introduction

Things are getting better for India in the neighborhood. China has withdrawn its troops in eastern Ladakh across the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Also, Pakistan has initiated a ceasefire across the Line of Control (LoC). The new U.S. administration has also been issuing positive statements.

How proactive diplomacy helped India?

1. **Under the new strategy of proactive diplomacy**, the Indian forces actively engage their enemy on the ground. Whereas military leadership actively engages in negotiations with their counterparts at the same time.
2. Due to it, China was forced to review its ground strategy for the second time. Mobilization of Indian forces led to the withdrawal of Chinese equipment and troops from Doklam also, in 2017.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

3. The DGMOs of India and Pakistan recently agreed to strictly implement the 2003 ceasefire agreement. This decision must be a step towards peace after multiple ceasefire violations.
4. This decision of Pakistan came even after the announcement by Imran Khan of no engagement with India until the status quo was restored in Jammu and Kashmir.
5. **It is also because Pakistan is under pressure due to its dangerous economic condition** and a repayment crisis. **China looks unhappy** about the uncertainty over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Pakistan must be under pressure from India, the new U.S. administration as well as China.

However, India is well aware of Pakistan's tendency to spread terror and violence in India. That is why India has repeated that counter-terror operations will not be reduced.

Favourable approach of the US towards India

There are signals that the Biden administration will adopt a complex approach with China.

- China also wants to take a chance by cooperating with US, for its own economic and strategic interest. China would also want Pakistan to adopt the same approach.
- Contrary to earlier beliefs, the Biden administration seems to be largely siding with India in its South Asia policy.
- A US state department official recently said that they are concerned by China's pattern of ongoing attempts to threaten its neighbours. And also, they are going to stand by their friends and allies.
- In another statement, the U.S. State Department said it welcomes the steps taken to return Jammu and Kashmir to full economic and political normalcy consistent with India's democratic values. India should seize this opportune moment.

10. Addressing Systemic Issues in Higher Education

Source: [Indian Express](#)

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

Synopsis: There are systemic issues in higher education. They need to be addressed to strengthen our education system.

Background

- According to the recently released **QS World University Rankings**, India has 12 universities and institutions in the top-100 in particular subjects.
- Though it is a better achievement compared to the previous years. Still, there is room for improvement.
- We need to address the systemic issues to further strengthen our education system.

Why are the systemic issues impacting quality in higher education?

There are many systemic issues which needs to be addressed. For example,

- **First, lack of relevant career opportunities** diminishes the appeal of academic education among students. **For example**, if studying hard and critical thinking doesn't lead to career improvement, students tend to lose academic ambition.
- **Second, the lack of relevance of the core syllabus** decreases students' interest in education. **For example, students** joining IIT's initially, work hard to secure admission, but then lose motivation owing to a lack of relevance in the actual syllabus.
- **Third, lack of High-quality jobs.** In India, only a few jobs exist after high-quality education. The Majority of jobs require lower skills and pay poorly. In such a system the Lower-ranked colleges don't find any motivation to improve themselves.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

- **Fourth, prioritising top colleges and neglect of Low ranked colleges.** For example, top colleges in India enjoy much state-sponsored support. They attract the best faculty and students. This makes it further difficult for low ranked colleges to make any improvement.

What needs to be done?

For the mediocre college to improve, its students must first see value in a better education. It requires system-wide growth in opportunity. To achieve this the relevant stakeholders must do the following;

1. **First, policymakers**, they need to promote employment led -growth oriented policies to create enough jobs for 650 million Indian youths under age 25.
2. **Second, industry**, they should focus on developing indigenous technologies. It will help in improving our Higher Education standards.
3. **Third, teachers**, standard of teaching will improve standards of the institutions and create more competitive students.
4. **Fourth, Students**, they need to demand for better education. Only then institutions will respond to their needs.
5. **Finally**, students will demand better education only when the quality education is valued by society. And vice versa, it will be valued by society only when the imparted quality education is applied towards the benefits of the society.

We must teach students not only our subjects, but also how to think about both existing applications and future ones. Students must aim to relate their learning to society.

11. Working towards Climate Justice

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS

Synopsis: New Delhi has to control its green commitment to guarantee carbon and policy space for its developmental goals. It will ensure Climate Justice.

Introduction

Joe Biden in the U.S. Presidential elections promised to lead a major diplomatic push to increase global climate ambition.

- The U.S. is moving back to Obama's achievement of the Paris Accord and to the Bush days. It is evident by the presidential call to resume the Major Economies Forum (MEF).
- The MEF was started in March 2009. It aimed to push for a way forward on climate change without attention to the differentiated responsibilities and historical responsibilities.

What actions have been taken to control greenhouse gas emissions?

All the countries are being told to commit to net-zero (Green House Gas emissions) by 2050. China committed to reaching the target by 2060, but they have been strictly told to be there a decade earlier.

- **Firstly**, the UN Secretary-General asked the countries to build a coalition for a carbon-neutral world by 2050. Countries representing around 65% of global CO2 emissions have already agreed to this. The UN Secretary-General wants this figure to reach 90% within 2021.
- **Secondly, the implementation of these plans** will be subject to international reviews and verification. India can easily be the focus of this dialogue because of its huge population and one of the world's largest economies.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

- **Thirdly, the EU might impose carbon border taxes** on those who do not take on high carbon cut-down targets. This could add to the challenges of this proposed global goal.
- **Fourthly**, the U.S. Administration appears uncertain on these border taxes, but this possibility cannot be ruled out. In such a situation, World Trade Organization rules that currently exclude the use of charges on **environmental grounds will surely get modified.**

What is the idea suggested by Raghuram Rajan?

The lack of money is a constant issue in the climate discourse. Raghuram Rajan has recently put forward a proposal for India to consider. It asks countries to pay into a global fund amounts based on their carbon emissions over and above the global per-capita average of five tons.

- **This step disincentive coal and incentivises renewables.** Countries above the global average would pay, while those below would receive the taxes. This method may be unacceptable to the developed countries.
- **This proposal may appear attractive to India** as today it has a per capita CO₂ emission of only 2 tons. India is a global record-setter in pushing renewables. However, it is unlikely that real politics would allow a major economy to benefit from such fund flows.
- **The long-term consequences of this proposal** require examination in detail. Alternatives such as emission trading should also be considered.

However, The proposal focuses on current and future emissions. Thus, it penalizes developing countries while giving developed countries a certain free pass. Because more than 75% of the carbon space available to keep global temperature rise to 1.5° C already been utilized by the developed world and China.

The way forward

- Climate negotiations are also about global governance and will hereafter be pursued with a drive. It requires India to carefully regulate its approach including on the economic and political fronts.
- Climate justice is very important for India. It needs to influence its green and pro-nature commitment to ensure carbon and policy space for its developmental and global aspirations. India's diplomatic and negotiating efforts must be quickly geared to that end.

12. Reasons Behind Participation of India in Desert Flag exercise

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis: India and South Korea participated in the sixth edition of the Desert Flag exercise. It is an indication of Increasing Asian security interest in West Asia.

Background

- The Indian Air Force for the first time is about to participate in the sixth edition of Desert Flag. It is a multi-nation exercise hosted by the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- Other than India and the UAE, Bahrain, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and the United States are also participating.
- Though the joint military exercise by Western countries and Arab countries is common, the involvement of India and South Korea showcases the growing interests of Asian economies.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

- The sixth edition of Desert Flag is important considering the recent developments in the West Asian region.
 - Mounting tensions between Iran and the U.S.
 - The signing of the Abraham Accords in September 2020 between Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain.
 - Ongoing wars in Syria and Yemen.

How West Asia's stability is important for India and other Asian economies?

1. **First**, as net importers of crude oil, the Asian economies are heavily dependent on the West Asian states for their supplies. For example, in April 2020, Saudi Arabia was India's top supplier of oil followed by Iraq.
2. **Second**, for the **protection of vital sea lanes**, such as the **Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Aden, and the Red Sea**. For example, The Indian Navy has made multiple port calls from the UAE and Kuwait to Iran and Qatar in recent years.

Iran – US conflict and its impact on India and South Korea:

Both India and South Korea faced negative impacts of Iran sanctions. The West forced economic sanctions on Iran due to the issue of nuclear weapons.

- In 2013, an Indian oil tanker named **MT Desh Shanti** confiscated near the Strait of Hormuz by Iranian forces. It was seen as a pressure tactic by Tehran to make India pay for Oil Imports. India was unable to pay for oil imports owing to US sanctions.
- Similarly, in January 2021, Iran confiscated a South Korean tanker, **MT Hankuk Chemi**, also from near the Strait of Hormuz. At that time, Tehran and Seoul were also in the conflict over billions of dollars worth of oil payments. It was frozen due to sanctions against Iran over its nuclear Programme.

The changing security nature in West Asia:

- The US security support is eroding in the West Asian region. **For example**, January 2021 marked the first time since 1985 that the U.S. did not import oil from Riyadh
- Hence, Regional states will become more responsible for their own security, and Asian economies such as India are strong stakeholders.

13. The Issue of Programme Code for Media outlets

Source- [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis – Karnataka High Court directs media outlets to stick to Programme Code.

Introduction

1. Karnataka minister resigned after media aired footage that allegedly featured him and an unidentified woman.
2. There has been speculation about the prospect of more such CDs that could be aired.
3. Following that, PIL filed by Jarkiholi's lawyer. It seeks to take steps to safeguard the right to privacy of individuals and ensure that media do not breach the law by invading the privacy of individuals.
4. Karnataka HC directs media houses to follow the **Programme code** defined under the **Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act**. It restrained around 70 media organization from broadcasting or publishing contents of a CD.

However, the order of restraining media might become a tool of harassment.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

What are the concerns and provisions about the Programme Code?

Concerns-

- The code contains an elaborate list for a media organization. It says that no programme should be aired that contains
 - **Anything offensive for the sovereignty and integrity of India.**
 - **Criticism of friendly relations of India with any foreign state.**
 - **Obscene, defamatory, false, and suggests innuendos and half-truths.**
- DMs, SDMs and police commissioners are the authorized officers to ensure that the Programme Code is not breached.
- It contains defamation, half-truths and innuendo as the potential violations.

Penalties under the code-

If any media governed under the CTN Act violates the provisions and the Programme Code, the code prescribes;

- Imprisonment up to two years or fine up to ₹1,000 or both for the first offence or
- Imprisonment up to five years and with a fine of up to ₹5,000

What are the challenges in this case?

- **No complaint filed by the victim-** It is not possible to show any misconduct in the absence of a complaint from the victim, or even information about her.
- **Invasion of Privacy** – An invasion of someone's privacy or a disrespectful representation of women cannot be justified in the name of the public good.

14. Incentivising Women's Domestic Care and Associated Issues

Source: [Indian Express](#)

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

Synopsis: Addressing Women's challenges in an economy is more important than incentivising women's domestic care work.

Background

- In the 1991 census, women's groups undertook a campaign to ensure that women's home-based labour is getting recognised.
- Recently, in the poll-bound Tamilnadu state, various political parties announced remuneration for women's domestic and care.
- Over the years, Tamil Nadu has nurtured the growth of **competitive welfarism**. Because many believe that the success of such social security net has resulted in reducing poverty and ensuring inclusive growth.
- However, the recent proposal has been criticized. It is because Political parties resorted to **Populist measures** to win elections without paying real attention to the existing women issues

What are the issues of Women that need priority in Tamil Nadu?

- **First**, Women working as domestic workers and housekeeping staff are still not recognised as Workforce. The lack of recognition of domestic workers as a workforce forces them to accept poor remuneration, abuses etc.,
- **Second**, increasing **female indebtedness**. The state has allowed and enabled the growth of microfinance in the state, which led to a high level of female indebtedness. Mostly, the loans are taken for a range of social and reproductive purposes such as Children's education, hospital expenses.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

- **Third**, the vulnerable conditions of Women in employment have not been addressed by the state yet. For example, denial of equal pay for equal work, sexual harassment at the workplace, lack of social security net, etc.,
- **Fourth**, the state has been promoting liquor sales despite many demands from the Women groups to make liquor sales illegal. Spending on liquor drinking reduces the household's financial ability to spend on basic goods.

Rather than paying wages for women's domestic care work, the state should address core Women issues and challenges and empower them to become a contributor in development from being a welfare recipient.

15. Flaws in new IT Rules 2021

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2

Synopsis: The [IT \(Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code\) Rules, 2021](#), will result in systematic incremental loss of the freedom of speech and expression.

Introduction

The final notification of the rules will depend on the decisions of the two petitions filed against it in Kerala and Delhi.

- **The main motive of this new set of rules is to put in place a grievance redressal** mechanism. It will involve the consumer of social media and over-the-top (OTT) platforms and digital news web portals.
- The smaller or medium-sized independent digital news portals will be most affected by this redress requirement. They are already struggling to survive.

What are the issues in this notification?

The worrying aspect of this move is to control the digital media which are more defiant than the mainstream media.

1. **Firstly**, the notification gives the government ad hoc **emergency powers to block any content**. It would include the content that the government considers problematic even without the symbolic procedure.
2. **Secondly, regulation by the government**. The rules have made a mockery of self-regulation by giving the power of regulation to a committee set up by the government. They can regulate the content on the basis of a real or imagined grievance.
3. **Thirdly, this measure poses a financial threat** as monetization opportunities become limited. Investors and brands get scared because of political considerations interrupting business interests and an unusual media policy regime in constant change.
4. **Fourthly, it is eroding pillars of democracy**. It is important to realize that the fourth pillar i.e. media is as important as the other three pillars, i.e. the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary. A healthy tension among the four pillars keeps the democratic structure strong and vibrant.
5. **Fifthly, it affects free speech and expression**. The freedom of the press, although not prescribed as a fundamental right directly, is a derivative from Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g). These articles have given every citizen the right to free speech and expression.

There is also a question that why the government is curbing press freedom when there are more stringent laws such as Sedition law and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, or UAPA.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

Conclusion

This argumentative notification takes it an absurd step further. A deliberate measure of government regulation of the news media is required to be passed off as self-regulation by that same news media.

ForumIAS

General Studies Paper - 3

General Studies - 3

1. Financial distress in Railways : Reasons and Way Forward

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs3: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways, etc.

Synopsis: Despite several reforms, Railways is facing financial distress. This article highlights the issues and suggests solutions for financial distress in Railways.

Recent developments

- In 2016, the [Railway Budget was merged with the General Budget](#). Earlier, Railways had a separate Budget.
- The [Dedicated Freight Corridor](#) will be operational by 2022. It includes
 - The **Western Dedicated Freight Corridor** (WDFC), from Uttar Pradesh to Mumbai
 - The **Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor** (EDFC), Ludhiana in Punjab to Dankuni in West Bengal.
- Recently the union cabinet approved a proposal to create a single cadre for railways management. This was aimed to eliminate “**departmentalism**” in railways.

Why Railways is in financial distress?

- **First**, freight earnings are not improving despite improvement in freight load.
 - According to the CEO and Chairman of the Railway Board, the freight loading in January 2021 was the highest ever.
 - However, the freight earnings, according to the **Revised Estimates** for 2020-21 is ₹1,24,184.00 crore. It is lower than what was achieved in 2018-19 (₹1,27,432.72 crore).
- **Second**, the financial performance index i.e., **the Operating Ratio (OR)** (the ratio of working expenses to revenues) is not effective. (If the ratio is less than 100%, then Revenues are more than working expenses)
 - Currently, the **Operating Ratio** is less than 100% due to the under-provisioning of the Pension Fund for 2020-21.
 - However, the actual **Operating Ratio** works out to 114.19% and 131.49%, respectively, if the required provision is made for pension payments.
 - More worryingly, this is the first time ever, the Indian Railways were unable to adequately provide for the Pension Fund.

What are the future challenges that may increase the financial distress of railways?

1. **First**, traffic revenue is unable to keep pace with the increase in staff costs and pension payments. With the **(Eighth) Pay Commission**, to be scheduled in 2025-26 the working expenses of railways will further increase.
 - **For example**, the passenger and freight revenues increased by 84.8 % from 2010-11 to 2019-20. While the staff and pension costs almost doubled, by 157%, in the same period.
 - This is despite the fact that there is a reduction of about one lakh staff on the roll during this period.
 - The increase in the staff and pension costs is mainly due to the implementation of the Central Pay Commission recommendations.
2. **Second**, freight traffic is over-dependent on one commodity, coal. Almost 50% of freight earnings are contributed by the transport of coal.
 - With the increasing usage of renewable energy at competitive prices, dependence on coal will reduce. This will affect freight revenues.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

3. **Third**, the other major challenge facing the Railways is the burgeoning staff costs including pension. In this scenario, the proposal to recruit an additional 1.5 lakh staff will further increase the financial distress.

Suggestions

1. **One**, increasing the revenues, particularly on the freight front, and a drastic reduction in the number of employees. In this context, the operationalization of two DFCs is significant.
2. **Two**, Railways need to think seriously about life after coal. Adoption of the **roll-on roll-off model** of transporting loaded trucks on the rail on the DFCs will reduce the overall carbon footprint.
3. **Three**, Corporatisation of the Railways' Production Units and outsourcing the medical services may reduce work expenses.
4. **Finally**, an annual report called **Indian Railways Report** on the lines of the annual Economic Survey should be placed in Parliament every year. It should detail the physical and financial performance of the Railways. It will make railways more accountable and transparent.

2. Why Criticisms of New IT Rules 2021 are illogical?

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Synopsis: The new IT rules 2021, is not a discretionary, arbitrary document released by the government. It is a document aimed towards creating a level playing field.

Introduction:

Recently, the government introduced the Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. The rules have the potential to [transform the online media platforms](#) to fit into the Indian ecosystem.

Few important provisions of new IT rules 2021:

The [major provisions of the new IT rules](#) are,

- **Self-Classification of Content:** The OTT(Over the top) platforms would self-classify the content into five age-based categories i.e. U (Universal), U/A 7+, U/A 13+, U/A 16+, and A (Adult).
- **Three-tier grievance redressal framework:** Both the digital news publishers and OTT platforms have to establish and follow the three-tier grievance redressal framework.

What are the general criticisms against new IT rules 2021?

The new IT rules are criticised by various private sectors. These private players mention the new IT rules as discretionary and against freedom of expression. They all point out criticisms like,

1. 5 Stage content classification on OTT platforms is arbitrary
2. Government influence in 3-tier Grievance redressal mechanism
3. The new IT rules were not consulted with OTT platforms
4. Government right to ban any content on OTT platforms
5. Furnishing basic information of a user violates privacy

Counter-arguments against the criticisms of new IT rules 2021:

All these steps are aimed to create a level playing field between offline and online media. But there are few criticisms against the new IT rules in 2021. But these criticisms are meaningless.

1. **5 Stage content classification on OTT platforms:** This is for the first time in independent India, the policy is shifted from pre-certification(censorship) to self-

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

classification. This is a more transparent system compare to censorship. Even many countries are not following the same. For example,

- The Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) of Singapore: All the service providers are required to obtain a license from IMDA for operation. Further, all content must be rated according to the Film Classification Guidelines there.
- Recently the UK Government released a **white paper on the threats posed by unregulated online content**. The paper proposed few important points such as,
 - **Creating a new independent regulator** to ensure online safety,
 - **Develop codes of practice**,
 - Impose liabilities/fines on companies for the violation, etc. So the 5 stage content classification is much in line with the international practice.
- 2. **Government influence in 3-tier Grievance redressal mechanism:** This is completely a wrong criticism. Tier **1 and tier 2** of the **self-regulatory body** are to be **formed by the OTT platforms themselves**, not by the government.
- 3. **Lack of consultation with OTT platforms:** The government consulted the private sector on various occasions. Such as,
 - Earlier, the I&B ministry organised consultations in Mumbai and in Chennai with the OTT platforms in November.
 - The I&B minister himself met representatives of OTT platforms in March.
- 4. **Government right to ban the content:** This is not a new provision in India. Under the Information Technology Rules, 2009, the government uses the same provision to ban the content. Further, these provisions are aimed at National Security to protect its national interests in digital platforms.
- 5. **Furnishing basic information of a user violates privacy:** This is not a violation of privacy. Instead, it is transparency. The private players always advocating transparency from the government, but they themselves don't want to be transparent. So, the new IT rules 2021 not provide discretionary powers to the government. Instead, the new IT rules are progressive and creating a level playing ground for digital entities.

3. Why India should Focus More on Climate Change Adaptation?

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- **GS 3** – Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Synopsis- Climate Change initiatives are not working as per their aims. India's climate policy should focus on Climate Change Adaptation measures instead of emission mitigation.

Introduction

- The United Nations COP-26 summit is set to take place in Glasgow in November 2021. This conference was originally scheduled to be held last year but delayed due to COVID-19.
- The COP-26 will be the first time after the Paris Climate agreement concluded in 2015. Countries will be expected to raise their nationally determined commitments they made as part of that agreement.

Target announced by the major economies to reduce emissions

Countries globally are more focussed upon Climate Change Mitigation instead of adaptation, as depicted below:

- The EU and the UK have committed to net-zero GHGs by 2050.
- Japan, Korea, Canada, South Africa all have statements of intent for 2050 targets in either GHG or carbon terms.
- The US rejoined the Paris Agreement under the Biden administration and will achieve net-zero emissions no later than 2050.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

- China has announced a 2060 carbon neutrality target.

What are the Climate Change challenges in front of India?

1. **Present strategies are not effective in containing the Temperature rise-** The original commitments to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions might be enough to limit global warming to near 3° C by 2100, but it is still not enough to limit it to 1.5° C.
2. As depicted in the data above, the **Net Zero target strategy is not that effective**. Climate Change is already a reality and India's population is much more vulnerable. India needs to focus on Adaptation strategies rather than just focussing on mitigation.
3. **US-China collusion on climate policy framing** before COP- 26 same as Barack Obama and Xi Jinping before Paris climate summit.
 - Indian interests were neglected at that time despite China being part of the BASIC group. There is a full possibility that the interest of India will not be taken into account this time also.
4. **Financing** – By 2020, developed countries committed to mobilize \$100 billion in climate financing each year, including a mix of mitigation (carbon reduction) and adaptation projects. **According to the OECD, they delivered \$21 billion short at the end of 2018.**
 - As per estimates of the Indian finance ministry only a billion dollars in new and additional finance transferred to developing countries annually.

What should India's stance be at these meetings?

- **Both climate mitigation and Adaption strategies are required.** India should focus more on adaptation measures to climate changes. Adaptation and mitigation should be given equal weight if climate change action is discussed.
- **India should highlight the finance component** – Developed countries, must keep their pledge to channel \$100 billion annually.
- **India needs to implement a new climate change policy** to protect its interests and commit to a global climate regime that benefits rather than hinders India's growth prospects.
- **Delinking from China.** India must delink from China and make BASIC a consultative forum only. India needs to forge a coalition with like-minded developing countries on climate change.

India should focus more on Climate Change Adaptation rather than following the Net Zero targets like countries.

4. Prerequisites for Developing Digital Health Data

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Synopsis: National Digital Health Mission aims to build digital health infrastructure in India. But there are many hurdles in developing comprehensive digital health data.

Introduction:

Recently on Independence Day, our Prime Minister announced [National Digital Health Mission](#). The Mission aims to develop the backbone for integrated digital health infrastructure in India. Developing countries with significant health challenges like India critically need such an infrastructure.

The NDHM will help in developing the diagnostics and management of health services. Apart from that, the NDHM will also help in achieving broader public health monitoring, research, socio-economic studies, prioritizing resource allocation and policy interventions, etc.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

Digitization can make healthcare more organized, effective, and efficient. But we must know that Digitization can't substitute the fundamentals like an investment in nutrition and welfare, primary healthcare services and healthcare professionals, etc.

What is the prerequisite to digital health infrastructure?

Before going completely digital, certain things are essential to achieve the desired social objectives. They are,

1. India needs to carefully develop **various ways to fulfil the “health needs of the public”**. India needs to carefully examine the following things and their improvement with digitization. Such as,
 - Ways of facilitating better diagnosis and management,
 - Understanding of the data structures for effective health services
 - Alleviate health problems with digitization such as malnutrition and child stunting, etc.
2. **Challenges with Privacy:** It may also create tensions between a collection of digital health data and individual rights to privacy. For example, many countries like UK, Sweden, the US, etc. attempted to build digital health infrastructures they were not successful due to serious privacy-related controversies.
3. **Linking the digital health data to other sectors:** This data may be linked to other sectors such as banking and services with adequate access to data. This creates two types of challenges.
 - **Not linking** the digital health data with other sectors will make the **potential uses of digital health data very limited**.
 - **Complete interlinking** of digital health data will **create various problems** such as privacy violation, the vulnerability of data to profit-motivated pharma companies, etc.
4. **Design of Digital health data operations:** Access to digital data requires identifying and understanding the complexity in various data sources such as immunisation records, data in government and private hospitals, diagnostic centres, etc. The **design should also include** an understanding of data generation frequency, error models, sharing and other operational requirements, etc.
5. **Building an effective system** that can generate people's trust requires building a transparent process. That process should have openness and public consultations in all spheres of development. This includes avoiding “crony expertise”, rejecting poorly-conceived designs and ideas, etc.

So, developing a comprehensive digital health infrastructure not only depends on the health sector alone. Instead, it also depends on e-governance and the administration of digitisation in India.

5. The Advantages of Work from Anywhere

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS3: Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life.

Synopsis: The new policy of **Work from anywhere** gained momentum during the pandemic. It has multiple benefits for all stakeholders.

Background

- Lack of clarity and flexibility in the US H-1B visa Programme remains major concerns for high-skilled Indian migrants, seeking to relocate to the U.S.
- This uncertainty was high during the Trump administration, with visa denial rates rising significantly.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

- With the new administration in the US, reforms of the immigration system became a priority.
- However, bringing reforms will take more time owing to the lack of consensus among the political forces in the U.S.
- In this scenario, the new **Work from Anywhere** policy is gaining acceptance among corporates. It has the potential to mitigate the dependence on H-1B visas.

What are the reforms proposed by Mr. Biden to ease the immigration system?

Mr. Biden wants to ease the legal immigration for both family-based and employment-based migrants.

- **First**, for the high skilled population, he proposed the removal of country-specific quotas for employment-based visas. A green card for **STEM Ph.D. students** pursuing from a U.S. institution is also in the proposal.
- **Second**, the current H-4 visa holders (spouses and children of H-1B visa holders) will be made eligible for work permits.
- However, given the partisan divisions in the U.S. legislature, it is unlikely that the proposal in its current form will become a law.
- But for those skilled workers hoping to access U.S.-based opportunities have an alternative option of **Work from Anywhere**.

What are the benefits of the Work From Anywhere (WFA) policy?

1. **First, benefits for the workers:** It grants individuals the choice to live in their preferred locations without the need of commuting to an office. Whereas the traditional work-from-home (WFH) model allows workers WFH a few days every week.
 - WFA allows workers to relocate to their hometown, be closer to family and friends, manage dual career situations.
 - Workers can also benefit by moving to (or continuing to live in) a lower cost-of-living location.
2. **Second, benefits for the organisation:** **WFA** allows new companies to access a global pool of talent with relatively low investment in office space.
 - It can also help to reduce real estate costs of the organization as the workforce shifts to remote work.
 - Also, it helps to increase the efficiency of workers. For example, According to research, worker productivity under a work-from-anywhere policy increased 4.4% compared to the traditional work-from-home environments.
3. **Third, benefits for the society.** Society, too, can benefit, as daily work commutes are a major source of carbon emissions.
 - According to research shifting to remote work cut emissions by their employees by more than 44,000 tons.

TCS case study

1. Recently, **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** announced that its 400,000-plus employees will be 75% remote by 2025.
2. TCS has rolled out a **'25-25 remote-work model'**:
 - 25% of the workforce will be in a physical office at any one time
 - Also, workers will be expected to work from an office for only 25% of their working hours,
3. The Harvard Business School explored the changes being implemented by TCS and identified the following advantages.
 - One, this model enables TCS clients to access the best talent within TCS, independent of the location of talent.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

- Two, the model also offers TCS employees an opportunity to simultaneously work on multiple projects around the globe. It doesn't require relocation to the client site or worrying about immigration.

The TCS example shows how work-from-anywhere can help Indian companies and workers mitigate the challenges of immigration.

6. Revisiting the Reservation Laws in India

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

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

Synopsis:

The Supreme Court is examining the constitutional validity of the Maratha reservation policy. During the hearing, it mentioned that it will re-examine the landmark verdict in the **Indra Sawhney vs Union of India** case 1992.

What is the Indra Sawhney Case?

1. **The Mandal Commission-**
 - In 1979 the Second Backward Classes Commission was set up by the President.
 - The commission report concluded 52% of the population in India are “Socially and Economically Backward Classes (SEBCs)”. Further, the commission recommended a 27% reservation for SEBCs. This reservation is provided in addition to the previously existing 22.5% reservation for SC/STs.
 - The government accepted the recommendation and provided the 27% reservation.
 - In 1991, the government enacted provisions for the reservation of 10% of jobs for economically weaker sections (EWS) among higher caste people.
2. **Indra Sawhney vs UOI case or The Mandal case:**
 - The Mandal Commission report and the government's decision to reserve 10 percent for the EWS was challenged in the Supreme Court.
 - A nine-judge Bench gave their verdict in 1992.
 - The important intervention of the case includes,
 - **First**, the criterion for a group to qualify for reservation is social and educational backwardness only. So, the 10 percent reservation to the EWS becomes unconstitutional.
 - **Second**, a 50% limit to vertical quotas will apply to ensure efficiency in administration **unless in exceptional circumstances**. The court in its earlier judgments like M R Balaji v/s State of Mysore (1963) and Devadasan v/s UOI (1964) also mentioned the 50 percent reservation limit.

Why is the Supreme Court revisiting the Mandal case?

- In 2018, the Maharashtra government enacted a law to provide 16 per cent reservation to the Maratha community in jobs and admissions. This **violated the 50 per cent ceiling** mentioned by the Mandal case.
- But, the **Bombay High Court** upheld the validity of the quota. But the Court **reduced the Maratha reservation to 12-13%** (Instead of 16%). This per cent is also recommended by the State Backward Classes Commission. (Both are above 50 per cent)
- An **appeal was filed in the Supreme Court**. The Supreme Court during the case said that it will look into the capping of 50 per cent reservation in the Mandal case.

How does the Maratha reservation relate to the Indra Sawhney case?

The Maratha reservation law is related to the Indra Sawhney case in Many ways such as,

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

1. The President power to notify backward classes–

- This power is provided by the **102nd Constitutional Amendment** provided powers to the President to notify the backward classes. The Court has to find out whether States have powers to notify the backward classes or not.

2. Validity of 103rd Amendment, 2019

- This amendment provides for 10% reservation for the EWS in government jobs and educational institutions from the unreserved category.
- Thus, the Marathas belong to EWS can attain benefits under the 103rd CAA. But the specific quotas to Marathas will turn into a bad example for communities asking for such reservations. For example, Patels in Gujarat, Jats in Haryana and Kapus in Andhra Pradesh.

3. The Breach of 50% ceiling set by Indra Sawhney Verdict

- The Maharashtra law if enacted could make a reservation of up to 68%. Further, it can join states like Tamil Nadu, Haryana which already exceed the 50 percent ceiling.
- **For Example–** the Tamil Nadu government reserves **69% of the seats in colleges and jobs** in the State government. Further, Tamil Nadu also placed its reservation law in Ninth Schedule

What is Ninth Schedule–

- It excludes the law from the jurisdiction of judicial review under Article 31 A of the Constitution.
- Laws placed in the Ninth Schedule cannot be challenged on the ground for violating any fundamental right.
- However, in **I R Coelho v/s Tamil Nadu (2007)** case the supreme court held that laws in the ninth schedule can be challenged on the ground of violation of the basic structure of the constitution.

7. Cyber attacks on critical Infrastructure

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 Security Issues and basics of cyber security

Synopsis: At present Critical infrastructure of India is vulnerable to cyberattacks. The government have to strengthen its cybersecurity initiatives.

Introduction:

Recently Massachusetts-based firm Recorded Future released a study. It mentioned that Mumbai power outages can be a [cyber attack aimed at critical infrastructure](#). The report also mentioned few important things such as,

- The Cyberattack was carried out by the state-sponsored group Red Echo.
- The Red Echo has close ties to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and has also behind [many recent cyberattacks by China](#).
- So the cyberattacks probably carry a message from China.
- Chinese cyberattacks in the past focussed on stealing critical information and not on projecting their cyber potential. But their Cyberattack on India might be different.

What is the critical infrastructure?

These are the physical and cyber systems that are so vital to any country. Any attack on these infrastructures will weaken the economic security or public health or national security of a country.

In general 16 sectors are identified as a critical infrastructure of any country. This includes sectors such as the Defence sector, Energy sector, Emergency services, Nuclear reactors and their materials, etc.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

What was India's response to the cyber attack on critical infrastructure?

1. The power minister denied the reports. Further, he mentioned cyberattack was not the reason behind power failure in Mumbai.
2. But, the power minister of Maharashtra on the same day mentioned that the Mumbai Cyber Police investigation had suggested a possible cyberattack on critical infrastructure. The cyberattack aimed with the intent to disrupt the power supply.
3. National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) has also reported cyberattacks by Red Echo to hack the critical grid network.

Government initiatives to protect critical infrastructure from cyberattacks:

1. Indian government for the past few decades interested in critical information infrastructure protection (CIIP). So, In 2014 the government made NCIIPC as a national nodal agency for CIIP.
2. In 2019, the government also announced a National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS). The mission allotted a budget of Rs 3,660 crore for five years, to strengthen the Cyber-Physical Systems(CPS).
3. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) also launched the Industrial Cybersecurity Standards (IEC62443). This standard aimed to address and mitigate current and future cybersecurity challenges. Especially in industrial automation and control systems. But the government is yet to adopt the standards.

Vulnerability of Critical Infrastructures:

Critical infrastructure has become increasingly vulnerable to cyber-attacks. The power grid ecosystem is a major target of such cyber attacks.

Critical infrastructures always focused on productivity and reliability during their construction and planning. Further, many of these critical infrastructures were never designed to protect against cyberattacks. This is the main reason for their vulnerability to cyber attacks.

Suggestions to protect critical infrastructure:

The government has to **adopt the BIS Industrial Cybersecurity Standards**. This will strengthen cybersecurity.

Apart from that, Ministries and Departments need **better budgetary allocations** for cybersecurity. The government also **need a robust infrastructure**, processes and audit system to strengthen [cyber security](#).

To **strengthen the power sector India needs strong regulation**. India can take examples from the North American Electric Reliability Critical Infrastructure Protection (NERC) policy. The policy could serve as a guide to the power sector companies and help in securing their operational technology (OT) networks.

India so far has protected the critical networks like the sensitive Aadhaar ecosystem, the core banking systems etc. To strengthen it further, India can release a new cybersecurity policy addressing wider challenges.

8. Absence of Regular Chiefs in Central Security Forces

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-3: Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

Synopsis: Many Security Forces are functioning without regular chiefs. This will impact their efficiency. So the government has to take the necessary steps to strengthen security forces.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

Introduction:

At present in India, Many Security Forces are without regular heads. They play a pivotal role in maintaining the internal security of India. However, they are not given the due importance that not only affects the performance of Security Forces but also affects national security.

Few examples of Security Forces without regular Director-General:

1. **The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)**
 - With 3.5 lakh personnel, It is the largest Central force in the country.
 - But the CRPF is now headed by a temporary officer after its regular chief took superannuation.
2. **The Border Security Force(BSF)**
 - It is the second-largest force in the country after the CRPF.
 - The BSF tackles Pakistan Army and militants along the borders.
 - Apart from that, it even combats militants in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast.
 - But the Director-General of BSF is also burdened with an additional charge for Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).
3. **The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**
 - The CBI has been **without a head since February 3** after its head retired.
 - The **additional Director is currently in charge of CBI** until the regular appointment of its head.
 - The regular CBI Director will be appointed through the high-power selection committee(HPC). The HPC consist of the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India and the Leader of the Opposition.
 - An NGO Common Cause has also filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court seeking the appointment of CBI Director.
4. **The National Security Guard(NSG)**
 - It is an elite force comprising personnel from the Army and the Central Armed Police Forces
 - It comes into action during crisis times such as the Mumbai attacks of 2008.
 - Further, It is also entrusted with the responsibility of providing security to certain high-risk personalities.
 - But the NSG is **without a regular Director-General for nearly six months**.
5. **The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)**
 - It is the only research and training organisation for the police forces in the country
 - But the BPR&D also at present **headed by an officer with an additional charge**.

Impact of having vacancies in Security Forces:

1. Officers holding provisional charges shy away from taking any major policy decisions.
2. Apart from that, Many regular chiefs do not get sufficient time for outcomes. When appointed they only have just a few months or a year of service. So, the head of these organizations cannot provide desired outcomes within short tenures.

These issues have an adverse impact on the efficiency of these Security Forces.

Suggestions:

1. The government should consider announcing the next chief of organisations at least three months in advance. Further, the government also consider appointing a chief with a minimum tenure of two years or till superannuation, whichever is later.
2. The government can form a panel of officers cleared by the Union Public Service Commission. The government should appoint panel members for future vacancies in

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

top posts. This will speed up the decisions and enhance the efficiency of the Security Forces.

The government not only focus on posting the right kind of officers with adequate skill but also have to post them within a time limit. This will improve the efficiency of the Security Forces.

9. Need for Fire Safety training and technologies

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- **GS 3** – Disaster and disaster management.

Synopsis- Despite large fires in the past, building and fire safety standards continues to be ignored.

Introduction-

The current fire protection measures in all major cities do not account for all contemporary fire hazard issues. It makes fire safety a growing concern.

- The Fire accident at Eastern Railway Headquarter in Kolkata is a prime **example of poor attention to fire safety fundamentals, lack of preparedness plan, and the absence of robust fire mitigation technologies.**
- This accident also provides an opportunity to assess the status of the Model Bill of 2019. It Provides for the Maintenance of Fire and Emergency Services of a state.

Modern technology and preparedness are both important for safety against fire hazards, but both are undervalued in India.

What are the concerns related to fire safety in India?

- Lack of robust fire mitigation technologies.
- Most of the modern Buildings in major cities lack sufficient in-built fire safety services such as smoke alarms and sprinkler systems. These systems operate as early warning systems and fire control measures.

What should be done to reduce fire accidents?

1. Proper use of **fire safety norms prescribed under the National Building Code.**
2. **Fire Safety Audits [FSA]** should be made mandatory in India. Moreover, the auditing work should be delegated to third-party agencies with experience in the field.
3. **Regular fire safety drills** should be conducted so that people are aware of what to do in the event of such tragedy.
4. Enhancement of public awareness and proper use of technology and resources for the mitigation of fire hazards is needed.
5. Technology and resource advancement is needed.

10. Growing Food Subsidy Bill: Reasons and Suggestions

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs3: Public Distribution System – Objectives, Functioning, Limitations, Revamping; Issues of Buffer Stocks and Food Security;

Synopsis: The centre needs to find pragmatic solutions to limit the growing food subsidy bill.

Background

- The Economic Survey 2020-21, has pointed out the issue of a growing food subsidy bill.
- During 2016-17 to 2019-20, the total food subsidy bill was in the range of ₹1.65-lakh crore to ₹2.2-lakh crore. (Food subsidy + loans are taken by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) under the **National Small Savings Fund (NSSF)**)

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

- Whereas, the food subsidy bill for the financial year (2020-21) according to the revised estimate is ₹4.23-lakh crore. It excludes the **extra-budgetary resource allocation**. (Centre distributed extra food grains to the poor at free of cost during the Pandemic).
- Also, the survey has stated that it is difficult to reduce the economic cost of food management in view of rising commitment towards food security.

What are the Reasons for Increasing Food subsidy bill?

1. **One**, The National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, increased the entitlements. It covers two-thirds of the country's population.
 - The law requires the authorities to provide to each beneficiary 5 kg of rice or wheat per month. This resulted in an increased States'demand for food grains in the States.
2. **Two**, recently the government has discontinued the **National Small Savings Fund** Loan to FCI for Food Subsidy. (i.e., extra-budgetary allocation has been discontinued) The Budget Provisions are provided accordingly. Consequently, budgetary allocation increased.

What was the suggestion given by the survey to address the growing food subsidy bill of the center?

- The survey suggested increasing the **Central Issue Price (CIP)**. It remains at ₹2 per kg for wheat and ₹3 per kg for rice for years.
- However, a mere increase in the CIPs of rice and wheat without a corresponding rise in the issue prices will not work. It would only increase the burden of States.
- Also, the State governments don't want to increase the state issue price. It is because food subsidies are internal to their political discourse. For example,
 - In States such as Karnataka and West Bengal the retail issue prices of rice and wheat Priority Households (PHH) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) ration card holders are nil.
 - In Tamil Nadu, rice is given free of cost for all categories including non-PHH.
- This is the reason why retail prices of food grains at fair price shops are so low even after achieving substantial poverty reduction in the country.

What can be done?

1. **First**, the centre should find solutions to decrease the quantum of coverage under the NFSA law from the present 67% to around 40%. It can be done by
 - One, allowing a "give-up" option, as done in the case of cooking gas cylinders.
 - Two, the centre should nudge the state governments to objectively identify PHH cardholders, thereby reducing the number of **ghost beneficiaries**.
2. **Second**, the prices of the existing arrangement of flat rates should be replaced with a slab system.
 - Excluding the needy, other beneficiaries can be made to pay a little more for a higher quantum of food grains.
3. **Third**, other reforms to strengthen the PDS system includes,
 - End-to-end computerisation of operations,
 - Digitisation of data of ration cardholders,
 - Seeding of Aadhaar, and automation of fair price shops.

In India, the PDS system has shown to be more effective over Direct benefit transfer especially during time of emergencies. So, it is important to revamp the PDS based on the needs.

11. Importance of FPOs | Farmer Producer's Organisations)

Source: [Indian Express](#)

GS3: Transport and Marketing of Agricultural Produce and Issues and Related Constraints

Synopsis: FPOs (Farmer Producers' Organisations) could be a solution to the agrarian distress if they are helped to access credit and markets

What are the main reasons for farmer's distress?

- **First**, the declining average size of farm holdings is one of the reasons for agrarian distress.
 - The average farm size declined from 2.3 hectares (ha) in 1970-71 to 1.08 ha in 2015-16.
 - This resulted in a further increase in small and marginal farmers from 70 percent in 1980-81 to 86 percent in 2015-16.
- **Second**, getting access to inputs and marketing facilities is another main challenge faced by Small Farmers.

How FPOs can help small and marginal farmers?

Institutionalizing FPOs can help marginal and small farmers to overcome their challenges. FPOs will allow members to gain greater bargaining power in the purchase of inputs, obtaining credit, and selling the produce. For example,

1. **One**, FPOs in Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan have shown positive outcomes. Farmers through FPOs were able to **realize higher returns** for their produce.
 - For example, tribal women in the Pali district of Rajasthan formed a producer company, and they are getting higher prices for custard apples.
2. **Two, The International Food Policy Research Institutes** comparative study of FPOs in Maharashtra and Bihar has revealed the following benefits of FPO's.
 - FPO's are doing better than non-FPO farmers. Also, within FPOs, organically evolved FPOs (**OFPOs**) are more beneficial than pushed or promoted FPOs (**PFPOs**). For example,
 - According to the survey, **OFPOs** resulted in an increase in gross income. While only 2 percent indicate a decline in the same.
 - For **PFPOs**, 64 percent report an increase in gross income while 27 percent report no change in income.
 - Whereas, only 32 percent of the non-members indicate an increase in gross income.

Steps taken by the government in this regard?

- Since 2011, the center has intensively promoted FPOs under the Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC), NABARD, state governments, and NGOs.
- The FPO is supported through,
 - **Capital infusion:** up to Rs 10 lakh to registered FPOs
 - **Credit guarantee cover** to lending institutions: maximum guarantee covers 85 per cent of loans not exceeding Rs 100 lakh.
 - **Budgetary support:** Budget 2018-19 gave a five-year tax exemption for FPO's. Budget 2019-20 targetted to set up 10,000 more FPOs in the next five years.
 - **State support:** In Tamil Nadu, under collective farming, six lakh small and marginal farmers have been integrated into 6,000 farmer producer groups.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

What are the Challenges for building sustainable FPO's?

Studies of NABARD shown the following challenges for building sustainable FPOs:

1. Lack of technical skills,
2. Inadequate professional management,
3. Weak financials, inadequate access to credit,
4. Lack of risk mitigation mechanism and
5. inadequate access to market and infrastructure

How to address the challenges faced by FPO's?

1. **First**, for a large country like India, more than one lakh FPOs are required. (currently 10,000 FPO's).
2. **Second**, to address issues such as working capital, marketing, infrastructure. For that
 - o Banks must be facilitated to come with structured products for lending to FPO's.
 - o Also, banks need to focus on capacity building to improve their professional management.
3. **Third**, FPO's have to be linked with input companies, technical service providers, marketing/processing companies, retailers etc. This will enable them to access data on markets and prices and other information and competency in information technology.
4. **Fourth**, FPOs need to look for land consolidation of their members where contiguous tracts of land are available. To some extent, Aggregation can overcome the constraint of small farm size. Women farmers also can be encouraged to group cultivate for getting better returns.

12. Why India Needs a Strong Regulatory Framework for Agriculture?

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3

Synopsis: There is a need of developing a strong regulatory framework to promote India's agricultural growth.

Introduction

The farmers in the country face various constraints such as accessing agricultural inputs, markets, finance, human resources, and information. All these factors are critical for increasing farmers' competitiveness.

The existing institutional structure controlling farm production fails to handle these issues. Thus, there is a need to develop a suitable regulatory system.

How did India perform in the World Bank publication, "enabling the business of agriculture"?

The World Bank recently published a report 'Enabling the Business of Agriculture (EBA) 2019'. It measures the extent to which government regulatory systems make it easier for their farmers to operate agricultural activities. It covers 101 countries worldwide.

- **The 8 indicators of evaluation** are supplying seed, registering fertilizer, securing water, registering machinery, sustaining livestock, protecting plant health, trading food, and accessing finance.
- **India ranked 49 out of 101 on the EBA aggregate score.** Out of 20 emerging countries, India has the second least favorable regulatory environment for farming activities.
- **India has the weakest performance on five out of eight indicators** compared to China, Brazil, and Russia. Indicators are; registering fertilizer and machinery, securing water, sustaining livestock, and protecting plant health indicators.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

- **The comparative score of India on supplying seed**, trading food, and accessing finance indicators is high.

Why India needs a strong regulatory framework for agriculture?

Governments need to develop a regulatory framework that enables farmers' access to agricultural inputs, reduces the cost of production, improves farmers' participation in agricultural markets and value chains. It is important due to the following reasons:

1. **Firstly, The regulatory system that runs irrigation management** is important for reducing the inconsistency of farm output, prices, and incomes, reducing vulnerability to natural shocks, and incentivizing the production of riskier and high returns crops.
2. **Secondly, India requires a sound regulatory framework on SPS.** For instance, with the active involvement of the SPS authority called as National Agrarian Health Service (SENASAPeru), Peru had become one of the world's leading exporters of asparagus.
3. **Thirdly, a healthy seed supply system is required** for improving yield and adopting new crop varieties.
4. **Fourthly, a warehouse receipts system** helps the farmers to obtain the credit needed to invest in agriculture. Warehouse receipt operators accept deposits of crops and provide warehouse receipts to farmers as evidence of deposited crops. By using warehouse receipts as security, farmers can receive credit.
5. **Lastly, Insufficient access to quality agricultural inputs** such as fertilizers, water, and mechanical power can cause:
 - Productivity loss.
 - Higher cost of food production and uncertainty.
 - Lower capacity of farmers to produce surpluses.

Suggestions

The future of world agriculture and food production is expected to increasingly depend on middle-income countries such as China, India, Brazil, and Indonesia. India needs to put in place an agricultural regulatory system that would make it easier for its farmers to conduct agricultural activities. Thereby improving their productivity, competitiveness, and income.

13. India's Rise as the new global manufacturing hub

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Gs3: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Synopsis: India's recent achievements have positioned it as an alternative global manufacturing hub to China at the global level.

Background

- Democratic countries consider a rising China, with its authoritarian one-party system, as a challenge to the democratic order.
- This provided the strategic case for the formation of **Quadrilateral Security dialogue. It envisioned to develop a more sustainable model of governance.**
- But the QUAD formed in 2007 was not able to progress further. The dependence on China's factories kept the grouping of democracies from emerging.
- But two recent developments have completely changed the dynamic.
 - One, Australia returning to the **Malabar Naval exercises** in 2020, after 13 years.
 - Two, the **first summit-level meet of the Quad** is scheduled to take place in March.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

- The rise in India's manufacturing ability as an alternative manufacturing destination to China has been one of the reasons for the above-mentioned developments.

What are the recent promising developments in India's manufacturing sector?

1. **First, the success in manufacturing PPE kits at a large scale.** Initially, after the pandemic, the world was dependent on China to secure supplies of PPE kits. But, India's ability to produce on a mass scale at a much cheaper price provided an alternative to the other countries. A similar case was with ventilators and other essential supplies, such as the drug HCQ.
2. **Second, the success of 'Vaccine Maitri' diplomacy.** India exported millions of vaccines to other countries in need and all through domestically-manufactured vaccines. **For example,** Canada, Pakistan, Caribbean Islands, Brazil and many more.
3. **Third, the growing success of India's private industry. For example,** the manufacturing capacity of Hindustan Syringes & Medical Devices was almost 6,000 syringes a minute.
4. **Fourth, India's success in precision high-end manufacturing.** India's **PLI scheme** was able to attract 22 top companies, including Apple and Samsung mobile phones in the electronics' manufacturing segment. It is expected that, over the next five years, a manufacturing capacity of over \$150 billion and exports of \$100 billion will be tied up through the **PLI scheme**.
5. **Fifth,** the success of India's **fourth-generation fighter jet Programme.** The government has decided to procure 83 indigenously-developed **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas** for the Indian Air Force. Very few countries have such ability to indigenously manufacture high-tech fighter planes.
6. **Sixth,** simultaneously India's Economic policy reforms have made India an attractive manufacturing destination. For example,
 - India has the lowest tax rate anywhere in the world. (15 per cent for new manufacturing units).
 - FDI norms have been further relaxed to allow for automatic approval processes in some sectors even up to 100 per cent.
 - Privatisation of PSUs to bring more efficiency and managerial capacity.
 - Labour laws have been reformed to ease compliance burdens.
 - Abolition of Rent-seeking behaviour by making the taxation procedure faceless.
7. Apart from this, effective bankruptcy laws, low-interest rates, strong digital infrastructure makes India a more attractive destination for manufacturing.

All the benefits that China provided – quality, scale, speed, skilled manpower and a huge domestic market are now operative in India without the drawbacks of the Chinese model.

14. Need of Specific Law for National Security Screening of Inward FDI

Source- [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- **GS 3**– Internal Security and related issues.

Synopsis – There is no clear law for national security screening of inward FDI in India. It is a major

Introduction-

1. As per some media reports, India may ease restrictions on FDI by Chinese companies. They will be allowed to invest up to 25 percent in a company through an automatic route.
2. Last year India tightened its FDI policy. It was aimed at preventing an opportunistic takeover of Indian firms, hit by COVID-19 pandemic induced lockdown.
3. India made all Chinese FDIs subject to mandatory government screening.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of March (Second week), 2021

4. Whereas, US, Australia, Canada, and Germany used specific laws to protect their companies against such takeover.

However, India does not have specific law which can block such attempts. Thus, India fails to differentiate between genuine National Security concerns and legitimate FDI.

How India regulates foreign investments?

India primarily uses FEMA to regulate Foreign Investments. RBI governs the **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)**.

Objectives of FEMA

- Facilitating external trade and payments.
- Promoting the orderly development and maintenance of foreign exchange markets in India.

Shortcoming of FEMA

National security is unrelated to FEMA. Therefore, India needs a separate law for national security screening of inward FDI just like many other western countries.

What are the different types of legitimate threats from foreign acquisitions?

All countries face the difficulty of screening foreign investment in a way that separates genuine national security threats from bogus claims. In this regard, Theodore H. Moran identifies three types of legitimate threats from foreign acquisitions.

1. **Dependency on a foreign supplier** – The proposed acquisition would make the country dependent upon a foreign-controlled supplier of goods or services. These goods or services shall be crucial to the functioning of that economy.
2. **Transfer of technology** – The proposed acquisition allows the transfer of technology or other expertise to a foreign-controlled entity. There is a possibility that It might be deployed by the entity or its government in a manner harmful to the country's national interests.
3. **Infiltration and sabotage** – The proposed acquisition would allow some potential capability for infiltration, surveillance, or sabotage into the provision of goods or services, which are crucial to the functioning of that countries' economy.

Unlike FEMA, the new FDI control law would specifically state legal criteria for FDI in an Indian corporation. Also, it would be able to check the genuine national security danger.

What are the provisions required under the new FDI control law?

- Only the finance minister should have the right to reject strategic foreign acquisitions on national security grounds.
 - **For example-** the Australian Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act, 1975 empowers the treasurer to block certain foreign acquisitions on national security grounds.
- Both the power and accountability mechanisms should be part of the law.

Way forward-

National security and capital control are separate and independent policy objectives. Separate legislation for national security screening of inward FDI will be prudent.

ForumIAS