

9pm

Compilation

April, 2021 (Third Week)

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General Studies Paper - 1

General Studies - 1

1. Ambiguities Over the Status of Rohingyas in India

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 1 – Population and associated Issues

Synopsis:

India has shown an ambiguous stance over the status of Rohingyas. This has created some complexities, thus it desires alteration as per international law.

Background:

- It is assumed that the Supreme Court(SC) has implicitly accepted the center's view that Rohingyas in India are illegal immigrants.
- The belief is based on the court's refusal to release 300 Rohingyas from detention camps in Jammu and Delhi. The **court called for their deportation under the Foreigners Act, 1946.**
- However, different countries/organizations have different stances over them.

Stand of different Stakeholders over Status of Rohingyas:

- The UN treats Rohingyas as refugees. As per the organization, the Myanmar military crackdown in Rakhine state in 2017 created the world's biggest refugee crisis.
 - The 1951 UN convention on the status of refugees and 1967 protocol defines refugees as:
 - Persons who fled their homes and countries due to a well-founded fear of persecution. The persecution can be because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.
- Bangladesh gave refuge to Rohingyas in the Cox Bazaar region on humanitarian grounds. It converted the region into the biggest refugee camp in the world.
- Myanmar believes that Rohingyas are illegal immigrants that entered their country from Bangladesh.

Ambiguous Stance of India:

- The Indian PM has assured Bangladeshi PM that both countries will ensure the return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar sustainably. There are about a million refugees in Myanmar and 40000 in India.
- Further, India allowed the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to carry out verification and provide some of them with identity cards. Approximately 14000 issued refugee identity cards.
- However, the solicitor general has imposed allegations of terrorism and communalism on them and demanded their deportation.

How has India been able to maintain this ambiguity?

- The country is non-signatory to the 1951 UN Convention or the 1967 Protocol.
- Further, it doesn't have a dedicated refugee law or policy that determines who should be given the refugee status.
 - Some people say the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 comes closest to a refugee policy. Although it discriminates between refugees on the basis of religion in offering them Indian citizenship.

It allows the government to declare any person as an illegal migrant. Despite this, the country has nearly 3 lakh refugees.

ISSUES WITH DEPORTATION OF ROHINGYAS:

- **Influx of Pro-Democracy Protestors:** They have entered India through Manipur and Mizoram since the Feb 2021 military coup in Myanmar. If refugee status is given to them, then it would be very difficult to deport Rohingyas as both face a threat of persecution.
- **Cooperation from Myanmar:** Myanmar is reluctant to admit Rohingyas under its territory. Further India has been able to send back only a few refugees in the last 4 years.
- **Principle of non-refoulement:** The desire to send back Rohingyas goes against this principle. India is bound to follow it as it is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
 - The principle states that no refugee shall be returned in any manner to any country where he or she would be at risk of persecution.
- **Differential Treatment:** India offers Voluntary repatriation to Sri Lankan Tamil refugees after the end of the civil war in 2009. Further, they can seek jobs and send their children to schools.
- Thus, the need is to engage with agencies like UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and country of origin (Myanmar). This will result in the creation of an enabling environment for voluntary repatriation in consonance with international law.

General Studies Paper - 2

General Studies - 2

1. Violation of India's Exclusive Economic Zone by US Navy

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- **GS 2** – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Synopsis – Recently, the US Navy challenged India's maritime rights in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) near Lakshadweep Islands. It called India's claim excessive and its actions as per the freedom of navigation.

Introduction

- Recently, a move by the US navy came as a surprise to India. It is a surprise, especially after two successful visits by senior U.S. officials.
- The US Navy carried out **Freedom of Navigation Operation [FONOP]** in India's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) near Lakshadweep Islands.
- The US warship did not request India's permission before sailing through its Exclusive Economic Zone.
- It also challenges India's excessive maritime claims. This operation, according to the US Seventh Fleet, was to assert navigational rights and freedoms. Moreover, it also claims that this move was in accordance with [the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#).

What was India's stand on the issue?

- **However**, India has raised its concern to the US, through diplomatic channels.
- Further, India also said that UNCLOS did not authorize military maneuvers on the continental shelf or EEZ. That too without the prior consent of a country.

The incident is an unusual fallout between the two members of the QUAD. They both recently pledged to work together to protect freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific.

Way forward

US may adopt a new SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) for these FONOPs. India must take some of the following steps to avoid any further tension.

- India needs to deal with the US's open challenge to its maritime claims.
- Further, India must clearly articulate its stance, demonstrating to all stakeholders how Indian maritime law is consistent with international law.
- Also, India must seek clarification from the US that how the aim of the Quad grouping of "free and accessible Indo-Pacific," can coexist with the US Navy's open challenge.

2. NYAY Scheme: Significance of Cash Transfer Schemes

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS

Synopsis: Congress has promised the revival of the NYAY scheme in its Kerala manifesto. This cash transfer scheme could have been beneficial during the lockdown.

Introduction

The NYAY Scheme has become more relevant in today's age and time of the Pandemic crisis.

- This scheme offers a monthly transfer of ₹6,000 to homes living below the poverty line. This unconditional cash transfer to the poor is a good idea.
- Cash transfers lead to important short-term effects such as better nutrition, less food insecurity, higher consumption.
- Other benefits of cash transfer according to research are it can totally transform people's futures, unlock blocked entrepreneurship, investment etc. It could lead to a

bearable exit from poverty. Cash transfers are a powerful tool for sustainable poverty reduction.

Why a scheme like NYAY is important in the present times?

The need for NYAY has only become stronger after the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, rural-urban migrants faced hardships during the lockdown, followed by the economic slowdown.

- **Firstly**, if an NYAY-like scheme during the lockdown, could have helped **migrant workers** to remain where they were, after losing their job. Further, it could have helped companies to restart activity easily once lockdown was lifted.
- **Secondly**, Ideas42 is non-profit behavioural science research and design firm. It experimented with the benefits of cash transfers on 2 types of people in Africa:
 - The one's who just received cash transfers.
 - Others, who along with the cash transfers, also were trained with some (Nudge tools) behavioural methods. These methods were directed towards setting long-term goals, saving more and making productive investments.
- After the pandemic, ideas42 interviewed both the recipients. Everyone stated a loss of income and also told that the cash they had received helped them cope. However, the people that received the **“nudge” tools did better because they saved more.**
- Even during a pandemic, cash transfers helped people feel in control, and adding **behavioural tools increased the cash's impact** on people's well-being.
- **Thirdly**, a state-level implementation of a scheme like NYAY helps **the necessary fixing out of logistical challenges.**
- **Fourthly, it also allows for strategically including ‘nudges’** and other proven involvements that can help increase the effect of cash transfers.

The conclusion

- Such involvements can help ensure that people receiving cash are able to meet their immediate needs. Also, they are able to set some money aside for emergencies, such as the pandemic or natural disasters.

3. Increasing Importance of Indo-Pacific for EU

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS:2 – Important International institutions, agencies, and fora- their structure, mandate

Synopsis: Europe is ready for a new Indo-Pacific relationship. The new EU and Indo-Pacific relationship are mutually beneficial. Further, the EU can aid the Indo-Pacific region to become globally competitive.

Introduction:

When the global economy crashed in 2020, Economies such as Vietnam and China grew. A number of Asia's open societies shown how to successfully contain the virus. Further, the world **depends on India to end the pandemic** for its capacity as a vaccine exporter.

At present, one can observe three types of Asian countries.

1. Firstly, Asia of business – This includes Asian countries with open, dynamic, interconnectedness.
2. Secondly, Asia of geopolitics – This includes Asian countries with nationalistic policies, territorial conflicts, arms races, etc. Geopolitical rivalries threaten free trade.
3. Lastly, Asia of global challenges – This includes countries that lack cooperation in fair globalization and getting climate crisis.

The European involvement in the Indo-Pacific:

1. Recently, the German government has for the first time **adopted certain guidelines for the Indo-Pacific**.
2. European countries are the **key trading, technology, and investment partner** for many countries of the region. Germany alone now conducts one-fifth of its foreign trade with the Indo-Pacific countries.
3. Recently the **EU has concluded free trade agreements** with Japan, Singapore, and Vietnam.
4. China remains a key economic partner for the EU.
5. The EU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations(ASEAN) concluded a **strategic partnership**. This connects the EU with the South-East Asian Countries.
6. The EU is the biggest supporter of the [international vaccine platform\(COVAX\)](#). Further, India as a leading producer of vaccines is the most important COVAX supplier. The benefits of this platform are beyond the Indo-Pacific region.
7. Europe also supports **human rights and the promotion of democracy** in the region. For example,
 - o Sanctions against those responsible for human rights violations in Xinjiang
 - o Sanctions against Myanmar's generals following the [Myanmar coup](#).

Suggestions to improve the European presence in the Indo-Pacific:

The **European strategy for the Indo-Pacific** must include all three Asia's into account.

1. The **time for the EU is running short**. Because in 2020 the countries of East and Southeast Asia created the world's largest free trade area(RCEP). The [RCEP\(Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership\)](#) includes one-third of the global economy. So Europe has to act swiftly and starts negotiations for FTA's with Indonesia and India.
2. The EU should not neglect the developed economies of Asia like Japan, South Korea etc.
3. Europe must take a stand against polarisation and geopolitical rivalry. Further, the EU can also advise on inclusive, rules-based Indo-Pacific.

Advantages for EU engaging with Indo-Pacific:

1. **Europe can set standards** for new technologies, human-centered digitization, and sustainable connectivity.
2. **Europe can improve its innovation and economic strength** as well as its regulatory power at a global level.
3. Indo-Pacific is the biggest emitters of CO2 in the world(China and India contribute to that). The **EU can invest in renewable energies, climate protection and biodiversity** in the region.

Upcoming engagement of EU in Indo-Pacific:

1. The EU aims to launch a connectivity partnership with India in the upcoming **EU-India Summit**.
2. To ensuring fair market access and investment conditions in Asia, the **EU will hold meetings with the US**.
3. This week, **Germany and Japan** are going to undertake **Ministerial discussions** on challenges in free trade and security in the region.
4. Further, **France and the Netherlands** also **started their work on a European strategy for the Indo-Pacific**. The strategy is expected to be in place by the end of the year.

In conclusion, Europe is ready for a new partnership that focuses on all three types of Asian economies. Further, it focuses on dialogue with open Asia, taming geopolitical rivalry in Asia and providing solutions to the Asian Challenges.

4. Backchannel Diplomacy Between India and Pakistan

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: India and its Neighborhood- Relations.

Synopsis: The recent developments in India – Pakistan relation suggest that there is an ongoing backchannel diplomacy since 2020.

Developments in India- Pakistan Relations indicating backchannel diplomacy

Important developments took place between India and Pakistan. It suggests the functioning of an ongoing backchannel talk.

1. **First**, India-Pakistan agreement to follow Ceasefire reached by India-Pakistan border commanders at LoC. It indicates coordination at a diplomatic level and high-level political approval.
2. **Second**, the events including the scheduling of the much-delayed **Indus Water Treaty talks**. Further, the granting of sports visas strengthened rumors of a backchannel process.
3. **Third**, most recently, contrary to the usual stand, there were no references to Pakistan in electoral speeches by the ruling party. Further, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)'s silence on U-turn by Pakistan on trade are the other clues.

What is the need for back-channel process in India-Pakistan Relations?

Engagement between India and Pakistan is inevitable due to the following reasons:

1. One, for Pakistan, the weakening economic condition and the increasing pressure from the Financial Action Task Force to shut down all terrorist safe-havens.
2. Two, for India, a stand-off with the Chinese Army at the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh and the possibility of a two-front war situation.
3. Three, apart from this, the geopolitical issue of engaging with Afghanistan will be one of the major reasons for the engagement.

What are the past examples when India engaged with Pakistan through backchannel diplomacy?

- **One**, a channel for peace talks began in 1988 during the **Rajiv Gandhi** period, supported by Jordanian Crown Prince Hassan. However, the death of Pakistan's general ended the process without any solution.
- **Two**, during the Kargil War, PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee employed a back-channel interlocutor to finalize a ceasefire agreement.
- **Three**, more recently, in 2016, six former Pakistani High Commissioners traveled to Delhi for a Track-II consultation with nine former Indian High Commissioners.

5. Freedom of navigation operation (FONOP) in Indian waters

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis: The U.S. Navy's FONOP in India's EEZ highlights the difference in the Indian and American perception on international maritime law (UNCLOS).

Background

- Recently, the USS John Paul Jones carried out freedom of navigation operations (FONOP) in the west of the Lakshadweep Islands. It lies in India's exclusive economic zone.
- It was done without requesting India's prior consent.
- Some of India's strategic community members described this as an unnecessary provocation by the U.S. Navy.
- Whereas the US defended its operation by stating that it is consistent with international law (UNCLOS).

What are the ambiguities in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)?

Different interpretations of the UNCLOS gave rise to the problem. For example,

- According to the U.S Navy, India's requirement of prior consent for the passage of foreign warships through Indian EEZs is a violation of UNCLOS.
- Articles 56 and 58, Part V of the Law of the Sea, entitles U.S. warships to high-seas freedoms in the 200-nautical mile EEZs of another coastal state.
- Whereas, according to India's Interpretation, the UNCLOS does not explicitly permit the passage of military vessels in another state's EEZ. Military exercises in the EEZ require the consent of the coastal State.
- This position of India is also consistent with India's domestic law (I) the Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone, (II) Other Maritime Zones of India Act of 1976.

How India responded?

India refrained from stating its differences with the US interpretation of UNCLOS because of the following reasons,

1. One, India understands that FONOPs give the U.S. Navy leverage in the contest with China in the South China Sea.
2. Two, FONOPs in Indian EEZs have been relatively low compared to other countries. **For example**, since 2016, the U.S. Navy has carried out only three FONOPs through Indian EEZs. Whereas, U.S. warships have conducted eight FONOPs in 2019, and nine in 2020 in Chinese islands.
3. Three, apart from conducting FONOPs in Indian EEZ the US navy also conducted FONOPs in the territorial seas of the Maldives. It is done mainly to inform China that the U.S. Navy is committed to upholding the rules-based order in the waters of opponents and partners.
4. Four, the choice of Lakshadweep rather than Andaman Nicobar Islands to conduct FONOPs indicates that US doesn't want to make a rift in India-U. S relation. Because maritime boundaries around the Lakshadweep are more settled than the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

What are the lessons for India?

1. First, FONOPs normalizes military activism close to India's island territories. It makes Indian waters vulnerable to incursions by foreign warships. It encourages other regional navies to violate India's domestic regulations in the waters surrounding the Andaman and Nicobar Island.
2. Second, India should also rethink its stand on freedom of navigation in the EEZs. Because, India's domestic regulation is not in concurrence with international law (UNCLOS). For example, India's declaration of straight baselines delineating zones around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is a violation of UNCLOS law.

6. Need of Peace Between India and Pakistan

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2

Synopsis: Peace Between India and Pakistan is essential for the transformation of South Asia.

Introduction

The Director Generals of Military Operations of India and Pakistan agreed to strictly observe ceasefire agreements between the two countries. This matched with the Pakistani PM's statement that Pakistan's only issue is Kashmir, and it can only be fixed through dialogue.

- This statement was strongly supported by General Qamar Bajwa, Pakistan's Army Chief.
- There is a growing realization that both the countries cannot take parts of Kashmir that the other country controls.
- Thus, the focus should be on resolving issues that scar the whole subcontinent instead. These issues include poverty, malnutrition and an unacceptable disregard of the young.

How will peace with Pakistan help in transforming South Asia?

The India-Pakistan hostility hurts regionalism and South Asian growth. Peace between India and Pakistan will be beneficial for all the nations constituting the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

- **Firstly**, many reports proved that a good economic **value can be derived from South Asian economic integration**. The World Bank publication titled 'A Glass Half Full' is one of those reports.
- **Secondly, SAARC has remained a victim of India-Pakistan enmity**. Even though it has formed partial alliances among its members.

How can India make a difference to the SAARC?

Professor Selim Raihan of the University of Dhaka highlighted India's vast 'size imbalance' in South Asia.

1. **Firstly**, Professor Selim Raihan shared that **India's total land area is 62%**, the population is 75%, and the GDP of South Asia in 2016 was 83%.
 - Pakistan and Bangladesh have a share of only 7.6% and 5.6%, respectively in regional GDP.
2. **Secondly, this indicates that only India can take the lead** in changing a grossly under-performing region like South Asia. South Asia has a GDP (PPP) of \$12 trillion with a population of a tad over 1.9 billion.
 - On the other hand, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has a GDP (PPP) of around \$9 trillion. Member states like Vietnam are growing enormously.

Way forward

1. **Firstly, India needs to think big and act big** by determinedly aiming to plan a South Asian economic miracle. China did the same and even rose in 1972.
2. **Secondly, India needs to view peace with Pakistan as essential** and urgent and not just a bilateral matter. It is a chance of a lifetime to drastically makeover South Asia for the better.

7. Talks on Iran Nuclear Deal Resumes

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

Synopsis – The Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) [Iran nuclear deal] resumed talks. The lifting of sanctions on Iran and nuclear implementation measures are on top of the agenda.

Background-

- In 2018, former US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the nuclear deal. Further, it imposed sanctions on Iran and jeopardized the 2015 agreement to limit Iran's uranium enrichment.
- In response, Iran increased uranium enrichment and stockpile and expanded its research and development.

Therefore, for the revival of the 2015 agreement, diplomats from Russia, China, France, Britain, Germany, and Iran have been meeting in Vienna.

- The aim is to reach an agreement on a road map for lifting US sanctions and recommitting Tehran to its agreements under the accord.

Changing approach of US toward IRAN-

- The US President appointed a special envoy to Iran.
- It ended US support for Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen against the Houthis [Iran-backed militants].
- Biden Administration also offered Iran to release \$1 billion of Iranian money frozen in South Korea according to sanctions. In exchange, Iran was asked for ending its 20% uranium enrichment.

However, Iran has rejected the offer, seeking more concrete measures from the U.S.

Is there a deadline for this deal to be done?

Presidential election in IRAN – Iran will go to the polls in June to elect a new president. The current president Hassan Rouhani, seen as a moderate in Tehran, will not be able to stand again for the presidential race.

Challenges –

Rising security tension in the region could jeopardize the diplomatic efforts to revive the JCPOA.

- Shia militias supported by Iran continue to attack US forces and bases in Iraq.
- The Israel-Iran shadow conflict is now being fought inside Syria and on the seas. In the Red Sea, an Iranian ship was attacked.

Way forward-

- The best chance for the US is to revive the JCPOA, and that too, before the presidential election.
- Both Iran and the United States must work to re-establish lost faith and take measures to revive the nuclear deal. It would end the nuclear crisis in exchange for the lifting of sanctions.

8. The National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Bill, 2020

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

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

Synopsis: Lok Sabha passed **The National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2020 [NCAHP]** unanimously. Importance of Allied Health professionals in the delivery of health care services.

Introduction-

- Recently, **the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2020 [NCAHP]** passed unanimously by the Lok Sabha.
- The Bill would control and standardize allied and healthcare professional education and practice.
- The recognition of allied healthcare professionals under NCAHP 2020 is paradigm shift.

Allied health professionals and their role in the delivery of healthcare services-

Allied health professionals are individuals engaged in the delivery of health or related care. Their area of expertise includes therapeutic, diagnostic, curative, preventive, and rehabilitative interventions.

Role-

- They are the first to recognize the problems of the patients and serve as safety nets.
- Their awareness of patient care accountability adds tremendous value to the healthcare team in both the public and private sectors.

Key takeaways of the NCAHP bill 2020

1. First, The Bill defines an allied health professional as an associate, technician, or technologist. The professional, who is trained to support the diagnosis and treatment of any illness, disease, injury, or impairment.
 - **For example-** The bill recognizes over 50 professions such as physiotherapists, optometrists, nutritionists, medical laboratory professionals, radiotherapy technology professionals.
 2. Second, The bill used the **International System of Classification of Occupations (ISCO code)** to classify allied professionals.
 - This allows for greater global mobility and better prospects for such professionals.
 - It will benefit up to 8-9 lakh current allied and healthcare professionals.
 3. Third, **the establishment of a central statutory body as a National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions.**
 - To frame policies and standards.
 - To govern professional conduct.
 - Also, to recommend credentials.
 - Further, to establish and maintain a central registry.
 4. Fourth, the Bill has the provision for state councils to execute major functions through autonomous boards.
 - The state councils are in charge of implementation, while the National Commission is in charge of policy formulation.
- **Why government's recognition of allied healthcare professionals is a paradigm shift?**
 - Stressful life due to modern lifestyle, rapid urbanization
 - Rising chronic non-communicable disease burden.
 - An increasing proportion of elderly people.

The above issues require a change in healthcare delivery methods. Therefore, trained, allied health professionals are needed to care for patients with mental illnesses, the elderly, those in need of palliative treatment. Also, it will enable professional services for lifestyle change related to physical activity and diets.

Way forward-

- Allied healthcare professionals are an important part of the medical profession. Their contribution is equal to, if not greater than, that of doctors.
- The law would increase job opportunities for allied and healthcare professionals and also provide dignity to their valuable works.

9. India's vaccination strategy needs a course correction

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis: India's vaccination strategy lacks few important steps and needs immediate action.

Introduction: Recently Drug Controller General of India formally approved another vaccine candidate ([Sputnik V](#)). This vaccine is approved under [emergency use authorisation](#).

India's vaccination strategy:

1. So far, India's vaccination strategy **relied almost entirely on Covishield**. The other vaccine Covaxin so far has only limited extent in India's vaccine strategy.
2. India also allowed using **foreign-made vaccines in India**. But, these vaccines have to be approved by their respective regulatory agencies. Such as the U.S., the U.K., Europe, Japan.
3. Similarly, there is **World Health Organization's** (WHO) list of approved emergency use vaccines. Indians can also use those vaccines.

Concerns with India's vaccination strategy:

1. Vaccine approved in a different country may have adverse effects on the Indian population.
2. The WHO vaccines can avoid **local clinical trials**. But, they are subject to parallel bridging trials. For example, Pfizer approached Indian regulators for such bridging trails.
3. India due to **emergency use authorization rushed through its regulatory process**. This is evident as India had enough time and opportunity to conduct clinical trials in the right way for Vaccines such as [Covishield and Covaxin](#). But India approved these vaccines under Emergency use.
4. **Not clear planning on vaccine stocks**. Countries like the U.K. and the U.S. planned enough vaccine dosage for their country for attaining self-sufficient. For example, in the US at least 30% of its adults have got one dose of vaccination. But India did not have any such plan. So, without that, 'atmanirbhar' in the vaccine is not feasible.

Suggestions to improve India's Vaccine strategy:

India's pharmacovigilance programme has to step up to solve the challenges in India's vaccine strategy.

1. India **must not repeat the same mistake**. India has to understand that the available choice of vaccine does not translate into immediate availability.

2. All the Indian **vaccine companies** had a tie-up with their foreign counterparts. So, even though they make millions of vaccines in India, they will **sell them to the highest global bidders**(Profit-motive). So India has to ensure vaccine availability to at least for its adult population.
3. India has to **study the past**. Last year, the Indian health system faced a shortage of hospital beds, ventilators, and black marketing of drugs. With the cases increasing once again, India has to improve the situation prior to the worrying state.

10. Issues in the MTP Amendment Bill

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections

Synopsis: The Medical Termination of Pregnancy or MTP Amendment bill is a step forward in recognising the rights of women. But it is not a giant leap.

Introduction:

The 1971 [Medical Termination of Pregnancy \(MTP\) Act](#) aims to reduce the maternal mortality ratio due to unsafe abortions in India. The amendments made a few significant updates to the 1971 Act.

Salient provisions of The MTP Act, 1971:

1. The act allows a woman to **terminate her pregnancy within the first 12 weeks** of pregnancy. After consulting an RMP (registered medical practitioner) woman can terminate her pregnancy.
2. If the women want to terminate her pregnancy between 12-20 weeks, she needs to get an opinion from 2 RMPs.
3. The Medical practitioners have to ascertain that continuance of the pregnancy would **risk the life of the pregnant woman or** substantial risk (Physical or mental abnormalities) to the **child** if it is born

Salient provisions of the MTP Amendment Bill:

1. The amendment **extends the upper limit for permitting abortions from the current 20 weeks to 24 weeks.**
2. The opinion of one **RMP is required for termination** of pregnancy up to 20 weeks of gestation. (Between 20 weeks to 24 weeks the opinion of two RMP's is required).
3. The Amendment also allows the termination of pregnancy beyond 24 weeks **if there are foetal anomalies.**
4. **Formation of the [medical boards](#) in each state** by State governments for this specific purpose(termination of pregnancy after 24 weeks).
5. Further, the amendment **[facilitates abortion of "unmarried women also"](#)**. As the amendment replaced the word 'husband' with the word 'partner'. For the first time, the amendment of the MTP Act moved beyond marital relationships.

The problems in the MTP Amendment Bill:

But the [MTP Amendment falls short of few important things](#). Such as,

1. The amendment does not address the heart of any debate on abortions. That is a **woman as an agency of reproduction**.
2. The key decision-maker regarding the termination of pregnancy after 24 weeks should be the woman and her gynaecologist (for deciding the health of the woman/foetus). Instead, the **amendment created a Board of specialists**. The board will make the **woman undergo a difficult process** before such an abortion. Sometimes the cases will also get decided in courts.

3. The Amendment is **not in line with the global trend**. Over 60 countries allow women to abort their pregnancy at any point during their 10-month gestation.

Suggestions to improve the MTP Amendment Bill:

1. Because of a lack of development in medical technology, the **1971 Act prescribes the 12-week limit**. As it is not safe for pregnant women to abort after 12-weeks.
 - But with the advancement of **medical technology**, it is safe to abort at any stage during their gestation. So the government has to remove the gestation limit in the Amendment.
2. **Fundamental change in mindset** is the need of the hour. Until women are seen as an agent of reproduction, nothing will change in reality.

So, the improvement of the **MTP Amendment is not a holistic one**. Instead, it is a minor update.

11. Issues and Challenges facing BIMSTEC Organisation

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis: Recently, the 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held. In this article, we will discuss the **progress, issues, and challenges concerning the BIMSTEC organisation**.

Background

- Recently, the 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held online. The foreign ministers of **BIMSTEC** (the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) were the participants.

About BIMSTEC

- Initially, BIMSTEC was a grouping of four nations (India, Thailand, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka) formed through the **Bangkok Declaration** of 1997. Its aim was to promote rapid economic development.
- Later, three more countries (Myanmar, Nepal, and Bhutan) also included in BIMSTEC.
- The progress under BIMSTEC was slow in the first 2 decades of its establishment. For instance, only 3 summits were held in the first 20 years.
- However, After the failure of SAARC, India changed its foreign policy to treat it as a more important instrument for regional cooperation.
- BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat, followed by their Outreach Summit with the BRICS leaders in Goa in October 2016, gained international attention.
- Later, the 4th leaders' summit, held in Kathmandu in August 2018. It framed an ambitious plan for institutional reform to include **economic and security cooperation**.
- During the 4th summit, the decision was also taken to form the BIMSTEC charter.
- Today the shared goal is to aim for "a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Bay of Bengal Region".

What are the developments in the 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting?

- **One**, the meeting welcomed the proposal to hold the 5th BIMSTEC Summit in Sri Lanka in the next few months.
- **Two**, the ministers recommended the early adoption of **BIMSTEC charter**.
- **Three**, they also endorsed the rationalization of sectors and sub-sectors of activity, with each member-state serving as a lead for the assigned areas of special interest.

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- **Four**, they also supported the Master **Plan for Transport Connectivity**, which will be adopted at the next summit.
- **Five**, three MoUs / Agreements were also endorsed for signing at the next BIMSTEC Summit.
 - Mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.
 - Cooperation between diplomatic academies.
 - The establishment of a technology transfer facility in Colombo.

What were the opportunities missed out in the recent ministerial meeting?

- **One**, lack of deliberation on the trade and economic front. The BIMSTEC Free Trade Area Framework Agreement, signed in 2004 remains unsuccessful even after 20 rounds of negotiations. A recent study by the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry** had suggested that BIMSTEC should aim for a comprehensive **Free Trade Agreement** to be a real game-changer.
- **Two**, there is no effort from the BIMSTEC leaders to expand their dialogue by involving the vibrant business communities.

What are the issues that are hampering the progressive development of BIMSTEC?

BIMSTEC has achieved much progress in the fields of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and security, counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and coastal security cooperation.

Also, the academic and strategic community actively interact through the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks. Despite these developments, some concern remains

1. **One**, lack of cordial bilateral relations between its member states. For instance, India-Nepal, India-Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh-Myanmar ties are not good, due to political, economic, and social reasons.
2. **Two**, uncertainties over SAARC impact the development of BIMSTEC. For instance, BIMSTEC members Nepal and Sri Lanka want a revival of the SAARC summit.
3. **Third**, the growing influence of China in South Asia is another threat to BIMSTEC cooperation. For instance, a popular Bangladeshi scholar supported admitting China as a partner in BIMSTEC. However, India will not welcome this idea.
4. **Fourth**, the ongoing military coup in Myanmar and popular protest against the military coup is a new practical challenge.
5. **Fifth**, apathy towards holding regular annual summits. For instance, while most of the regional organisation (SCO, ASEAN, G20) were able to meet at a high political level even during the Pandemic, BIMSTEC leaders failed to meet.

12. Why India Needs to Balance Relations with China, Russia and US?

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India

Synopsis: India must actively engage with all the three big powers (US, Russia, China). It is because there is no guarantee that today's friends will not confront and today's enemy will not cooperate in the future. This is based on the principle that change is the only permanent thing in foreign relations.

Background:

- The recent visit of the Russian Foreign minister to Delhi and Islamabad shows India's changing relations with big powers. Earlier, Russia used to give more importance to India.
- It is just one example amongst the multiple indications that includes:
 - China's rising assertiveness over India.

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- India's growing relationship with the US and Europe signals a shift from an earlier stance of alienating the west.
- India's rising stature in the International arena due to its economic might and diversified foreign policy.

Change is the only permanent thing in International relations as can be seen by changing relations between the trio (US, Russia, and China).

Russia-China Relations:

1. They shared very good relations in the 1950s due to the shared ideology of communism. A formal treaty of alliance was signed in 1950.
 - Russia generously gave economic and technological support to China that helped in the development of China's nuclear program.
2. However, relations deteriorated in the 1960s and a tussle between the armies was seen in 1969.
3. After this, both countries tried to enhance their closeness with the U.S as a way of countering the other. However, a little normalcy in relations was seen in the 1980s post the American pressure.
4. The relationship strengthened once again after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It was due to the ignorant attitude of the western bloc towards Russia.

US – Russia relations:

1. They were allies in the 1940s and defeated the axis powers in World War 2. They laid the foundation of the Yalta system on which the current world order rests.
2. However, in the late 1940s, a Cold War emerged between the two based on ideological confrontation – Capitalism versus Communism.
3. A ray of hope was again witnessed in the 1960s when the two agreed to lay the foundations for nuclear arms control. They also agreed to develop a new framework for shared global leadership.
4. Nonetheless, the relationship has been confrontational in nature after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.

US-China Relations:

1. They shared a sour relationship in the 1950s. The countries were confronting each other in the Korean War in the early 1950s.
2. However, the growing differences with Russia and fear of two countries' global domination in the 1960-70s induced it to engage more with the U.S.
3. As a mark of loyalty towards the US, the Chinese government didn't renew the security treaty with Russia in 1980.
4. China took the support of the US and strengthened the economic power that eventually helped it to become a future global leader.
5. Despite this, China and the US don't share a cordial relationship in the current scenario.

India's relationship with China, Russia, and US:

- **Russia had shown considerable support** in the form of repeated veto in the UN against Anglo-American interventions in Kashmir.
- The 1960s tussle between Russia and China allowed India to enhance its cooperation with Russia especially post the 1962 Sino-India war. Both countries viewed China as a common threat.

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- India became cautious of US- Russia dominance over the world in the 1960s especially post the adoption of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty system. This was to curtail India's atomic ambitions.
- Russian intervention in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan were against Indian principles. It created a gap in relations.
- Russia and China are today cautious of India's growing closeness with the U.S. They want to create an Asian [NATO](#) to counter the west. India on the other hand is concerned about America and China setting up a G-2 over Asia and the world.

Way Forward:

- The changing relationships between the trio indicate that bonding between Russia-China can decrease in the future. Similarly, the US can develop closeness with China.
- Understanding this, India must actively partner with all of them as done by it in the past.
 - In the case of Russia, the mutually beneficial bilateral relationship shouldn't be compromised despite the current differences over Afghanistan and the Indo-Pacific issue.
- India should leverage its economic potential (6th Largest) and diverse base of foreign policy to effectively balance the relationship with the trio.
 - Diverse Base – Actively engaging with US, European powers (France, UK), Asian powers (Japan, Korea, and Australia), etc.
- In a nutshell, we can say that the only permanent thing in foreign relations is that they are bound to change in the future.

13. India – China Bilateral Relationship Demands a Minimalist Approach

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its neighborhood- relations

Synopsis: India and China should adopt a minimalist approach in their future negotiations. This would give better and realistic results rather than an idealist and unfulfilled expectation.

Background:

- A track 2 dialogue held recently between China and India. In dialogue, a consensus was aimed at the adoption of a minimalist approach.
 - This approach focuses on low-hanging fruits that are easier to grab, rather than aiming for a full-scale solution.

This approach is emphasized because high expectations have failed to deliver credible results in the past.

High Expectations and Unwanted Results:

- In the 1950s, both countries **idealized the restoration of pan-Asian civilizational** partnership. However, this notion didn't exist in reality and the two sides were confronting each other in the 1962 war.
- **Two informal summits took place in 2018 (Wuhan) and 2019 (Mamallapuram)** aimed at everlasting peace between the countries. However, barely after two years, a grave border confrontation took place in eastern Ladakh.

Therefore, the countries must focus on modest goals to improve the relations. The **3 areas that deserve priority** in this regard are 1) border dispute, 2) trade, and 3) the role of other countries and multilateral platforms in bilateral relations.

Current Situation of Border Dispute:

- The border clash at Galwan Valley, Eastern Ladakh is going on for ten months.
- It is the worst violence since 1967 and the de-escalation effort has reached an apparent stalemate.
- There is no clarity over the withdrawal of armies along the north and south bank of Pangong lake, Eastern Ladakh. Further, no joint statement was released post 11th round of talks between Corps Commanders on April 9.
- Thus, it appears that China is in no mood for a final settlement of the boundary question.

Equation on the trade front:

- There were talks of **decoupling Chinese trade** post the Galwan valley stand-off. However, the latest trade data shows a different picture.
- The figure stood at \$87.6 billion where Chinese exports amounted to \$66.7, making it India's largest trading partner. Similarly, Chinese company Vivo sponsored India's biggest cricket tournament.
- The reliance is so high that complete decoupling is not possible in the near future.

Role of other countries and multilateral platforms in bilateral relations:

- The track 2 dialogue made it clear that China views its relationship with India through its relations with the U.S. The country criticized the creation of small circles like QUAD group to undermine its national interest.
- India too has shown discontent over its **exclusion from China led small circles** in South Asia and multilateral efforts on Afghanistan.

Way Forward:

- The countries must curtail the mistrust between them. On boundary questions, they can at least bring **clarity on most sensitive hotspots** and do **coordinate patrolling** over them.
- They **should cooperate in areas that don't have security implications**. This includes infrastructure development, clean energy, etc.
- A **robust policy framework** should be drawn for security-sensitive areas like 5G operations. This would protect India from every other malicious country, not solely from China.
- The countries must leverage **shared platforms** to discuss their respective concerns pertaining to 3rd countries or any multilateral platform. These platforms are also useful for reviving and strengthening bilateral relations.
 - For instance, **BRICS** can be used for reviving bilateral cooperation in Afghanistan or developing vaccine initiatives as done by Quad.

Thus, both countries should focus on modest goals that may be more rewarding than misplaced expectations.

14. Degree of Trust in Public Institutions across different castes

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – mechanisms, laws, institutions, and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections

Synopsis:

The India Human Development Survey (IHDS) tries to ascertain the degree of trust that people across different castes hold in public institutions. A thorough analysis of the data calls for strengthening trust, especially among the vulnerable sections.

Background:

- The IHDS categorizes public institutions into state government, judiciary, and police. Caste categories are divided into General, OBCs, SCs, and STs.
- The survey asks a question on the degree of confidence that people have over public institutions.
- This confidence indicates their trust in them and people can choose from – a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, and hardly any confidence.

Findings of IHDS:

- **Household Level:**
 - Judiciary is most trusted followed by state governments and police in public institutions.
- **Across different Castes:**
 - Maximum general category people have low confidence in public institutions.
 - A high proportion of OBCs displays great confidence in public institutions. A similar level of confidence is shown by STs.
 - SCs display the highest level of confidence in public institutions. Only a small proportion choose the 'hardly any confidence' option.

Analysing the Findings:

- SCs display a **very high degree of confidence in state governments**. They largely depend on affirmative actions and state support. The government gives quotas to SCs, STs, and OBCs in education and public sector employment.
- STs, on the other hand, display slightly less confidence than SCs due to their isolationist nature. It has devoid them of various social security nets.
- The **trust over the judiciary is quite high** in comparison to state governments across all the castes. Eg- three-fourths of STs reported a great deal of confidence. This is surprising given the judicial overload of cases and prolonged delays.
- The overall confidence over police is also low with only 13-18% showing great confidence. Further SCs and STs have very little confidence in them due to the **rampant corruption and discrimination against lower castes**.

Need for strengthening Trust:

1. **Positive Correlation:** There exists a positive relationship between trust and quality of governance or any other outcome.
 - For instance, greater trust results in better functioning of financial markets as the higher the trust, the higher is the credibility of debtors.
 - Similarly, greater trust manifests higher levels of cooperative relations between labour and management. It results in better functioning of labour markets.
 - Eg. – Firms that have trade unions are better able to adapt to new management methods, and show better productivity.
2. **Declining Trust:** The trust in institutions rose from 2005 to 2012. However, it is now showing a downward trend due to:
 - Non-inclusive policies of the government
 - Substandard judicial verdicts that compromise on autonomy and fairness
 - Also, due to, action of Police that undermines rights of citizens

We need to transition to a policy environment that is inclusive and transparent. It is a challenging task that could be facilitated with growing awareness among the citizens.

15. Issue of Freedom of Navigation in EEZs

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS

Synopsis: States should consult the coastal state before conducting military exercises in an exclusive economic zone.

Introduction

The USS John Paul Jones conducted a 'Freedom of Navigation Operation' 130 nautical miles west of the Lakshadweep Islands. The operation took place inside India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This exercise was conducted without asking for India's consent.

- The U.S. 7th Fleet said that India's emphasis on prior consent is inconsistent with international law.
- India stated that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) "does not allow other States to carry out military exercises in the Exclusive Economic Zone and on the continental shelf without the consent of the coastal state".

Explain the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)?

UNCLOS binds all its parties and customary international law binds all states. India is a member of the UNCLOS while the U.S. is not. According to the UNCLOS, EEZ is an area next to the state waters of a coastal state where the state has rights and duties.

1. **Firstly, the right and duties involve management of natural resources;** formation and use of artificial islands, installations, and structures; marine scientific research; and protection of the marine environment.
2. **Secondly, the present issue highlights Articles 58 and 87 of the UNCLOS.** Article 58 (1) provides that in the EEZ, all States enjoy the freedoms referred to in Article 87 of navigation.
 - a. **Article 87 offers freedom of the high seas** under which all states have the freedom of navigation. However, the freedom of navigation is subject to the conditions provided under the UNCLOS.
 - b. **Article 58 (3) specifies that,** in the EEZ, States shall respect the rights and duties of the coastal State and shall obey the laws adopted by the coastal State.
 - c. The Indian law relating to this is the Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone, and Other Maritime Zones of India Act, 1976.
3. **Thirdly,** the assertion by India in 1995 told that the **Convention does not allow other States to carry out military exercises** in the EEZ. The event involving the use of weapons or explosives without the consent of the coastal State is not allowed.
4. **Fourthly, Article 310 of the UNCLOS allows the states to** explain the relationship between the Convention and their own laws. However, such statements should not modify the legal effect of the provisions of this Convention.

What should be done?

- Freedom of navigation cannot be read in a complete and isolated manner. **Non-consensual military activities that obstruct the lawful enjoyment** of such rights need not be allowed.
- A coastal state is worried about military exercises posing a risk to its coastal communities, its installations or artificial islands, and the marine environment. Any state who wants to conduct such exercises must do so after **consultation with the coastal state.**
- **India and the U.S. should discuss such concerns and maintain international peace** and security. Otherwise, it might threaten friendly relations and undermine

the progress towards codification and development of international law which is particularly complex.

16. SC Directions to CBI in ISRO Espionage Case, 1994

Source- [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis – The Supreme Court has ordered the CBI investigation in the Nambi Narayanan ISRO Espionage case. CBI will review the involvement of the Kerala police.

What is the ISRO espionage case?

- In 1994, a Maldivian woman was arrested. She was suspected of selling secrets from ISRO scientists to Pakistan.
- Mr. Narayanan was arrested along with two other scientists by the Kerala Police on charges of sharing official secrets on space technology and launch missions.
- Later, the CBI took over the probe from the Kerala police. In 1996, CBI recommended closure of the case due to lack of evidence.
- The CBI also highlighted serious flaws in the police investigation, which relied on dubious tactics and was based solely on suspicion.

What is the court order [2018]?

- In 2018, **the Supreme Court dismissed the case as a criminal frame-up** based on “some sort of fancy or notion.”
- According to the Court, the former **ISRO scientist was “unnecessarily arrested and harassed”**.
- **Thus, the court ordered the State of Kerala to pay him Rs.50 lakh as compensation** for the damage to his honor and dignity.
- The court also formed a committee headed by Justice D.K. Jain to find ways and means to take appropriate steps against the erring officials

Recent court order-

- The SC ordered CBI to investigate the alleged **espionage case** against a former ISRO scientist in 1994 and to submit a report within three months.
- Furthermore, the CBI will investigate the report of Justice D.K. Jain Committee on senior Kerala police officials accused of framing ISRO scientist.

Concerning facts about the case-

- The ‘ISRO spying case’ has raised significant concerns about police investigations in the country.
- Also, Kerala’s government has been ignoring calls for disciplinary action against the erring police officers.
- Moreover, the State government opposed the CBI’s closure report and made an attempt to revive the investigation by its own police.

Suggestion

- SC order is a welcome and necessary step toward ensuring transparency for the alleged frame-up.
- Also, it would be in the best interests of the case if the CBI could continue with its inquiry into the officers involved without hindrance

17. Strategic Autonomy will shape the Emerging global order

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis: The middle powers like Japan, Iran, Turkey, and India are looking for strategic autonomy. It will make the emerging global order into a multipolar world instead of a new Cold War type bi-polar world.

Background

- The confrontation between greater powers (The US on one side and the Russia-China axis on the other side) is giving rise to a **New Cold War**.
- Some following examples are a sign of the Cold War,
 - The hard negotiations of the US with China at the Alaska summit.
 - An allegation by US over Mr Putin as a “killer”
 - The reluctance of the US to rejoin the nuclear agreement with Iran are some.
 - Further, the development of QUAD, to ensure a “free, open, resilient and inclusive” Indo-Pacific region to contain China.
- US enmity towards Russia and China has encouraged them to strengthen their relations under the **‘Greater Eurasian Partnership’**.
- Now, the New Cold War is being reflected as the **Indo-Pacific versus Eurasia**.
- The final shape of this divide will be determined by four middle powers, namely Japan, Iran, Turkey and India.

Why the middle powers are reluctant to join the alliance?

The middle powers will not join the alliance (either Indo-Pacific or Eurasia) due to their compelling national interest. Instead, they will pursue **Strategic autonomy**.

1. **First, Japan** has a more friendly relationship with the US than China. While Japan has territorial disputes with China (the Senkaku Islands dispute in the East China Sea), it has signed a security treaty of 1951 with the U.S. to safeguard its interest. Yet, Japan will not be willing to join the US bloc because,
 - a. One, Japan is dependent upon China in trade. For example, in 2019, 24% of Japanese imports came from China, while 19% of its exports went to China.
 - b. Two, Japan is emphasising Self-reliance and aims to reduce its security-dependence on the U.S. Thus, it wants to pursue an independent role in the Indo-Pacific.
 - c. **For example**, Japan's \$200 billion **‘Partnership for Quality Infrastructure** that funds infrastructure projects in Asia and Africa. It also wants to work on BRI projects on a selective basis.
2. **Second**, since 2016, **India** has moved very close to the US by expanding its Defence ties, frequent military exercises and elevation of the Quad to the ministerial level. Yet India will not be willing to join the US bloc because,
 - a. One, neither the U.S. nor the Quad can address the challenges it faces at its 3,500-kilometre land border with China.
 - b. Two, US intervention in Human rights issues in India is forcing India to realign its strategies with china and Russia. India now wants to manage its ties with China through its own efforts and retain Russia as its defence partner.
3. **Three**, sanctions on **Iran** by the US have made Iran a natural ally of the Sino-Russian axis. Yet, Iran will be willing to pursue its strategic autonomy once sanctions are lifted instead of an alliance with the Sino-Russian axis.

4. **Four, Turkey** has benefitted more by increasing geopolitical, military and economic alignment with Russia and China. Yet, Turkey will not join the Sino-Russian axis as it wishes to continue ties with the US parallelly. For example, its **“New Asia”** initiative, involves the strengthening of east-west logistical and economic connectivity backed by western powers and China.

“Strategic autonomy” defined by flexible partnerships, with the freedom to shape alliances to suit specific interests at different times will shape the emerging global world order.

18. A Balanced Approach Under IBC Amendment Ordinance 2021

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

Synopsis: The new Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code amendment ordinance 2021 shows a shift from a creditor-centric approach towards a more balanced approach. Under the new approach, both promoters and creditors are incentivized to reach a more acceptable solution.

Background:

- The President has promulgated the [Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code \(Amendment\) Ordinance 2021](#).
- It marks a shift from earlier approaches against the promoter and focussed on the creditor. Under this, the creditor was given the main control over the insolvency process while the promoter hardly had any say.

About the amendment:

- It tries to address the structural weakness in IBC by allowing a [pre-packaged insolvency resolution process](#) (PPIR).
 - PPIR is a form of restructuring that allows creditors and debtors (or promoters) to work on an informal plan within the IBC structure.
 - It is done before the commencement of insolvency proceedings.
 - Once accepted by creditors, the plan must be presented to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for approval.The process is available only for MSMEs (Micro, small and medium enterprises).

Difference from earlier approach:

- The amendment has **made the process less promoter averse**. Now PPIR will ensure promoters are able to retain their control over their business.
 - Earlier, the control was given to a resolution professional. He/she was appointed to manage the affairs of the company during the insolvency process.
 - The promoters did not have control due to cases of corruption, crony capitalism, and other fraudulent activities tagged with them. This undermined the creditor's interest and sanctity of the resolution process.

Further, the **new process doesn't give the scope of open bidding** that was available earlier. This might hinder price discovery and value maximization for creditors.

Benefits of the new amendment:

- **More powers to Promoters:** They get to hold on to their firms, and exit the process with more manageable obligations.
- **Prevents Closure of Genuine Firm:** With greater promoter control, the genuine firms will not get closed, like the ones who are not performing due to pandemic stress or other genuine barriers.

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- Further, the IBC process suffers from a **liquidation bias**. Around 46.5 % of all cases under IBC have ended up in liquidation. While only 13.1% witnessed a resolution.
- **Creditor Incentivisation:** As past data shows that liquidation value is only a fraction of the creditor's claims and the majority of IBC cases end up in liquidation.
 - The new process can help the creditors get better value for their debt. Especially economic distress when there are limited buyers of stressed assets.
- **Better Coverage:** The PPIR process doesn't fall under the central bank's restructuring framework. It covers all financial creditors as opposed to RBI's restructuring schemes which deal only with banks.
- **Prevents future scrutiny:** PPIR involves approval by a judicial seal that prohibits any future questioning by investigative agencies.

Way Forward:

- The PPIR process should be **gradually made available to all corporate debtors**.
- The government can also **relax the terms of Section 29A** of IBC in order to widen the list of possible buyers.
 - The section disqualifies those who had contributed to the downfall of the corporate debtor or were unsuitable to run the company.

19. Significance of Lessons from the First COVID Wave

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS

Synopsis: Partial lockdowns again, are going to widen economic and social inequalities. Every step towards prevention must consider the Lessons learnt from the first COVID-19 wave in India.

Introduction

- India's second COVID-19 wave is more contagious than the first. Many States have imposed lockdowns of various scales. However, political rallies, social and religious events are still ongoing, making these restrictions meaningless.

How did the first wave lead to uneven growth?

The International Monetary Fund estimated India's GDP to grow at 12.5% this year, but this growth cannot be inclusive.

- **Firstly**, the technological, pharmaceutical, and healthcare sectors saw the greatest growth. The **wealth of billionaires in India increased by 35%** even during the pandemic.
- **Secondly**, sectors including travel and tourism and wellness and hospitality recorded historic lows. **The pandemic destroyed the informal and MSME sector**. It pushed 75 million Indians into poverty.
- **Thirdly**, the unplanned lockdown highlighted the **vulnerability of the migrant workers** and poor as they had to walk back to their villages.
- **Fourth**, many economists predicted that India's revival from the COVID-19 induced depression would be a **'K-shaped' curve**. It means **only a part of our population recovers**.
- **Fifthly, COVID-19 has affected the poor the most**. Introducing partial lockdowns will limit the movement of goods and laborers. It will considerably reduce industrial productivity and create paths that will widen our inequalities.

Suggestions

Interconnected industries can function at the maximum possible capacity in multiple shifts. However, Strict health and safety regulations should be framed and followed. Non-essential gatherings should be banned.

- **Firstly, governments will have to account for demand contraction. Thus, It should** urgently ensure cash incentive packages at both individual and institutional levels. This will boost consumption and investments.
- **Secondly**, the need to provide additional provisions for job stamps; direct cash transfer and employment guarantee schemes.
- **Thirdly, the NYAY scheme** that guarantees a minimum income of ₹6,000 to every household is a solution that needs to be used at this time.
- **Fourthly**, reports indicate that new COVID-19 mutations are challenging even to the younger population. **India will have to speed up vaccine production, procurement,** and distribution.
- **Fifthly, Open vaccination for all age groups.** This would make it easier for the majority of laborers to be present at their workplaces with lesser risks. Students will also be able to attend classes and examinations.

The conclusion

The government should take responsibility for the lapses in the health care system and vaccine shortages. The private sector and NGOs played a huge role in quickly scaling up healthcare infrastructure during the first wave. With political will and public participation, we should now be able to save lives without negotiating on our population's livelihood.

20. Need to Enact Siras Act on the Lines of Alan Turing law

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- **GS 2** – mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections.

Synopsis- Ex-post facto pardon to the convicts of homosexuality will serve justice to them. Alan Turing law is a perfect example in this case. Government should consider enacting Siras Act on the same line.

Introduction

- On September 6, 2018, India's Supreme Court ruled that consensual homosexual acts would no longer constitute a crime.
- The historic move reversed Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.
- The change was a positive step towards acceptance and equal rights to LGBTQ+ communities.

However, it is time to enact ex post facto pardon for those who are in jail due to their acts in the past because of their sexuality.

ex-Post facto means it will apply to the acts before the enactment of law or before the judgment i.e. retrospective effect.

What is section 377?

- Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code criminalized homosexuality. Section introduced in 1861 during the British rule in India, modeled on the Buggery Act of 1533.
- In 2018, The Supreme Court ruled that the criminalization of consensual homosexual sex, under Section 377 between adults was **unconstitutional, irrational, indefensible, and manifestly arbitrary.**
- However, Section 377 remains in force for sex with minors, non-consensual sexual acts, and bestiality.

Example of Persecution faced by the LGBTQ+ community in India

Ramchandra Siras Case –

- Siras was a Professor and HOD of Modern Indian Languages at Aligarh Muslim University.
- AMU suspended him for gross misconduct in 2010 due to consensual homosexual sex.
- However, Later, Professor Siras won his case against the university in Allahabad High Court on 1 April 2010 and got back his job as a professor.

What is Alan Turing law?

The Alan Turing law (**formal title- the Policing and Crime Act 2017**) was passed to correct a historic injustice. The law pardoned gay men convicted in the past because of their sexuality.

- The Law is named after Alan Turing, the World War II code-breaker and computing pioneer. He was convicted of gross indecency in 1952.
- However, Alan Turing received a royal pardon in 2013.
- Now, The law applies in England and Wales.

Landmark Judgments related to LGBTQ+ communities–

- **First, Naz Foundation v. Govt. of NCT of Delhi [2009]** is a landmark Indian case of the Delhi High Court. It held that treating consensual homosexual sex between adults as a crime is a violation of fundamental rights.
 - As a result of the ruling, homosexual acts between consenting adults are no longer illegal in India.
- **Second, Suresh Kumar Koushal vs. Naz Foundation [2013]-**
 - In Suresh Kumar Koushal vs. Naz Foundation, SC overturned the previous judgment by Delhi HC 2009 and restored Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.
- **Third, Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India [2018]-**
 - In **Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India in 2018, SC decriminalized homosexuality.** Dismissed the position taken by SC in Suresh Kumar Koushal case (2013).

Way forward-

The Indian government should pass a 'Siras Act,' similar to the Alan Turing bill, to make amends for past and current abuses towards the LGBTQ+ community.

21. The Questions Surrounding COVID Vaccine Exports by India

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis: The government should make sure to citizens that the COVID vaccine exports by India are not at the cost of their health.

Introduction:

Recently Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs stated that India is **Exporting Vaccine after considering the domestic and international Factors.** Further, he also mentions that India will continue to export vaccines based on the production and needs of the national vaccination programme.

Potential of India's vaccine exports:

1. According to Ministry of External Affairs statistics, upto April 13, India alone supplied over 65 million vaccines to 90 countries globally. This accounts for one month of India's current COVID-19 vaccines production. Of these
 - o More than 10 million doses are sent as grants.
 - o Almost 36 million on a commercial basis.
 - o About 19 million under the [COVAX programme](#).

India also exports vaccines to GAVI. India is a member of [Gavi's COVAX facility](#). Further, India also receives other vaccines from GAVI. So, exporting vaccine to GAVI is an obligation to India.

Why India need to export vaccine?

India explained the need to export vaccine during the recent [Raisina Dialogue](#).

1. Our PM mentioned that Humanity as a whole must be at the centre of our thinking and action. Further, he explains India must think of the entire humanity, not merely of people with Indian boundary.
2. Also, the Minister of External Affairs mentions "**equitable access to vaccines is critically important**". Further, he also mentions that "no one will be safe till everyone is safe".
3. Indian PM also mentioned the concept of '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*'. (the world is one family). India desires to be a good global citizen. A similar concept is also enshrined in the Objective Resolution. (moved by Jawaharlal Nehru in the Constituent Assembly by 1946.)

So being a responsible global power, India needs to think beyond itself. So, exporting vaccine is essential as much as vaccinating Indians.

How India calculates the number of Vaccines to be exported?

Being a global citizen India needs to export vaccines but not at the cost of non-vaccinating Indians. The recent Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs speech mentions that it is decided based on three factors.

1. Quantum of domestic production.
2. The demands of the national vaccine programme
3. Requests for vaccines manufactured in India.

Questions surrounding quantum of exporting vaccine:

1. Despite the above factors, the export value is not clearly defined. There is an ambiguity on how these factors collectively help in the decision-making process of calculating vaccine exports. For example, If an independent judgment is based on domestic production and national vaccine programme, then only the leftover (remaining) vaccine has to be exported.
2. Even if it is obligatory to send vaccine to the COVAX programme, sovereign states can always **invoke national interest to override obligations**.
3. Similarly, the commercial contracts of the company can also get disregarded under existing laws to fulfil national interests.

So exporting vaccine is for the general foreign policy of India. But the government have to clarify to its people, that vaccine exports are not at the cost of their health.

22. Bringing Down the Western Hegemony on the World Order

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

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Synopsis: Developing countries must unite to meet the challenges of the US-led liberal hegemonic world order

Background

- The US hegemony started after the end of British imperialism in the aftermath of the **Suez Crisis** (1956).
- After, six decades-long control over the world order, the authority of the US has started declining.
- As a result, the world will witness a more decentralised and pluralistic global order.

Reasons why the authority of the US is declining?

- **One**, the rise of China as a rival to challenge the US hegemony. **For example**, China is the world leader in renewable energy, dominates global investment and trade, and with a military budget of \$230 billion.
- **Two**, the rising economic power of the BRICS nations that are aggressively building a parallel economic order.
- **Three**, a decline in America's image as a result of Trump-era policies. For instance,
 - Threatening to withdraw from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
 - Withdrawing from the Paris Agreement on climate change
 - Poor handling of the marginalized immigrants
 - Apathy towards Democratic values in support of ultra-nationalism and ethnic purity.
- **Four**, rising impact of **Asian Regionalism** on international trade and commerce with China spearheading Asian regionalism. Nevertheless, America will continue to play a prime role in the international world order. Because its economy and Military strengths are still unmatched, and the global dominance of its MNC's.

What role can China play to control the hegemony of the US?

1. **First**, China must strengthen the opposition to the West through the promotion of regional multilateral institutions. China's self-centered policies such as **Belt and Road Initiative** and the **Silk Road project** have raised skepticism among the other countries. Hence, China must push to harmonise regional tensions.
2. **Second**, power rivalry in a multipolar world is a possibility, and it will give rise to military conflict. For instance, Russia's assertion of power in Georgia and Ukraine, India's disputes with Pakistan and China's infiltration into India, etc., China must resist using its military might in the Power rivalry. Rather, it should focus on challenging the established western world economically.
3. **Third**, China adopted the idea of absolute sovereignty and followed the nation-state model. This helped China to rise as a global superpower. But it cannot continue to rise by following the same idea of absolute sovereignty. It needs to ensure the liberal democratic model, to gain trust from other countries. Otherwise, U.S will deepen the divide against China. For instance, the U.S is already encouraging NATO members to join the US against China.

Way forward

- The developing countries should attempt to overcome their territorial aspirations. They should prioritize cultural mediation and democratic values.

- They should increase their cooperation through mutual sharing of knowledge and signing inclusive treaties.
- This will help them to tackle the challenge posed by the western hegemony

23. An Analysis of SC Ruling on Rohingyas

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Gs2: India and its Neighborhood- Relations.

Synopsis: Supreme court recently ruled against providing protection to Rohingya refugees. It signifies a flawed understanding of the international convention to protect Refugees.

Background

- Recently an application was filed before the supreme court to release the Rohingya refugees. They were detained in a sub-jail in Jammu and were likely to be deported to Myanmar.
- The Supreme court disposed of the application.
- It signifies a lack of understanding of international law and constitutional protections for refugees.

About Rohingyas

- The Rohingyas are termed as the world's most persecuted ethnic minority by the U.N
- In August 2017, the Myanmar military launched a clearance campaign in the Rakhine state (home to the ethnic Rohingya).
- As many as 7,50,000 Rohingyas fled to the neighboring states to escape a military crackdown and brutality.

India and Rohingyas

1. Nearly 40,000 Rohingyas who were feared of Genocide entered India and got settled in Refugee camps.
2. Recently, the home ministry had issued circulars to states sharing borders with Myanmar to identify, detain and deport Rohingyas back to Myanmar.
3. Following this, few states withdrew their support to provide food, shelter, or even essential medical care to the refugees.
4. In Jammu and Kashmir after a biometric verification drive, over 170 Rohingya refugees were detained despite having **UNHCR refugee cards**.
5. The Indian government labeled them as illegal economic migrants and perceived them as a national security threat. They are also excluded from the Citizenship Amendment Act.
6. In the past, India has differentiated illegal migrants and Refugees in its treatment of Afghan, Sri Lankan, or Tibetan refugees.
7. However, lack of consideration over Rohingyas as refugees is a disservice done to thousands of lives who are already affected by **Ethnic cleansing**.

What arguments are given by the supreme court?

- **First**, SC held that refugees cannot invoke Article 32 right. However, the constitutional safeguards of Articles 14 and 21 are equally available to every person, including refugees.
- **Second**, the court distanced itself from commenting on the genocide happening in Myanmar. The court distanced itself despite the International Court of Justice (ICJ) observation that the Rohingya had suffered genocide.

- **Third**, the court ignored India's binding commitment to **non-refoulement** and obligations in prohibiting genocide. India has ratified the Convention on **Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide** in 1959.
 - **Principle of Non-Refoulement:** It prevents expulsion of a refugee where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.
- **Fourth**, allowing Rohingyas to get deported is a breach of Article 21 and against the Gujarat High Court ruling In **Ktaer Abbas Habib Al Qutaifi v Union of India**. Even, Delhi High Court in **Dongh Lian Kham v Union of India** (2016) held the same view.
 - According to the Delhi and Gujarat High court, the Principle of Non-Refoulement protects the life and liberty of a human being irrespective of his nationality.
- **Fifth**, the court stated that petitioners' claim to a right against deportation should be seen along with the **right to reside**. Under Article 19 right to reside is only available to citizens. But Rohingyas had never asked for the right to reside. Rather they have prayed for the **right to life** to reside in a camp and the **right to liberty** to protect them from arbitrary arrests, harassment, and intimidation.

24. The US Afghan Strategy Fails to Control Taliban

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Synopsis: The US Afghan strategy to pull out the US troops without any settlement leaves the Taliban stronger.

Introduction:

In 2020, the Trump administration signed a deal with the Taliban to pull off US troops from Afghanistan. Following that, the current President Joe Biden upheld the agreement and agrees to pull off US troops. But there is no settlement reached between the Afghan government and the Taliban. It leaves the Afghan government as a vulnerable stakeholder.

Background of the US Afghan strategy :

- The U.S. and Taliban signed an agreement for "Bringing Peace to Afghanistan" on February 29, 2020, at Doha. (also called Doha agreement).
- [Features of Doha Agreement](#)
 - **Troops Withdrawal:** The US and NATO will withdraw their troops from Afghanistan. All the troops will be out of Afghanistan within 14 months. The withdrawal will start on May 1, 2021, with a full withdrawal by September 11.
 - **Taliban:** Taliban will not allow any of its members to use the soil of Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies.
 - **Prisoners:** Exchange of prisoners between the Afghan government and the Taliban will be done to build trust.
 - **Sanctions Removal:** As per the Doha agreement, US and UN sanctions on the Taliban leaders will be removed.

The US Afghan strategy under Joe Biden:

1. After becoming President Joe Biden ordered a review of the U.S.'s Afghan strategy. This includes the implementation of the Trump-Taliban deal(Doha Agreement).
2. There was also speculation that the current President will delay the implementation of the Doha Agreement. It will have to wait until there is a political settlement between the Afghan government and the Taliban. This is because of the following reasons.

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- a. The Biden administration also actively pursued to establish a peace plan between the Afghan government and the Taliban.
- b. Under this, the US also initiated an **UN-led regional peace conference**. It is scheduled to take place in Ankara, Turkey, in the next week.
3. But the Taliban has made it clear that it will not participate in the conference. Further, they also threatened to step up attacks if the US did not meet the May 1 withdrawal deadline. So, the US president upheld the Doha Agreement.

Vulnerability of Afghan Government:

1. There is an ambiguity with the **peace conference**. It is not clear whether the peace conference will go through without the Taliban's participation. If it is without the Taliban participation then there is no point in conducting it at all.
2. After September, the Afghan government will not get troop support from the US and NATO. The Afghan government will be on its own to fight the Taliban. The Afghan government depend on US forces driving out the Taliban in the past.
 - For example, whenever the Taliban overran cities, U.S. airpower was crucial in driving them back.
3. The country is also witnessing a series of targeted killings of journalists, activists and other civil society members opposing the Taliban. So, with US and NATO troops are gone this will intensify as the Afghan government is not capable to control the Taliban.

So, Once the Americans are gone, the balance of power will shift in favour of the Taliban.

Hope for Afghan government:

1. Already, The US promised that it would continue **remote assistance** to the Afghan government.
2. The role of regional players such as Russia, China and India is also crucial in deciding the Afghan's future.

Despite that, the US Afghan strategy not only lost the war, but it also lost the process of withdrawal also. As there is **no clear peace settlement and peace roadmap** between the Taliban and the Afghan Government. This leaves the Taliban a stronger force in Afghanistan.

General Studies Paper - 3

General Studies - 3

1. Need for a robust Personal Data Protection Bill

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs-3: Basics of Cyber Security

Synopsis: Some concerns in the draft **Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019** needs to be addressed to make it more effective.

Background

- After the Pandemic, many people are participating in the digital economy. For example, online purchase of groceries, telemedicine, e-education, etc.,
- During the same period, the number of personal data breaches from major digital service providers has increased. For example, The recent alleged data breach at **MobiKwik** (data of 9.9 crore users at risk).
- Hence, robust data protection regulations are necessary to prevent such events and the existing data protection regulations in India have become inadequate.
- The K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd) v. Union of India case, established the right to privacy as a fundamental right. Thus, a more robust data protection legislation is desirable.
- Currently, a revised version of **The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019**, is under scrutiny by a Joint Parliamentary Committee. It can provide adequate protection to users and their personal data.

What are the issues in the existing data protection regulations?

In India, at present, data protection is governed by the Information Technology Act, 2000, and various other sectoral regulations. However, they are inadequate because of the following reasons,

1. First, by obtaining users' consent to processing personal data, entities are able to override the data protection rules.
 - This is problematic because users might not understand the terms and conditions or the implications of giving consent.
2. Second, the current framework while emphasizes **data security** it does not give importance to **data privacy**. For example, the provision on users' preferences on how his personal data can be processed is unclear. As a result, entities could use the data for purposes different to those that the user consented to.
3. Third, the data protection provisions under the IT Act does not apply to government agencies. This limits the efficacy of data protection framework since governments are collecting and processing large amounts of personal data.
4. Fourth, the current regime has become inadequate in addressing risks emerging from new developments in data processing technology.

How the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 can be more effective than the current regulations in place?

1. **First**, the Bill seeks to apply the data protection regime to both government and private entities across all sectors.
2. **Second**, the Bill emphasizes data security and data privacy equally. For example, to protect personal data the entities will have to maintain security safeguards. Similarly, to protect the data privacy of its users, the entities will have to fulfill a set of data protection obligations and transparency and accountability measures that govern how entities can process personal data.
3. **Third**, the Bill gives users a set of rights over their personal data and means to exercise those rights. For instance, a user will be able to obtain information about the

different kinds of personal data that an entity has about them and how the entity is processing that data.

4. **Fourth**, the Bill seeks to create an independent regulator known as the **Data Protection Authority (DPA)** to monitor and regulate data processing activities. The DPA will grievance redressal authority when entities do not comply with their obligations under the regime.

Concerns regarding Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019

However, there are few concerns regarding the draft bill that needs to be addressed.

1. One, it gives wide exemptions to government agencies, and thereby it dilutes user protection safeguards.
 - For example, under clause 35, the Central government can exempt any government agency from complying with the Bill. This allows Government agencies to process personal data without following any safeguard under the Bill. This could create severe privacy risks for users.
2. Two, enforcement of various user protection safeguards such as rights and remedies could be difficult for users. For instance, the Bill threatens legal consequences for users who withdraw their consent for a data processing activity. In practice, this could discourage users from withdrawing consent for processing activities that they want to opt-out.

The above-mentioned concerns should be addressed to bring a stronger and more effective data protection regime in India.

2. India should Ensure Climate Justice in Net Zero Target Debate

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution, and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

Synopsis: India needs to propose an alternative formulation that ensures Climate Justice in achieving the 'net-zero target'.

Background

- Recently, the United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate visited India. Both sides discussed briefly about their cooperation on climate change and strategy for long term priorities and long-term targets.
- Also, S. President Joe Biden's '**Leaders' Summit on Climate**' is scheduled on April 22-23. This summit is expected to set a stage for major countries to outline their climate plans.
- Today, climate action to reduce GHG emissions has become equal to achieving a **net-zero** emission target by 2050.
- However, achieving net zero emissions have created a dilemma for the fast-growing developing countries like India. Because, these countries need carbon space to develop, and they are also among the most vulnerable countries to climate change.

What are the different views on adopting Net zero emission targets in India?

- The debate on whether India should declare a net-zero target or not has centred around two alternative strategies.
 - One view supports delegitimizing long-term targets and to focus on measurable near-term progress.
 - Whereas the other view argues that without long-term targets, the path to decarbonization has little value.

Which way to decide?

- Neither the short- nor the long-term targets delink from the climate action plan.
- Because a short-term target such as improvements in energy efficiency and fast penetration of electric vehicles cannot substitute a clear long-term target. Also, avoiding net zero emission targets will make India look like a climate laggard.
- Rather, India should attempt to reframe the net-zero debate on the basis of **climate justice**. Climate justice ensures that countries are equitably responsible based on their past and future emission.
- This approach will facilitate economic advancement and climate responsibility on parallel lines without compromising one another.

How climate justice can be ensured?

To ensure principles of climate justice, a formula that combines **per capita income** and **aggregate emissions** is required.

1. First, high-income countries (i.e., per capita income of \$12,536 or more in 2019 prices) should achieve net-zero emissions within 15-20 Years. For instance,
 - European Union or the United States needs to achieve net-zero emissions by 2035-40, rather than 2050.
 - Whereas India, which may become a high-income economy around 2050, should need to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070.
 - Even by this method, high-income countries will have a longer transition period between peaking emissions and net-zero compared to India, according to **Council on Energy, Environment and Water report**.
2. **Second**, Countries that are not in the high-income category should aim to reduce their Aggregate emissions (historical emission + future emission) compared to high-income countries. Because this idea accounts for the advantages enjoyed by developing countries to tap into technological advances and cost reductions.
 - For example, India benefited from falling solar costs and was able to aim higher for its renewable energy ambitions.
 - This will also create the conditions for further innovation and investment in climate-friendly infrastructure, technologies, business models, and behavioral changes.
 - As climate mitigation technologies become more widely available and cheaper, all countries will be able to achieve net-zero much earlier.

Countries need both short-term and long-term targets to establish certainty of action, the credibility of promises and create incentives for markets to respond.

3. Chenab Bridge – An Icon of Indian Railways Heritage

Source- [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- **GS 3** – Economy – Infrastructure.

Synopsis – Indian Railway is building modern engineering marvels such as **Chenab Bridge** and **Anji Khad Bridge**. Decades from now, they will serve as the Railways' heritage.

Introduction-

- Over the last 160 years, railway engineers built a number of 'Mega Structures,' including railway bridges.
- The Indian Railway has 1,50,390 Bridges, out of which 702 are important, 12,256 major and 1,37,432 minor bridges.
- According to 2015 CAG report there are 36,470 Bridges which are more than 100 years old and 6,680 Bridges more than 140 years old.
- **Causey Arch in England**, designed in 1725-26, is the world's oldest surviving railway bridge.

Challenges during construction of Railway bridge in Hilly areas

Tough Terrain- Bridge building in a hilly area presents its own set of challenges. The climatic conditions, geological features, and hydrological parameters differ greatly in a hilly environment. It makes construction conditions difficult.

- Deep gorges, severely cold temperatures, rivers with bouldery beds, strong winds, landslides are some example of obstacles in building bridges in hilly areas.

Examples of modern marvel of Indian Bridge-

- **Irang Bridge** – In Manipur, Indian Railways is building **the world's tallest pier bridge** across the river Ijai. The pier bridge will be 141 metres tall surpassing the existing record of 139 metres of the Mala-Rijeka Viaduct in Europe.
- **New Pamban bridge** – Indian Railways first vertical lift rail-sea bridge. The New Pamban Bridge will be over 2 kilometers long when completed. It will allow ships and steamers to pass.
- **Bogibeel Bridge** – Bogibeel Bridge, on the Brahmaputra River in Assam, is **India's longest rail-road bridge**.
- **Chenab Bridge** – Across the Chenab river, the world's highest steel arch bridge is being built. It has a height of 359 metres from the bed level to the centre of the arch. Chenab Bridge will term as a future icon of Indian Railways heritage.

What is the difference between Tallest Bridge and Highest Bridge?

- **Tallest Bridge** – Distance from the highest portion of the bridge to the surface of the water.
- **Highest Bridge**- The highest Bridge is defined in terms of deck height. The deck height of a bridge is the maximum vertical drop distance between the bridge deck and the ground or water surface beneath the bridge span.

4. Challenges Posed by Phasing Out Coal Use in India

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution, and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

Synopsis:

India is considering a proposal to adopt a net-zero emission target. This demands a [phase-out of coal use](#) which would pose numerous challenges.

Background:

- The UN has urged wealthy nations to end coal use by 2030.
- Similarly, a private member bill was introduced in Lok Sabha in March 2021. The bill aims to adopt a net-zero emission target by 2050.
- A lot of debates after this, have **given surety of a coal use phase-out in near future**.
 - As the conversation on net-zero emissions has almost always come after or gone hand-in-hand with a coal phaseout plan.

Challenges posed by ending coal use:

1. **Energy Security:** As currently 70% of India's energy needs are fulfilled by coal. In 2019-20, the country consumed approximately 942 million tonnes (MT) of coal. Out of this, 730 MT was produced domestically.

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2. **Social Challenges:** There would be **significant job losses** post the phase-out. Coal India Limited and Singareni Collieries Company Limited employ 2.24 lakh workers. Their job loss will impact almost 9 lakh people considering a four-person household.
 - Further, a setback to workers in coal-consuming sectors like power, steel, sponge iron, etc. will also be seen.
3. **Economic Challenges:** In FY20, the Centre alone collected approximately Rs 29,200 crore in GST compensation cess from coal. The revenue from coal allows centre and states to undertake various development activities.
 - Similarly, 40 percent of total freight revenues in railways are generated from coal.
4. **Data Discrepancies:** This will hinder prudent policy formulation and adaptation plans in the future.
 - For instance, robust data on contract employees working for mine development operators (MDOs) is not available.
 - Similarly, there is a lack of data for statecraft coal and subsistence coal economies.
 - Statecraft Coal – non-legal small scale coal mines in the northeast
 - Subsistence Coal – small-scale collieries run on village commons usually bordering formal mines.
 - Data on workers' skill set, education parameters, caste, and willingness to migrate is also not available.

Way Forward:

- India must ensure adequate support for people and communities dependent on the sector. It can learn from plans of other countries like:
 - **German coal phaseout plan:** It seeks to end coal burning by 2038. It also involves an investment of more than 50 billion euros for mining and plant operators, impacted regions, and employees.
 - **US's Interagency Working Group:** It is supposed to deliver resources that will revitalise the coal, oil, and gas communities.
 - **Canada's coal phase-out plan:** As per the plan, the phase-out will happen by 2030. A **Just Transition Task Force** has been created for the welfare of dependent communities.
- The phase-out plan should also ensure social, climate, economic and environmental justice.

5. Prospects of India's Automotive industry

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Gs3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment Prospects of India's Automotive industry

Synopsis: Automotive Industry will help India achieve a \$5 trillion economy. A favourable government policy can support the Auto industry to grow by 10-12 per cent per year for the next 10 years.

Recent developments in India's automotive industry

- **Increase in Demand:** for example, in the last 3 decades passenger vehicle volume increased 15 times, the SUV 24 times, and the two-wheeler 12 times.
- **Improvement in Quality and efficiency:** The technology features, the safety, the comfort, the emissions, and the energy consumption have improved much better than 3 decades ago.
- **Developments in supply chain ecosystem:**

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- India's Indigenous supplier base has become globally competitive.
- Quality defects have been reduced by 90 percent.
- India's engineering capabilities like their ability to design, engineer, and develop world-class products completely in India, improved a lot.

This has contributed to the increase in the global rank of the industry from 16th then to 5th now.

Significance of Automotive Industry to India's economic growth

1. **First, contributes to the development of the MSME sector.** For example, The MSME share of value-addition to a car is 35 percent. Further the automotive after market provides economic opportunities to thousands of MSMEs engaged in the auto value chain.
2. **Second, boost to the manufacturing sector.** The industry contributes 6.4 percent to GDP and around 35 percent to manufacturing GDP.
3. **Third, provides employment.** It supports over 8 million jobs directly and as many as 30 million more in the value chain.
4. **Fourth, attracts significant investments.** For instance, it has attracted \$35 billion over the last 10 years.
5. **Fifth, source of foreign capital. For example,** it generates export revenue of \$27 billion that is nearly 8 percent of the total merchandise exports from India.

Suggestions to support the growth of the Automotive industry

India's automotive industry contribution to GDP is low compared to countries like Korea, Germany, Thailand, Germany, and Japan. The contribution, there, is more than 10 percent of the country's GDP. The following measures need to be taken

1. **First,** India needs to make a niche for itself in EV tech mobility through rapid localization of EV tech in the production and supply chain.
2. **Second,** need to enhance local value addition to invest more in skill development and R&D. It will make it globally competitive in cost, quality, and technology.
3. **Three,** to improve exports India needs to sign bilateral treaties to get favorable tariff regimes.
4. **Four,** Also, there is a need to rationalize the extremely high GST rates on automobiles in a phase-wise manner.
5. **Five,** the **Automotive Mission Plan 2026** released by the government needs to revise in the current context by taking inputs from the industry.

If the above steps are implemented with a will, India's automotive industry will become a \$200 billion industry with exports of \$50 billion by 2026.