

9pm

Compilation

June, 2021 (Third Week)

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General Studies Paper - 1

General Studies - 1

1. Preserving National Archives annexes of India

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- GS 1 – Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Synopsis- The government proposes to remove the National Archives of India's Annexes as a part of the [Central Vista redevelopment project](#). But the government proposal to remove the National Archives annexes required proper planning and execution to manage the process of shifting invaluable archives.

Introduction

- A group of archivists, scholars, historians, students, among others from across the world filed a petition. The petition has urged for greater transparency in the proposed removal of National Archives annexes.
- The petition also mentions that there has been **no public consultation** regarding the National Archives annexes. Further, the government proposal also **not mentioned how to manage the process of shifting invaluable archives**.

Importance of National Archives of India

The National Archives of India contains records that contained several centuries of Indian history.

- The archival records include 4.5 million files, 25,000 rare manuscripts, 100,000 plus maps, treaties, 280,000 pre-modern documents and several thousand private papers.
- It also preserved the cartography section and 1,50,000 oriental records in Persian, Arabic and Urdu.
- According to UNESCO, the National Archives birchbark and clay-coated Gilgit Manuscripts are India's oldest surviving manuscripts.
- So, The National Archives of India documents are naturally brittle and require delicate, expert handling. The loss or damage to a single object or archival record would be an irrevocable loss.

The present condition of NAI

- **Poor maintenance of Archives:** A series of articles published in The New York Times in 2012, highlighted the vulnerable state of the National Archives. The articles mention that Indian archives are exposed to humid weather, staff negligence and mishandling, and improper preservation methods. This led to ruining of national archives. The articles especially mentioned the vulnerability of letters penned by Mohandas K. Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar, Gopalkrishna Gokhale, and other eminent Indian nationalists in particular.
- At present, there is a lack of expertise to manage certain national archives. This leads to the **locking up of some rare documents** in Persian, Urdu, Arabic, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Tamil, Malayalam, and Modi (records from Maharashtra).
- **Suggestion to shift the National Archives annexes**
- **Wider public consultation is the need of the hour:** The Indian government should arrange for public consultation. For example, the Federal Government of the United States decided to move the National Archive, there were extensive public consultations. No such measures were taken in India.
- **Required careful planning and execution in moving the Archives –**

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- Experts need to produce a detailed report on how to move the contents and share it with the government.
- They should also recommend an **integrated national strategy to archival management** that includes state archives, as state archives are also in bad condition.
- **Getting adequate information from global practices:** Many best global practices are available on shifting national archives. For example, The British Library's guide on "**Moving Library and Archive Collections**" is concise and comprehensive. **India can follow such a guide to shift the national archives without any disruption.**

2. Flaws in Haryana Government's order demanding demolition of Khori Gaon Jhuggis

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS 1 – Urbanisation and related issues

Synopsis:

The Haryana government's order demanding the demolition of Khori Gaon Jhuggis is surrounded by multiple flaws. It would result in brutal violations of human rights. Therefore, the government should provide alternative land and reasonable facilities to those facing eviction.

Background:

- The Haryana government has ordered to break 10,000 jhuggis in Khori Gaon without providing any rehabilitation plan.
 - Khori Gaon is located on the Delhi-Haryana border and comes under the Faridabad Municipal Corporation (FMC) jurisdiction.
- The demolition is imperative as the jhuggis are located in a forest area and the residents don't have any ownership over them. However, the order is surrounded by multiple flaws.

Issues associated with the Order:

- **First**, it will put **unprecedented stress** on the residents, who are already facing immense uncertainties during the pandemic. Eviction may endanger the health, economic well-being, and lives of thousands.
 - Recently, a construction labourer (named Ganeshilal) committed suicide on hearing the demolition news.
- **Second**, the order **doesn't extend to big high-rise buildings** located in the same forest area. This includes The Taj Vivanta Hotel, the Sarovar Portico Hotel, the Pinnacle Business Tower, and the Radha Soami Satsang Centre.
- **Third**, it **undermines the right to shelter under Article 21** of the Indian Constitution as no prudent plan for rehabilitation is given.
 - In the **Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation case**, the Supreme Court held that it would be the duty of the state to provide the right to shelter for the poor and needy.
 - In the **Shantistar Builders case**, the Supreme Court held that the right to life includes the right to have reasonable accommodation.
- **Fourth**, it violates **India's international obligation**. The country has ratified the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights which guarantees a right to housing for all irrespective of income.

Apart from this, there exist other issues that make the situation worse for the poor dwellers.

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Other Concerning issues:

- **First**, the **cut-off date for rehabilitation** hasn't been updated by Haryana Urban Development Authority since 2010. The cut-off date was fixed as 2003 but since then massive migration has taken place in the state, but the date hasn't been updated.
 - Gujarat has a cut-off date of 2010 while Rajasthan and Bihar use 2009, and Karnataka requires just a one-year stay.
- **Second**, several of those residents who settled before the cut-off date **don't possess the requisite documents**. Thus, 90% of the 10,000 houses of the settlement of Khori Gaon will be denied rehabilitation.
- **Third**, the **multiple housing schemes of the government** including the current PM Awas Yojana have not been implemented properly.

Way Forward:

- The Haryana government should do rehabilitation of the jhuggi-dwellers prior to their removal. This would involve
 - conducting a detailed survey prior to the eviction,
 - drawing up a rehabilitation plan and
 - ensuring that upon eviction the dwellers are immediately rehabilitated
- The Haryana government should update its rehabilitation policy by learning from other states' progressive housing policies.
 - For instance, the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board Act provides for a survey, removal and resettlement plan.
 - Under this, removal is done only when land is required for a public purpose; else the jhuggis are upgraded and improved in-situ.
 - An alternate house is provided if the family is staying in the jhuggi since 2015.

General Studies Paper - 2

General Studies - 2

1. Lessons and Challenges for India after a Year of Galwan Clash

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS2– India and its neighborhood- relations.

Synopsis: Ladakh crisis has highlighted that India needs to focus on its land borders. Also, it should use its limited resources for military modernisation instead of focusing on maritime ambitions in the Indo-Pacific.

Background:

- It has been one year since the Line of Actual Control (LAC) witnessed violent clashes in Galwan valley in Ladakh.
- Although both India and China gave gallantry awards to the fallen soldiers, the details about the incident have not been made public so far.

How the government response can be measured?

- Firstly, lack of political accountability.
 - No official briefing about the situation in Ladakh has taken place in the last 13 months.
 - The Government's political strategy was basically based on denial.
- Secondly, the official excuse given was **operational security**, but the actual reason was to avoid **political embarrassment** for the government.
 - There is no record of the Cabinet Committee on Security being convened to discuss the border situation, and that is why the PM being held responsible in the view of the public for the setback.
- Thirdly, it highlighted the **failure of diplomacy and foreign policy**.
 - The crisis in Ladakh erupted months after the second informal summit with the Chinese President at Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu.

What is the current scenario in Ladakh?

1. Firstly, the current situation is **not militarily certain** in Ladakh.
 - There has been continued deployment of 50,000-60,000 soldiers.
2. Secondly, **China** still holds a **strategic advantage**.
 - The Chinese are present on the Indian side of the LAC in Gogra, Hot Springs and Demchok especially Depsang Plains.
3. Thirdly, the Indian Army is holding **weak position in negotiation** during the talks with the PLA.
4. Fourthly, **China has become a bigger security threat** for India than Pakistan.
5. Lastly, the Ladakh crisis has also exposed India's military weakness, especially in case of two front war.

What are the major implications of Ladakh crisis?

- India opened back-channel **talks with Pakistan** which led ceasefire on the Line of Control.
- The Ladakh crisis has also led the Government to **relook external partnerships**. For instance, as per U.S. military officials, it has provided intelligence and logistics support to the Indian forces in Ladakh.
- India has recognized China as a larger neighbor with better force and better technology.
- The crisis has **reduced the military importance of the Quad**, as India refused to do joint naval patrolling with the U.S. in the South China Sea.

What are the major challenges present in front of India?

- Firstly, it is **difficult for India to counter Chinese influence** in South Asia due to the mishandling of second wave of Covid-19.
- Secondly, the Chinese challenge to India is much **economic** than geopolitical.
 - For instance, after the border crisis and restrictions on Chinese companies, China displaced the U.S. to become the biggest trade partner in 2020-21.
 - India **is dependent on China** for medical equipment to fight the pandemic.
- Thirdly, Chinese incursions have shown that **deterrence has failed**. Further, India has learnt that it can no longer have simultaneous competition and cooperation with Beijing.
- Lastly, it will be difficult for India to take sides in a new Cold War between the U.S. and China and protecting its strategic sovereignty.
- India needs to reset its foreign policy choices as they will have a significant impact on the future of global geopolitics.

2. Declassification of War Histories – Challenges of Credibility

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency and Accountability

Synopsis: Challenges of credibility in the declassification of war history should be addressed. So that it can help us to analyse lessons learnt by the history and prevent future mistakes.

Background

- Recently, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced the declassification of India's war history.
- It enables the archiving, declassifying, and compiling of India's war histories, which has been overdue for a long time.
- The **Kargil Review Committee** headed by K Subrahmanyam as well as the **NN Vohra Committee** suggested the requirement of a clear-cut policy on declassification of war records.
- Further, the responsibility for declassification of records is specified in the **Public Record Act 1993 and Public Record Rules 1997**. The policy mandates that records should ordinarily be declassified in 25 years
- Declassification of Military history will help to analyse lessons learnt and prevent future mistakes.

What needs to be done to produce a credible war history document?

- **One**, in the war histories document, the directives given by political heads during war and conflicts should be compiled along with operational accounts of the Indian military.
 - However, political directives are not included. It is the reason for the Indian Army's reluctance to declassify the **Henderson Brooks Report**.
 - The report considers only operational failures during the 1962 war with China. Thus, It does not clarify the role of political leaders involved at that time.
 - On the other hand, several histories of the Vietnam War are now considered to be credible. Because researchers have had access not only to operational accounts but also to archived discussions between the political architects of the conflict.

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- **Two**, compilation and analysis of events at multiple levels i.e., headquarters, commands, and field formations need to be made accessible. Otherwise, it will not be able to provide a clear analysis of the real picture.
 - For instance, the military general and the ambassador involved in **Operation Pawan** (India's intervention in Sri Lanka from 1987-1990) were subject to, much criticism by researchers while others are left unaccountable.
 - This is because, researchers don't get access to records of discussions involving other generals, admirals and air marshals, and even Prime Minister, Defence minister, etc.,
 - In this regard, writing the official history of **Exercise Brasstacks** must be prioritized .it will highlight the fusion of decisions taken at multiple headquarters right down to the regiment and squadron level.
- **Three**, need to assign a team of dedicated researchers and historians with a mix of academics and practitioners with access to records and files.
 - Non-inclusion of dedicated researchers and historians while declassifying files will restrict the in-depth analysis on strategic decision-making, operational analyses, leadership, and lessons for the future.
- **Four**, there is a need for Digitisation and the creation of oral histories. Because the absence of digital conversion will make it difficult to trace files and physical storing of files will lead to the destruction of priceless documents.
 - A software company must be administered for digitization of files. Further, outreach must be made to individual historians, think tanks, and global repositories to share their oral history collections on contemporary Indian military history.
- **Lastly**, declassification of files should involve the writing of both the successful and failed operations with due sensitivity. In this context, the following war histories should be given priority.
 - The Nathu La skirmish of 1967
 - The Lightning Campaign' in the Eastern Theatre during the 1971 War
 - Operation Meghdoot (Siachen)
 - Exercise Brasstacks
 - Operation Falcon (Sumdorong Chu).
 - Operation Pawan

3. Issues in Vaccine Procurement Policy

Source: [Click Here](#)

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

Synopsis:

The recent decision of the Centre to solely procure the vaccines for the states has been welcomed by experts and healthcare professionals. However, retaining a 25% quota towards the private sector seems inappropriate and should be reconsidered.

Background:

- The union government has again taken the responsibility for procuring vaccines for the states under the liberalised vaccine policy.
- Nonetheless, experts have objected to retaining the 25% procurement quota for the private sector.

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Issues associated with 25% quota:

- **First**, the private sector possesses **fewer vaccination centres than its approved procurement quota**. This may create a demand-supply mismatch and result in inequitable distribution.
- **Second**, the quota is based on a **mistaken assumption of an inflated 'middle class'**. The assumption is that 25% of the population is willing and able to pay for a commodity for which social benefits exceed private benefits.
 - However, in reality, the affluent form only a small fraction of the uppermost 25% of our population.
- **Third**, markets tend to under-produce commodities having significant positive externalities. This is true for preventive measures like vaccines which have lower private demand than curative services.
 - Hence, it would be very **difficult to generate demand** for vaccinating in private hospitals.
- **Fourth**, the top 25% have better access to government vaccination centres. They may choose to get free vaccination, which may **have a 'crowding out' effect for the poorer sections**.
- **Fifth**, it would **not be possible to attain herd immunity even if 60-80% of the population gets vaccinated**. As there would be the existence of grave disparities along geographic and socioeconomic lines.

Way Forward:

- The government should **increase its share of procurement by reducing the 25% quota** for the private sector.
 - The loss of revenue to vaccine producers from differential pricing of the private sector can be compensated by increased support through Government subsidies.
- The government should refrain from an **'all or none approach'** towards the private sector. Where some governments often impose unreasonable and unfavorable pricing restrictions and other governments give too much freedom. There is a need for a balanced approach.
- The focus must be on **creating a strategic purchasing framework** that could utilize the strengths of the private sector which includes innovative processes and efficiency.
- It must engage with both small and big private players, and create a more **decentralized and accountable** procurement system.

4. G7 Summit Presents a Template for Indian Engagement With the West

Source: [Click Here](#)

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

Synopsis:

The recent meeting of G7 countries was attended by India as a guest country. The meeting provided a template for Indian engagement with the West based on shared democratic values and mutual cooperation.

Background:

- The recent summit of G7 countries took place in Cornwall, England from 11-13th June 2021. India, Australia, South Korea, and South Africa were invited as guest countries for the Summit.

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- A **joint statement on Open Societies** was adopted. The statement reaffirms and encourages the values of freedom of expression, both online and offline.
 - It recognizes freedom as a virtue for safeguarding democracy and allowing people to live free from fear and oppression.

Significance of the summit:

- Indian Participation shows it is a natural ally of the G-7 and its partners. Further, laying emphasis on shared democratic values that bind India with the West shows a **greater willingness to cooperate with India**.
- The summit can be seen as the **beginning of institutionalization** of India's cooperation with the West.
- The joint statement on open societies shows a **willingness to construct an alliance of democratic countries**. This can be leveraged as a **common platform to counter China's assertiveness** over India and the western countries.
- It also shows the **revived importance** of the grouping in comparison to the G20. The revival has been on account of China's rise in the global economic order and rising U.S-China and U.S-Russia rivalry.

Relations between India and West:

- **India and U.S:** The relations were not very conducive during the Cold War. The 1998 nuclear test saw the imposition of sanctions by the U.S over India.
 - However, prudent efforts have been made since 1998 to improve the relations based on the shared commitment to democratic values.
 - The Indian government supported the U.S's initiative on **building a global community of democracies**. It later joined the Bush Administration in promoting a **Global Democracy Fund** at the UN.
 - The recent deterioration of US-China and Indo-China relations induced both countries to further improve their bilateral relations.
- **India and Europe:** The improvement in Indo-U.S relations didn't automatically compute into broader warmth towards the West.
 - However, this position began to change in the last few years, as Delhi embarked on an expansive engagement with Europe.

Way Forward:

- The grouping can be used to reorient global supply chains and reduce dependency on Chinese products. It can be used to initiate a fresh inquiry into the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic in China.
- India should participate in the grouping for ensuring a peaceful Indo-Pacific, mitigating climate change and prudently managing the Covid pandemic.
- Further, there is a need for sustained consultations based on democratic values between India and the West over new challenges posed by digital technologies. This includes radicalization, disinformation, electoral interference, cyberattacks, and the role of large social media companies.

5. Achievements of India's Vaccination Drive

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus:

Synopsis: The [COVID-19 vaccination drive](#) demonstrates that India has become [Atmanirbhar](#) in vaccination campaigns of the future.

Introduction:

Recently, the Indian Prime Minister talked about the past vaccination campaigns in India. He mentioned that earlier India has to wait for decades to procure vaccines from foreign countries. As they need to complete their vaccination programs first before selling vaccines to countries like India.

Furthermore, indigenous manufacturing of vaccines not only started late but also fell short of the demand in India for a long time. This forced the government to continue relying on imports.

Delayed vaccination drives for Polio:

Infectious diseases posed an enormous challenge to Independent India. This along with the delayed vaccination drives took countless lives. For example,

- The **Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) and Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV)** were licensed abroad in **1955 and 1961, respectively**. But it took two decades for India to start [polio vaccination drives](#).
- The OPV was introduced in India through the **Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI)** in urban and rural populations in 1978 and 1981, respectively.
- Prior to this EPI programme, India witnessed **more than 10,000 officially recorded cases of polio annually**.
- Moreover, India had to **rely on imports for both OPV and IPV**.
 - The OPV was produced by the Pasteur Institute of India, Tamil Nadu, but the Health Ministry closed down this unit in 1974.
 - The IPV could not be manufactured as it was licensed only in 2006.

Other examples of delayed vaccination drives:

This is just one example. But the **majority of Indian vaccination drives followed this pattern only**.

- **Delayed vaccination drives for Hepatitis B**
 - India started **mass vaccination for Hepatitis B two decades after commercial availability of the vaccine** in the U.S. in 1982.
 - The Hepatitis B vaccination was **introduced in India's [Universal Immunisation Programme in 2002](#) only**. Even then also, it was introduced only in 14 cities.
- **Delayed vaccination drives for [smallpox](#)**
 - In 1962, almost a decade after North America and Europe eradicated smallpox, India launched the **National Smallpox Eradication Program**.
 - India had an adequate stock of domestically produced low-potency liquid vaccine. But for the **highly potent freeze-dried vaccine**, India completely depended on the Soviet Union and the World Health Organization (WHO)
 - Further, India also had to rely on the WHO for bifurcated needles required for the smallpox vaccine.
 - This led to **higher disease outbreak in certain regions**. For example, States like Bihar and West Bengal witnessed a smallpox outbreak in 1974 which led to the death of close to 31,000 people.

India's vaccination drive at present:

India **drastically reduced the shortage of indigenously manufactured vaccines**. This led to reduced dependence on other countries for India's Covid-19 vaccination drives.

- **Increased manufacturing capability:** In a single day, up to 4.3 million beneficiaries received the COVID-19 vaccines and India already administered more than 25 crores of Covid-19 doses.
 - India is **one of the few countries across the globe with an indigenously developed vaccine**.
 - Indian companies not only fulfill the domestic demand for bifurcated needles but also **supplying syringes for COVID-19 vaccination to countries**.
- **Reduced geographical limitation:** At present, India's Covid-19 vaccination drives not focused on a particular region. Instead, citizens across the country are simultaneously getting vaccinated.
- **Eliminated global-domestic time gap:** India started its vaccination drives at par with the developed countries. Covishield and Covaxin, manufactured in India, have been available to the people since January 16, 2021.
- COVID-19 vaccination drive demonstrates that India has become Atmanirbhar in vaccination against infectious diseases. Further, the government also decided to conduct free of cost vaccination drives. This marks a complete shift in India's future vaccination drives.

6. Electoral Funding Lacks Transparency

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2: Election and related issues

Synopsis: Electoral funding of political parties lacks transparency. Over the years, many steps are taken by the government to make it a more secret affair.

Introduction:

In 2014, the **Delhi High Court held** that both main national parties (Congress and BJP) were **guilty of accepting donations illegally**. They both accepted donations from companies registered in India but whose controlling shareholders was a foreign company. The court held that this is a **violation of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1976**.

- In 2016 and 2018, the **government amended the FCRA** through the annual Finance Bills. These bills exempt political parties from the scrutiny of funds they have received from abroad since 1976. This enabled new and regressive pathways that afford full anonymity to corporate and foreign political donors.
- In 2017, the amount of **anonymous cash donations to political parties was reduced from ₹20,000 to ₹2,000** to ensure greater transparency in political funding. However, the **introduction of electoral bonds introduced a new form of anonymity**. It led to the funding of thousands of crores of anonymous donations.

Read more: [Electoral Bond and its challenges – Explained, Pointwise](#)

Challenges in electoral funding:

- The electoral funding drastically **reduced public and legislative oversight**. **Only the ruling party** (via the State Bank of India (SBI)) has a **full account of all donations received by electoral bonds**. The ruling party can monitor donations to itself and to Opposition parties.
 - Even the **Parliament, the Election Commission, and the Opposition parties do not have this information, nor do the public**.
- Earlier, only profit-making domestic companies were allowed to contribute to political parties; now **loss-making companies can also contribute**.

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- Earlier, foreign companies or companies where the controlling stake was held by a foreign company, couldn't contribute. Now they can contribute by a foreign company operating in India or by a foreign entity through a shell company.

Public Interest Litigation (PIL) on Electoral funding:

- For the above-mentioned reasons, the Association of Democratic Reforms filed a case in SC to declare electoral bonds unconstitutional.
- However, SC **refused to stay the sale of electoral bonds** prior to the Assembly elections in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.
- Instead, the court listed **several documents to establish a paper trail on donations**. But this is not practically feasible.

Challenges with cross-checking Electoral funding:

1. The full scale of registered companies is unknown. Even if registered companies filed annual financial statements, many **do not disclose political donations**.
2. **Amount of political donors in the country:** According to back-of-the-envelope calculations, there are close to 25 lakh potential donors, comprising just companies and firms. Annual reports of all these companies are not readily accessible on the website of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
 - Even if these documents are indeed available in the public domain, they will not specify donations to parties. It is notable that the Finance Bill of 2017 amended Section 182 of the companies act. It **removed the requirement for declaring political donations**.
 - Furthermore, even if a firm mentions the total political contributions through electoral bonds, it is not required to specifically name a political party.
3. Political parties also **not need to disclose their electoral bond donors**. So the cross-checking of donations is not feasible. The only requirement is the submission of annual audit reports with only aggregate amounts by political parties. However, this report too does not provide details of the total amount.

Thus, the SC's "match the following" suggestion is not practical.

Suggestions for transparent electoral funding:

- Companies and political parties should exercise **moral leadership and voluntarily disclose the identity** of recipients and donors. For example, recently, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha disclosed their donors voluntarily.

Conclusion:

The electoral funding gives **political power to companies, wealthy individual donors, and foreign entities**. They can **influence government policies through hidden donations**. This dilutes the universal franchise of one voter-one vote. So, electoral funding needs abrupt corrections to ensure universal franchise.

7. Orphaned children must be a policy priority

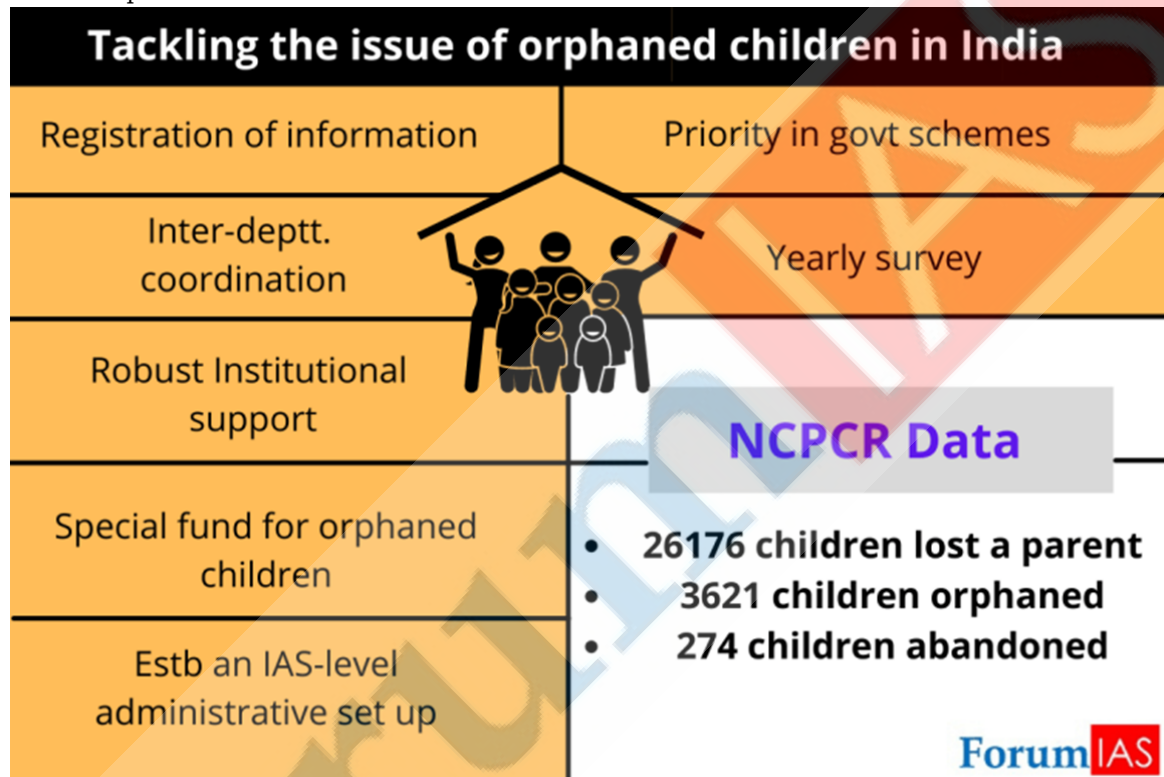
Source: [Click here](#)

Syllabus: GS2 – Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions and Bodies constituted for the Protection and Betterment of these Vulnerable Sections

Synopsis – COVID pandemic has been a nightmare, especially for orphaned children due to the deadly second wave. Government intervention is needed to help alleviate problems related to orphan care in India.

Introduction

- Even before the COVID pandemic, society generally ignored orphan children and their problems.
- People were discriminatory towards them. Their socio-economic condition, and multiple levels of oppression that they have to face routinely, put them in a disadvantaged position.
- But their plight has been made worse by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
- It's said that never waste a good crisis. Hence, the government can take this pandemic as an opportunity to design and implement policy-level solutions for orphan children in India.



Challenges faced by orphan children

- **Fight for Survival:** They have to fight really hard for their survival in the following two cases:
 - if relatives take no responsibility
 - if there is no relative to take responsibility
- **No support system**
 - No one to guide or provide emotional support
 - Most state govts do not allow staying beyond 18 years of age in state-supported institutions.
 - In the absence of a place to stay or a support system, many end up making wrong choices, or are drawn into a path that leads to poverty and worse.
- **Problem in arranging govt documents** like Aadhaar, PAN, death certificates of parents etc.

Also Read: [Orphaned children in India](#)

- How can govt tackle the issue?
- The government is legally bound by the Constitution to ensure the welfare of children. Following are some policy-level solutions that govt can implement:

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- **Yearly survey:** A yearly survey at district and block levels to be done immediately
- **Registration of information** about the child's family and the property of the child
- Supply of government documents on time
- **Healthy institutional support system:** Provision of a healthy institutional environment to orphaned children based on the principles of freedom, equality, fraternity, and social justice
 - **Staying beyond 18 years of age** should be allowed. Maharashtra government has changed the rule and allowed their stay in hostels till the age of 23
- **Priority in government schemes and programs**
- **Inter-departmental coordination:** Coordination of women and child development department that is responsible for the welfare of children with other departments like finance, higher education help and skill development, etc.
- **Separate representation:** As a special case, separate representation of orphan children at district and state levels and; special care for a girl child.
- **Fund for orphan children:** A permanent fund on the lines of a CM welfare fund
- **The establishment of an IAS-level administration set-up** to cater to the issues of orphan children permanently is also urgent.

Also Read: [How can govt support COVID orphans?](#)

- These policy changes are important for inclusive long-term planning and if the state wishes to effectively implement programmes for children.

Conclusion

There is a grave need, now more than ever, to stand with orphaned children throughout their life. The support of the government is essential in their lives so that they can get rightful opportunities to lead a quality life and participate in society.

Also Read: [Why foster care needs to be expanded?](#)

8. Legal and moral issues in Tarun Tejpal Case

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS2- Issues related to the functioning of Judiciary

Synopsis: The Tarun Tejpal acquittal in sexual harassment cases is based on preconceived notions of court and victim shaming. This decision involves legal and moral issues. It will deter women from fighting crimes against them.

Background:

- Tarun Tejpal is a former editor of a news magazine, who was charged with sexually assaulting an employee in 2013.
- The recent judgment of a trial court of Goa acquitted Tarun Tejpal.
- The court also held the investigating officer responsible for the lapses in investigation.
- Also, the Solicitor General of India said that the lower court's judgment lacked sensitivity regarding crimes against women.

The acquittal has raised some serious question of law, judicial fairness and justice delivery.

What are the major concerns associated with the judgment?

1. Firstly, **lack of awareness of criminal laws by the court.** There are some changes made in the Evidence Act as per the recommendations of the 172nd report of the Law Commission of India to protect **survivor's right to a fair trial.** There are:

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- The defense is not permitted to ask questions to a witness about the general immoral character of the victim and cite it **as evidence**.
 - The Supreme Court has said that the purpose of cross-examining a survivor of rape is not to humiliate her.
 - Therefore, questions about the past sexual life of the survivor should not have been permitted by the trial court.
2. Secondly, the court's interpretation is stereotypical and shows the **patriarchal mindset** of the judiciary.
- The court has no right to judge anyone's conduct, as every individual behaves differently under the different circumstances.
 - **In Aparna Bhat and Ors. Vs the State of Madhya Pradesh & Ors. (2021)**, SC has specifically said that courts should not express any stereotyped opinion during proceedings or in judicial order about women.
 - Therefore, the judiciary must be careful while creating standards based on **preconceived notions** about how a victim should behave.
3. Thirdly, only **omissions that lead to conflicting versions of the incident** made before the police and the court should amount to contradiction.
- It is not possible to share the same graphic details of the sexual assault.
 - Therefore, if the statement given during the trial is **substantially consistent**, it should not be rejected by terming them as untrustworthy.
4. Fourthly, the judgment is **against the spirit of the law**. Because anything such as the survivor's husband's name, her email address, etc. should not have been mentioned in the judgment.
- As per the Indian Penal Code, disclosure of identity of the survivor of rape by anyone is punishable under Section 228-A.
 - Also, the Supreme Court in **State of Punjab vs Ramdev Singh (2003)** held that the name of the victim should not be mentioned in the judgments.
5. The judgment sets a bad precedent. Though the law should be applied equally to everyone, it should not show lack of sensitivity towards the victim.

9. Mistakes in the U.S's Afghan Policy

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis: This article outlines the strategic mistakes in the U.S's Afghan policy. It has now left America to compromise on its goals of ending '**terror in Afghanistan**'.

Background

- The U.S invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 to target its enemy, al-Qaeda, after September 11 attacks. After the invasion, the U.S declared to destroy the Taliban too, which was supporting al-Qaeda.
- The Taliban is an indigenous militancy with deep roots in Afghanistan's Pashtun majority.
- After 20 years, the Biden administration has finally decided to withdraw the U.S troops from Afghanistan before the deadline of 11/09/2021.
- However, it has to be said that the American goals, to evict the Taliban from Afghanistan and to rebuild a centralised "democratic" state in Afghanistan, are not achieved.
- And now, the U.S. is leaving Afghanistan to the mercy of the Taliban, in return for assurances that they would not assist the terrorists such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

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- On the other hand, the Power and influence of the Taliban is strengthening day by day. They are now scattered across Asia and Africa, from eastern Afghanistan to the Sahel region.

What went wrong with the U.S's Afghan policy?

The U.S. made three fundamental mistakes, which led to the superpower's humiliating exit from this Afghanistan.

- **One, the US, overlooked the History of Afghanistan.**
 - For instance, Britain and the Soviet Union that invaded Afghanistan in the 19th and 20th centuries faced disastrous consequences.
 - Both the countries, Britain due to the Afghan resistance, and Russia due to Mujahideen resistance were forced to pull back their troops.
 - The U.S given the mistakes the British and the Soviets committed, could have had a strategically focused campaign, targeting its enemy, al-Qaeda.
 - But the U.S., driven by **neoconservative globalism** wanted to topple the Taliban and rebuild a centralised "democratic" state in Afghanistan. This was their first mistake.
 - Instead, the U.S should have attacked the terrorists, destroyed their networks, and then withdrawn.
- **Two, the Iraq invasion by the U.S before getting their job done in Afghanistan was their second mistake.**
 - After the U.S gained control over the Taliban and al-Qaeda, the U.S. had a chance to stabilize the country with help from its different factions and leave.
 - But the U.S decided to stay back to defeat the Taliban. After vowing to defeat them, the U.S. launched the Iraq invasion to topple Saddam Hussein.
 - The U.S relied on Pakistan's tactical support for its war on terror, overlooking the fact that Pakistan had deep strategic ties with the Taliban.
 - But Pakistan played a double game by supporting the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan while at the same time offering refuge and support to the Taliban.
 - When the U.S. declared victory in Afghanistan prematurely and went on to invade Iraq in 2003, it became easier for Pakistan to assist the Taliban's regrouping. The Taliban made a steady comeback in Afghanistan's hinterlands.
 - By the time the U.S. shifted its focus back to Afghanistan, after defeating the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria the Afghan war had already been lost.
- **Three, the U.S conceding to the Taliban's terms to pull back its troops was their third mistake.**
 - The presence of U.S troops ensured that the conflict between the Afghan Government and the Taliban was in a stalemate.
 - The U.S. should have used this stalemate, coupled with mounting pressure on Pakistan, to extract concessions from the Taliban.
 - Instead, the Trump administration went for talks with the Taliban on their terms while the Afghan government was kept out of the whole process.
 - And the U.S. struck a direct deal with the Taliban, without addressing any of the Afghan concerns. The American exit would decisively shift the balance of power in favour of the Taliban.

10. The SC ordered the closure of Italian Marines case in India

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 – Foreign Policy of India

Synopsis – What is the case of the Italian Marines, what was the conflict between India and Italy over the issue and the possible reason of delay in prosecuting the matter.

Introduction –

- After Italy deposited Rs 10 crore in compensation, the SC ordered the closure of court proceedings in India against two Italian marines accused of killing two fishermen off the coast of Kerala in 2012 after mistaking them for pirates.
- The diplomatic turbulence, legal tangle over jurisdiction between India and Italy caused the delay in resolving the Italian marine's case.

What was the dispute over the Italian Marines case?

- **India**
 - India alleged that the Italian marines on board “Enrica Lexie” had violated the freedom of navigation rights by shooting at the fishing boat.
 - As the two fishermen were killed without warning, India has jurisdiction over the matter.
 - The NIA invoked anti-piracy law, the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA).
- **Italy** – The prosecution under the SUA Convention was challenged by Italy for comparing the occurrence to a terrorist attack.
 - According to Italy, as the Indian vessel approached, the Italian marines determined that it was a pirate attack. As the fishing vessel continued to head towards the tanker despite sustained visual and auditory warnings, and the firing of warning shots into the water.
 - Italy claims the marines had been hired to protect the tanker from pirates and they were only carrying out their duties.
 - Italy also claims that the marines enjoyed sovereign functional immunity in India and Italy alone had jurisdiction to deal with them.

International tribunal's ruling-

- In 2020, the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled that the two Italian marines were on a mission for the Italian government and so should be sent to Italy, where they would face criminal charges.
- By the ratio of 3:2 votes, the Italian marines were entitled to diplomatic immunity as Italian state officers under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and that India could not exercise jurisdiction against them.
- The UN tribunal had also ruled that the Indian fishing boat and its victims were entitled to compensation as the Italian vessel, had violated the boat's right of navigation under the Law of the Sea.

Way forward-

- If India had accepted Italy's offer of compensation and a trial in its own jurisdiction sooner, the delay in prosecuting the matter could have been avoided.
- As a result, a lesson learned is that such cases should be handled with using both legal and diplomatic means to get a speedy resolution.

11. Protecting the right to dissent from UAPA

Source: [Click here](#)

Syllabus: GS2

Synopsis: The Delhi High Court granted bail to young student and activists Natasha Narwal, Devangana Kalita, Asif Tanha. The present judgement of Delhi HC will go a long way in strengthening the most important pillar of our democracy – right to protest and dissent.

Introduction

- The three young students and activists were imprisoned for over a year in connection with the riots in North-east Delhi, and the anti-CAA-NRC protests.
- They were arrested under some serious charges including those under UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act).
- Delhi HC granted them bail and explicitly stated that the foundations of our nation is unlikely to be shaken by a protest, howsoever well-organized by a tribe of college students.
- Those arrested under UAPA generally languish in jail for years without trial. If this judgment is upheld in the Supreme Court (*Delhi Police has gone to the Supreme Court on appeal against the verdict*) then it'll help other dissenters arrested under UAPA without sufficient evidence.

Also read: [UAPA explained from UPSC perspective – All you need to know!](#)

What are the problems faced by courts in granting bail under UAPA?

Under UAPA, the accused **does not have the option of anticipatory bail**. It presumes the accused guilty solely on the basis of the evidence collected. Courts usually face these two problems:

- **Legal bar on granting bail:** Firstly, Under Section 43D(5) of UAPA, there is a **legal bar on granting bail** if the court is of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the accusation against those held is *prima facie* true.
- **No detailed examination of evidence at bail-stage:** Secondly, the burden to demonstrate to the court that the accusation is untrue lies with the accused only. This has been made more problematic due to a **2019 Supreme Court judgment**. This judgment bars a detailed analysis of the evidence at the bail stage and rules that bail can be denied on “the broad probabilities” of the case.

Also read: [Status of UAPA in 2019](#)

How Delhi HC got around these two problems?

The High Court ruled that

- **Available evidence can be examined:** The bail court can look at the available evidence to satisfy itself about the *prima facie* truth of the case. In other words, there is no statutory invincibility to the prosecution case merely because the UAPA has been invoked
- **Other important remarks by the court**
- Delhi HC remarked that,
- Riots are matters concerning public order and not the security of the state. The court observed that the state, in its anxiety to suppress dissent, has blurred the line between the constitutionally guaranteed right to protest and “terrorist activity”.

Conclusion

Delhi HC judgment makes a clear distinction between those accused of offenses against the country's integrity and security on the one hand, and protesters or dissenters arrested

unjustifiably under the criteria of terrorism. This distinction shall help secure citizens two of the most sacred rights in a democracy: the right to protest and the right to dissent.

12. Pandemic-induced brain drain – Should India be worried?

Source: [Times of India](#)

Syllabus: GS 2

Synopsis: Recently, the COVID pandemic has exacerbated the brain drain problem in India but instead of obsessing over the issue of brain drain, government should be more concerned about implementing structural reforms. This will ensure that we create an environment where every last individual is able to thrive to his/her fullest potential.

Introduction

- India has wrestled with the problem of brain drain for many years. COVID pandemic has only given a turbo-boost to this phenomenon. It has amplified a pre-existing trend of high net-worth individuals leaving emerging economies for citizenship of advanced economies.
- COVID has accelerated the brain drain problem in India. Many high net-worth (HNI) individuals are leaving India for greener pastures. Well-off parents too are sending their children abroad especially USA.
- But, the real problem is a lack of investment in the people which stay in India. This needs to be resolved as a policy-priority.

What is brain drain?

It is defined as emigration of highly-skilled labor as a proportion of the potential educated labor force in sending countries.

Brain Drain from India – figures

A **Global Wealth Migration Review** report has revealed that nearly **5,000 millionaires**, or **2%** of the total number of high net-worth individuals in India left the country in 2020 alone

A 2018 bank report found that **23,000 Indian millionaires** had left the country since 2014. As per **OECD data**, around **69,000 Indian-trained doctors** and 56,000 Indian-trained nurses worked in the UK, US, Canada, and Australia in 2017.

Trend of brain drain from India

- The first big post-Independence wave of educated and/or well off Indians emigrating started in 1960s. India lost many skilled professionals in medicine, science and information technology starting as early as the 1960s to countries including the U.K., U.S. and Canada.
- India saw the **reverse migration** of skilled IT and other professionals during the economic boom of the late 2000s. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these reversed flows have slowed down as the pace of economic growth has dropped.
 - This phenomenon of back and forth movement of skilled people in a globalized world has been termed **brain circulation**.

Also read: [Brain Drain in the health sector](#)

Should India be worried?

No. As per author, India should not be worried about this recent increase in brain drain because of the following reasons:

- **No problems from brain drain:** Emigration from India that began in 1960s continued all through the post-reforms era. Despite this India has witnessed growth

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in its economy. Even the economic crisis of 1990s happened due to Indian socialism and not due to brain drain from India.

- **Indian diaspora helps:** Indian diaspora acts as a soft power multiplier for the country, as well as a network through which both ideas and investment arrive here.
- **What should India focus upon?**
- Instead of worrying too much about brain drain, India should lay emphasis on the following:
- **Responding positively to the pandemic-induced crisis:** GoI and states should respond to the pandemic-induced economic downturn and implement necessary structural reforms.
- **Focus on education and employment:** India has too few institutions of excellence and of professional studies. Getting into 'good' Indian colleges is often harder than getting into US universities. No country has gone up the wealth ladder without widespread availability of both good public education and regular, skilled employment.

Conclusion

Building world-class public education infrastructure and coupling it with structural reforms is the way forward because we have enough people. All we need to do is to focus on leveraging this asset. Brain drain is not the actual problem, brain waste is.

13. Delhi High Court's order upholds 'Right to be Forgotten'

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Significant provisions of Indian Constitution

Synopsis:

Recently, in response to a petition, the Delhi High Court ordered the removal of easy access from one of its own judgments. Delhi HC upheld the petitioner's right to be forgotten to prevent post-acquittal disgrace faced by him. However, some experts have criticized the order, stating that minor modifications would have yielded better results than complete revocation.

Background:

- The Delhi HC gave temporary relief to a petitioner. He sought the removal of the judgment from leading database platforms and search engines after his acquittal.
 - The court asked search engines to remove this order from search results. It ordered the database platform to block the judgment from being accessed by search engines.
- It recognized that the petitioner may have a right to be forgotten, which must be balanced with the right of the public to access courts of record.
- This is the first instance of a court ordering the removal of access to its complete final judgment from certain spaces.

About Right to be forgotten:

- It is a right to remove private information about a person from public access.
- It allows an individual to determine the development of their life in an autonomous way and prevents perpetual stigmatization for past conduct.
- In 2017, the Supreme Court held it to be a part of the Right to privacy. The court deduced that a lot of personal information may serve no "legitimate interest", was unnecessary or irrelevant and hence can be taken down.

Issues associated with Right to Forgotten:

- **First**, there are **no concrete provisions or guidelines** to determine the ambit of 'Right to be forgotten'. It is dependent on the discretion of individual courts and the status of individuals. For instance, a public figure may find greater difficulties in exercising this right.
- **Second**, there is **no clarity on information uploaded by 3rd parties** like a journalist or news agency. There is a broad consensus that one should be empowered to remove the information upheld by him/her over the internet.
 - However, removing 3rd party information may muzzle fair criticism of government policies and the media's right to report.
 - U.S Supreme court in **New York Times Co. v. Sullivan (1964)**, ruled that public interest reporting may continue without fear as long as it did not intentionally or recklessly make outright false statements.
- **Third**, the removal of complete judgments **may not allow public scrutiny of judicial performance** to ascertain the fairness and objectivity of the administration of justice.
- **Fourth**, the removal sometimes **creates a Streisand effect**. It is a social phenomenon that occurs when an attempt to hide, remove or censor information has the unintended consequence of further publicizing that information.

Way Forward:

- As per some experts, narrow tailoring of the judgment would have been more beneficial than forbidding access to its complete judgment.
- The court could have ordered that the name and personal details of the petitioner be censored while maintaining public access to the judgment itself.

Thus, the right to be forgotten must be studied along with the concepts of fair criticism and accountability.

14. Balancing Civil rights and Anti-terror laws

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS2: Structure, Organization, and Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

Synopsis: The objective of UAPA is to check terrorism, and its misuse is against the ethos of democracy.

Background:

- Recently, Delhi High Court granted bail to activists who were undertrial for their alleged involvement in the 2020 Delhi riots.
- The judgment is a judicial opposition to the authoritarian regime of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act ("UAPA").
- Also, the UAPA is one of the most abused laws in India today.

How UAPA is being misused?

1. Firstly, it **restricts the right to bail** of the accused. Section 43(D)(5) of this Act prevents the release of any accused person on bail if:
 - The court is of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation against such a person is **prima facie true (what appears to be true at first)**.
2. Secondly, the **adversarial system of criminal justice** causes further delays in overburdened courts.
 - It is based on the testing of evidence through **cross-examination**.
 - The court considers which side's evidence is more persuasive.

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- In higher profile cases such as the Delhi riots case, where the record is bulky, trials can take many years. It leaves the accused in prison for years.
- 3. Thirdly, section 43(D)(5) is against **natural justice and rule of law**.
 - In ordinary cases, both sides produce evidence and the court cross-examine them. But when **Section 43(D)(5)** is applied, the court looks at the prosecution's evidence, which requires that bail be denied.
 - It forces the court to make decisions on guilt or innocence based on one side's unchallenged story.
 - It deprives individuals of their freedom for years.
- 4. That is why in the case of Section 43(D)(5) when police prepare the charge sheet, it is highly difficult to get bail until there are no internal contradictions.

Why the judgment holds significance?

1. Firstly, pendency in courts and increasing burden leaves under-trials in prison.
 - That is why bail is the only safeguard and **guarantee of the constitutional right to liberty**.
2. Secondly, the Bench of Justices observed that Section 43(D)(5) is against the **basic principles of criminal justice**.
3. Thirdly, the court suggested **that criminal offenses must be specific** in their terms, to protect the innocent.
 - To attract the provisions of the UAPA, the charge sheet must reveal factual, individualised, and particular allegations against the individual.
 - It should specifically link the accused to terrorist activities.
4. Fourthly, UAPA applications should be **limited to terrorism-related cases only**.
 - Court also said "Terrorism" is a term of art, and not a word that can be thrown around loosely.
5. **Lastly**, the court also highlighted the significance of the right to protest and to dissent
6. Indian courts have to play an important role in finding a balance between citizens' civil rights and anti-terrorism legislation. It is the responsibility of the judiciary to keep a check on the executive's tyranny.

15. Marriage Rights of the LGBTQIA+ community

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS2: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States

Synopsis: India needs to look beyond the traditional concept of marriages to recognise marriages irrespective of gender identity and sexual orientation. Thus, India can recognise the marriage rights of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Background:

- Recently, a case related **to the question of same-sex marriages** came up before the High Court of Delhi.
- But the Union Government requested the court to adjourn it on the ground that it is not urgent during the second wave of COVID-19 cases.
- Court and the government ignored the suffering of the community without the legal protection of marital relationships.
- In India, marriages are observed under **personal laws**. Such as the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872, Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937.
- However, Same-sex and queer marriages are not legally recognised in India.

Read More: [Madras High Court guidelines for mainstreaming LGBTQIA+ community](#)

How marriage rights of the LGBTQIA+ community evolved globally?

- **South Africa:** In 2005 South African court held that the common law definition of marriage i.e. “a union of one man with one woman” is inconsistent.
 - As a result of the verdict, the Civil Union Act, 2006 was enacted which enabled the voluntary union of two persons above 18 years of age.
- **Australia, the reforms by Honourable Michael Kirby in 2007:** the Federal Government enacted the Same-Sex Relationships Act 2008 to provide equal entitlements for same-sex couples in matters of social security, employment and taxation.
- **The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 of England:** It enabled same-sex couples to marry in civil ceremonies or with religious rites.
- **Obergefell vs Hodges case, USA:** In 2015, the Supreme Court decided that the fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to same-sex couples.

Read more: [Need to ban the Conversion therapy of the LGBTQIA+ community](#)

Judgements in India recognising marriage rights of the LGBTQIA+ community:

In India also, there is judicial guidance available to recognize same sex marriages.

- **Arunkumarand Sreeja vs The Inspector General of Registration and Ors, 2019:** The High Court of Madras interpreted the term ‘bride’ under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and expanded its scope.
 - It says a ‘bride’ includes transwomen and intersex persons identifying as women.
 - Therefore, a marriage between a male and a transwoman can be valid under the Act.
- **Shafin Jahan vs Asokan K.M. and Others AIR 2018 (Hadiya case):** The Court upheld that the right to choose and marry a partner comes under right to freedom.
 - Court also observed that marriage lie within a core zone of privacy and society has no role to play in determining our choice of partners.
- It shows that **bar to same-sex and queer marriages are violative of Articles 14, 15 and 21** of the Constitution of India. Further, the concept of marriage that it is a bond between “a biological man and a biological woman” **can not be defended.**

Way forward:

- The marriage laws must be expanded to include all gender and sexual identities.
- **Reform in the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955** is needed to bring self-respect marriages under its domain.
 - Self-respect Marriages were legalised in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry through amendments to the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
 - Self-respect marriages have done away with priests and religious symbols such as fire or saptapadi. Instead, the solemnisation of self-respect marriages only requires an exchange of rings or garlands or tying of the mangalsutra.
 - It will help in breaking caste-based and gender-based practices.
- The recognition of the unequal laws discriminating against the LGBTQIA+ community and rectifying them is the need of the hour to make the world more inclusive and equal.

16. [Settling claims of rival factions in a party symbol dispute](#)

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS2 – Functions and Responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies

Synopsis: How Election Commission decides on party symbol disputes?

Background

- Recently, there has been a split within the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) and both the factions are claiming for the same party symbol.
- In the case of deciding the recognized party among rival factions, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has the final say.
- ECI has been empowered with quasi-judicial powers under **section 15 of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968**.
- How Election Commission decides on party symbol disputes?
- **Approach EC:** The EC **can not take suo motu cognizance** of such cases. It can act only when at least one party approaches it with its claim.
- **Evidence produced:** Once a claim has been raised with EC, it starts the proceedings by giving notice to the other faction to give its version. Both parties are asked to **produce evidence** in support of their claim, accompanied by affidavits
- **Scrutiny by EC:** The commission will scrutinize whether, there are rival sections or groups of a recognized political party as claimed based on the information it possesses. If the commission is satisfied that there exist rival factions within a political party then it decides which faction is a recognized party.
- **Test of majority:** The EC employs **'the test of majority'** principle to decide the recognized party. The EC looks at the strength of each group, in the party's organization and in the legislatures.
 - In case EC is not able to determine the strength of rival groups based on support within the party organization, it resorts to testing the majority among elected MPs and MLAs.
- **Binding decision:** The decision of the Commission is binding and on all such rivals' sections or groups.
- In 1997 the EC introduced a new rule under which while one faction got the party symbol, the other had to register itself as a separate party.
 - The national or state party status of the new formation would be determined only on the basis of its performance in state or central elections after registration.

Also read: [Power of Election Commission of India](#)

Judicial position on the issue

- Many of the cases of split in political parties have landed in the Supreme Court. The most significant case was that of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1969 where the Supreme Court **upheld the order of the ECI** applying the test of majority (*Sadiq Ali vs ECI, 1972*).
- It was a milestone judgment for the Election Commission as the **apex court upheld the constitutional validity of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968**, giving an executive order the status of subordinate legislation.
- SC stated that *'The Commission, in resolving this dispute, does not decide as to which group represents the party, but which group is that party'*
- The Supreme Court has, time and again, upheld the test of majority in the Symbols Order to be a "valuable and relevant test" to decide a dispute between rival groups within a "democratic organization" like a recognized political party.

General Studies Paper - 3

General Studies - 3

1. Why Indian Military doctrine Should include both Sun Tzu & Kautilya?

Article – The Indian Express

Syllabus – GS3 – Security

Synopsis – In a recent address PM has called for indigenization of the national security system including that of doctrines, procedures, and customs. This shift towards indigenization shouldn't lead to the complete ignorance of foreign strategic thoughts.

Introduction

- A recent, PM address at the Commanders' Conference stressed the importance of indigenization of the national security system, not just in sourcing equipment and weapons but also in the military doctrines, procedures, and customs practiced in the armed forces i.e. the Indian armed forces doctrine.
- But, this doesn't mean that India should reject the ideas of any foreign military strategist. A balanced approach is the need of the hour.

Evolution of Indian armed forces

- Indian armed forces have evolved from the British military. Hence, they have absorbed certain legacies and war-fighting strategies from it.
- Moreover, in modern times Indian armed forces have learned equally from their large-scale interactions with armies of other countries.
- Training academies too have reformed with time. Professional military education (PME) is also upgraded after few years.

What is PME?

PME is the bedrock of military doctrine.

It is the fundamental set of principles that guides military forces. Being a flexible concept, the doctrine evolves over time. Post-implementation, the strategies in the doctrine are refined and streamlined.

It equips officers with the intellectual tools to analyze strategic problems.

Its aim is to shape leaders at most levels of leadership to be able to 'think strategically'.

Table I India: Military Education Profile

Type	Service Profile (Years)	Duration	Joint	Aim	Remarks
Pre-commission	–	2–4 years	@ Yes	Moulding cadets into officers	@ 60% joint training
Basic	0-1	6 months	No	Orientation to service profile	Service arm/specific
Junior Command	5-6	3 months	No	Command of sub-units	
Staff	9-10	1 year	Yes	Staff duties	
Senior Command	14-15	3 months	No	Battalion command	Only in Army
Higher Command	20	1 year	Yes	Command up to division or equivalent level	Conduct by each service
Higher Defence Management Course	20	1 year	Yes	Defence management at directional level	
National Defence College	28–32	1 year	@ Yes	Strategic studies and national security	@ Include civil service and foreigners

Professional military Education in India

Issue with PME

The major issue is that the up-gradation of PME is not happening consistently or with required diligence especially related to cyberspace.

Challenges and concerns

- Indigenization is good, but there is a concern that while encouraging indigenous strategic thought, inputs from “foreign” writings could be ignored.
- Producing a new indigenous doctrine at this stage would be challenging. Many developments have taken place very recently, such as: –
 - new [Department of Military Affairs](#)
 - the post of [Chief of Defence Staff](#) (CDS)
 - Creation of theatre commands

Also Read: [Ultimate Military Strength Index](#)

Suggestions

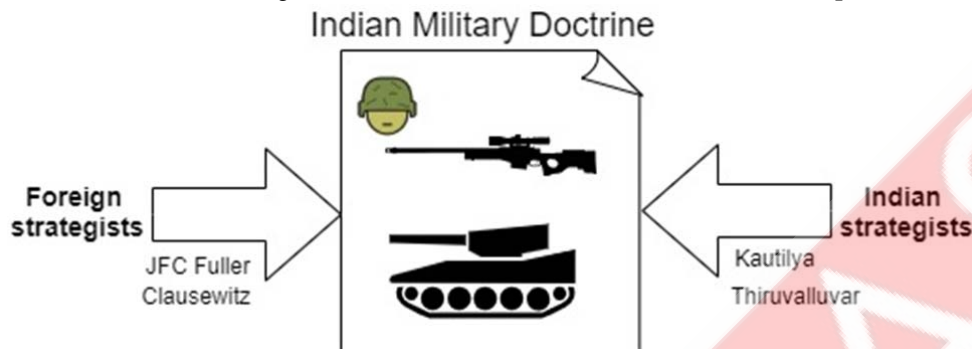
Global best practices

Military strategy doctrines of major developed countries in the world include lessons from diverse foreign resources, irrespective of their nationality.

- **UK Joint doctrine:** The 2014 UK Joint Doctrine 0-01 starts with a Sun Tzu quote:
 - “Thus, it is that in war the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory is won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and then looks for victory”. This is timeless and not country-specific.
- **US Doctrine:** Similarly, the US Army ADP1-01 Doctrine Primer commences with a quote of J F C Fuller, the British military historian,

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- *The central idea of an army is known as its doctrine, which to be sound must be based on the principles of war, and which to be effective must be elastic enough to admit of mutation in accordance with change in circumstances. In its ultimate relationship to the human understanding this central idea or doctrine is nothing else than common sense—that is, action adapted to circumstances.*



Framing the Indian Military Doctrine

Thus, India should also not emphasise for a military doctrine that is solely based on indigenous ideas.

Way forward

When it comes to learning, it should not matter whether the source of that learning is national or foreign. Hence, PM's address definitely didn't mean a complete rejection of foreign strategic thought. It simply meant to also include the teachings of our own strategic thinkers in India's military doctrine. It is true that indigenous teachings have not received proper attention in Indian military thoughts, but it would be equally illogical to exclude the teachings of foreign strategists.

- Timeless wisdom, be it from Chinese strategist Sun Tzu or the German thinker Clausewitz, are equally valuable as Kautilya's Arthshastra or Thiruvalluvar's Kurals
 - **Kural:** a classic Tamil language text consisting of 1,330 short couplets of seven words each, or kural.

Conclusion

There needs to be a conscious effort to ensure that the Indian military doctrine is not affected by triumphalism (*delighting too much regarding over one's success or achievements especially in a political context*) with regard to history.

2. Issues with NTCA Circular on Shutting Down Tourism in Tiger Reserves

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS: 3 – Biodiversity and Conservation

Synopsis: The recent NTCA Circular on tiger reserves shut down the tourism activities in tiger reserves. But the circular needs course correction.

Introduction:

India's Project Tiger program is a globally successful initiative to conserve tigers. At present, India has [51 tiger reserves now boasts of at least 3,000 tigers](#).

The entire country is gearing up to relax the lockdown norms. However, the [National Tiger Conservation Authority \(NTCA\)](#) closed the tourism activities in tiger reserves till further announcement. This deserves a wider public discussion.

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The reason behind the NTCA Circular on tiger reserves:

- A lion at Chennai's Vandalur Zoo has died of suspected coronavirus infection. Similarly, a tiger died at Jharkhand's Bhagwan Birsa Biological Park after suffering from fever. This raised the suspicion regarding Covid-19 disease transmission from human beings to captive wild animals.
- This is why the NTCA issued a circular to chief wildlife wardens of all the tiger range states.

Issues with the NTCA Circular on tiger reserves:

1. **Encroachment into the power of States:** Forests and wildlife reserves fall under the concurrent list. The state chief wildlife wardens are the ultimate deciding authority for most issues concerning state forests. Thus, the recent NTCA Circular violates decentralized decision-making. For example, the Madhya Pradesh government has challenged the decision of NTCA.
2. **Against Vaccination Policy of locals:** Tiger reserves were closed for almost two months during the second wave. Government and civil society organizations used this lockdown time to propagate the uses of vaccines, educate the nearby community towards testing, treating the Covid-19 diseases. All this done with one incentive, that is, **faster reopening of forest reserves to the public to boost their economic activity**. If this is reversed by the recent NTCA Circular, then the vaccination policies might delay in and around the tiger reserves.
3. **Research on the vulnerability of animals to Covid-19:** The transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from humans to zoo animals and domestic pets has been documented earlier. But these studies mention that the **fatality rate in the animal is a rare case**.
 - Further, these studies also point out that, **direct contact with infected humans** is the primary cause for infection in wild animals. That is not feasible in the majority of the wildlife reserves in the world. As Jeeps and people are required to keep a distance from park animals. Not only that, In India the **masks are mandatory** for visiting the tiger reserves. So, the NTCA circular failed to look into the scientific aspects of disease transmission.
4. **Loss of revenue and biodiversity:** The wildlife tourism economy brings in substantial revenue to the state governments. When the governments are opening up their economy, the revenues from wildlife tourism is very essential for their economic recovery.
 - The role of tribal people to live close to or inside the protected areas is very important. As they collect minor forest produce and help to conserve the forests.
 - The **cost-benefit analysis shows** the entire biodiversity also faces losses during the lockdown. This is due to reasons such as uncontrolled fires, poaching, etc.
5. **The arbitrary reason to exclude other protected areas:** The NTCA circular only protects the 51 tiger reserves in India. In India, there is an enormous presence of wildlife outside the tiger reserves.

Read more: ["Srivilliputhur-Mudumalai Tiger Reserve is the 51st tiger reserve in India"](#)

Suggestions to improve the recent NTCA Circular on tiger reserves:

1. **Training the local forest officials:** Instead of a blanket ban, the government can train the local officials to decide whether to allow safaris for people based on local conditions.
2. **Utilizing the opportunity:** Forest departments should prepare the protected areas against future pandemics by implementing steps such as

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- a. Setting up **Non-invasive, bio-safe protocols** for Covid-19 vulnerable species under wildlife surveillance.
- b. Creating **Early warning systems** for preventing the Covid-19 spread if any wild animal died from Covid-19.
3. Encouraging the **role of environmental research organizations** in conserving species during the pandemic.
4. Launching **scientific research and prevention measures**: State government should launch these measures to decide whether to open the protected area or not.
5. The NTCA circular on tiger reserves is a centralized, non-scientific-based decision. This decision has to be replaced with decentralized, science-based decision-making to protect the bio-diversity of India.

3. How to Prevent Misuse of Synthetic Biology?

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs3: Awareness in the fields of Nanotechnology, Biotechnology

Synopsis: Synthetic biology is a double-edged sword. It is highly prone to misuse, thus there is an urgent need for international measures for monitoring and verification.

Background:

- Synthetic biology is a revolutionary technology. It can help us **manipulate biological organisms and processes for human betterment**, especially in treating diseases, by re-engineering cells.
- Till now there is no clarity over the origin of Coronavirus, but it is clear that bio-weapons can be made in labs.
- However, the preparedness of nation-states and weak global security arrangements are not sufficient in dealing with the misuse of synthetic biology.

What are the concerns associated with the misuse of synthetic biology?

1. Firstly, its misuse has national and global security implications.
 - In 2014, for instance, the U.S. Department of Defense categorised synthetic biology as one of the six **disruptive basic research areas**.
2. Secondly, there is always a chance of **accidental leaks of experimental pathogens**.
 - Various factors such as insufficiently trained staff, inadequately safeguarded facilities, and lack of proper protocols followed during experiments might trigger the leak in the future.
3. Thirdly, **poor regulation** of bio-weapons even after growing military interest in synthetic biology.
 - Bio-weapons are recognised as the **'weapon of mass destruction' (WMD)** but nothing is done by the international community.
 - Nuclear weapons have received maximum safety and security due to attention given by the institutional arrangements.
4. Fourthly, the attack through bioweapons takes time to show its impact. In that case, it is difficult to **ensure accountability**.
 - For example, in case of attacks carried out by state actors against the enemy, it would be difficult to pin responsibility as the incubation period is high, and the pathogen can be modified to hide its origin.

Why Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is not effective in dealing with the misuse of synthetic biology?

1. Firstly, the **Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) of 1972** has no implementing body and does not have a verification clause.

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- Also, it has not clearly laid down rules and procedures to guide research.
- 2. Secondly, the **dilemma in Article 1 of the BTWC**.
 - Bio-weapons are banned, but research for medical and bio-defence purposes is allowed for peaceful purposes.
 - But the issue is that there is a thin line between bio-defence research and bio-weapons research.
- 3. Thirdly, the report of an ad-hoc group to negotiate a protocol to ensure transparency was not accepted by the member states of BTWC. The Ad Hoc Group was set up in 1994 at the Fifth BTWC Review Conference in 2001.
- 4. Lastly, the traditional **distinction at the international institutional level** between biological weapons (BTWC) and diseases (domain under the World Health Organization) is not useful anymore.

Why India is more vulnerable to bio-weapon attack?

- **Firstly, lack of preparation and poor infrastructure.**
 - India is not having a strong disease surveillance system.
 - The poor state of the healthcare system was visible during a pandemic.
- **Secondly, there is a multiplicity of bodies** and the absence of an empowered coordinating body, which makes coordination difficult.
 - For instance, the implementation of biosafety guidelines is the responsibility of the Science and Technology Ministry and the Environment Ministry.
 - However, labs dealing with biological research are set up under the Indian Council of Medical Research and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, which are under the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, respectively.
- Thirdly, the traditional ministry-wise separation is not useful in the case of zoonotic diseases as it requires **“one health approach”**.
- Lastly, India has porous borders with ill-trained border control institutions, and they are not prepared for defending against pathogens.

Way forward:

- There is a need for cooperation between health specialists and bio-weapons/defence specialists.
- The November 2021 BTWC review conference must review advances in the field and address the thinning line between biotechnology research and bio-weapons research.

4. Need of Strengthening Cyber Resilience of Civilian infrastructure

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs3: Challenges to Internal Security through Communication Networks

Synopsis: Cyber-attacks are increasing on civilian targets and infrastructure around the globe. Thus, there is a critical need to strengthen the Cyber resilience of civilian infrastructure.

Background

- Cyber, which is regarded as the fifth dimension of warfare, is now largely being employed against civilian targets.
- For instance, several high-profile cyberattacks were reported from the United States during the past several months.
- These attacks were all primarily on civilian targets that were of critical importance.

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- Hence, there is a need to defending civilian targets, and more so critical infrastructure, against cyberattacks such as ransomware, phishing, spear phishing, Zero-day software, etc.,

Recent cyberattacks on Civilian infrastructure reported from the United States

1. **SolarWinds:** It was believed to be sponsored by Russia. It involved data breaches across several wings of the U.S. government, including defence, energy, and state.
2. **Hafnium:** Aggressive cyberattack, by a Chinese group. It exploited serious flaws in Microsoft's software.
3. **DarkSide:** Ransomware attack by Russia/East Europe-based cybercriminals. Attacked the Colonial Pipeline, the main supplier of oil to the U.S. East Coast, compelling the company to temporarily shut down operations.
4. **Nobellium:** Russia-backed group. A phishing attack on 3,000 e-mail accounts, targeting USAID and several other organisations.

Possible motives behind Cyberattacks

Data has become the world's most precious commodity and reportedly, we create more than three quintillion bytes of data every day. With the growth in the digital world, attacks on data and data systems are bound to intensify for various following reasons,

- One, for nation-states involved in Cyber-attacks, their primary aim is to transform the existing Geopolitical situation in their favor.
- Two, for cybercriminals and for terror groups, the motive is to earn increased profits.
- Three, some companies encounter 'insider threats' due to discontent with the management or for personal reasons.

Why the cyber resilience of Civilian infrastructure needs to be strengthened?

Nations around the globe are concentrating on cyber defences to protect military and strategic targets, whereas the priority to protect civilian infrastructure is being overlooked. This needs to be changed for the following reasons.

- **One**, the use of 'Zero-day software' that earlier existed only for the military domain now exists outside the military domain too.
 - A zero-day attack (also referred to as Day Zero) is an attack that exploits a potentially serious software security weakness that the vendor or developer may be unaware of.
 - It has the capability to cripple a system and could lie undetected for a long time. The most infamous Zero-day software is **Stuxnet**. It almost crippled Iran's uranium enrichment Programme.
- **Two**, the distinction between military and civilian targets is increasingly getting erased. For instance, the 2012 cyberattack on Aramco, employing the **Shamoon virus**, had wiped out the memories of 30,000 computers of the Saudi Aramco Oil Corporation.
- **Three**, cyberattacks on unconventional sectors have increased. For instance, Banking and financial services were most prone to ransomware attacks, but oil, electricity grids, and lately, health care, have begun to figure prominently.
- **Four**, the number of cyberattacks on healthcare systems is increasing. Compromised 'health information' is proving to be a vital commodity for use by cybercriminals. The available data aggravates the risk not only to the individual but also to entire communities.

What needs to be done?

Already, Cyber professionals are now engaged in building a 'Zero Trust-Based Environment' by employing software-defined solutions. However, much needed to be done

- One needs to build deep technology in cyberspace. New technologies such as artificial intelligence, Machine learning, and quantum computing, presents new opportunities in this regard.
- Two, officials in the public domain and company boards should carry out regular vulnerability assessments and create necessary awareness of the growing cyber threat.

5. Why Record FDI Inflow is Not a Cause for Celebration?

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis: The record level of FDI inflows in India for the year 2020-21 does not match the development priorities of the government.

Background

- In a recent press release, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced that India has attracted the **highest ever total FDI inflow** (U.S.\$81.72 billion) during the financial year 2020-21.
- This is 10 percent higher than the last financial year 2019-20.
- Also, given that there was a decline in global FDI inflows in 2020 by 42% compared to 2019, and inflows to developing countries had fallen by 12%, this is a significant development.
- Effective implementation of FDI policy reforms, investment facilitation, and ease of doing business were credited for the record level of FDI inflows.
- However, an analysis of FDI inflow data reveals that the reality of FDI in the Indian economy does not help India's development priorities.

Why FDI inflows accounted for the year 2020-21 will not benefit India's development priorities?

- **First**, the nature of the bulk of the investments involves just a mere transfer of shares without creating productive assets in the country. This is contrary to the expectation that FDI can contribute to the revival of the economy
- For instance, take the case of Reliance Group companies, the largest recipients of FDI for the year **2020-21**. It accounted for 54.1% of the total equity inflows during the three quarters.
- In this case, FDI inflows were meant to facilitate Reliance Industries to withdraw its investments already made in the form of **Optionally Convertible Preference Share**.
- This, therefore, amounted to the indirect acquisition of shares held by Reliance Industries.

Optionally Convertible preference shares: This class of shares can be converted into equity shares either at the option of the holder or at the option of the company. The convertible portion can be in full or in part

1. **Second**, according to RBI, though FDI inflows were stronger in 2020-21, their distribution was highly skewed.
 - For instance, the manufacturing sector received just 17.4% of the total inflows during 2020-21.
 - Whereas, the services sector attracted nearly 80% of the total inflows, with information technology-enabled services (ITeS) being the largest component.

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- Further, according to the RBI, non-acquisition-related inflows into the manufacturing sector were the lowest in 2020-21.
- 2. **Third**, the bulk of the investments in Reliance Group companies will not facilitate sharing of managerial experience and technical expertise. Because investors' share is pegged at 9.9%. For instance, Facebook's shareholding in Jio Platform was pegged at 9.9%.
 - According to the **International Monetary Fund** and also **the RBI**, a foreign investor, holding 10% or more of voting shares in a company, can exercise a significant influence on its management.
- 3. **Finally**, there are other issues related to FDI inflows in India for the year 2020-21. For example,
 - According to RBI data, there was a 47.2% increase in repatriation/disinvestment in the year 2020-21.
 - Further, RBI reports that there was a high increase in portfolio investment (FII) for the year 2020-21. This was the second-highest level of FIIs' involvement in India.
 - Surely, sustained sizeable repatriation of the long-term FDI, together with a large increase in speculative capital (FII's) is not good for a country's Economic Health.

6. Cryptocurrency in India – Lessons from other Countries

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3

Synopsis: No legal classification of cryptocurrency in India should not be the reason for its ban. There are some international examples, from where India can adopt some ways to deal with Cryptocurrencies.

Introduction

El Salvador became the first country in the world to adopt bitcoin as legal tender. This shows the rising global trend of accepting cryptocurrencies with all their associated risks. Almost all countries are permitting the growth of the cryptocurrency market subject to certain safeguards.

However, India is still thinking about whether to prohibit or regulate cryptocurrencies. Globally, there is an inclination towards regulations that recognizes the freedom of choice of people for using a medium of exchange other than a central bank-backed fiat currency.

How has India responded to the crypto business so far?

The cryptocurrency market in India has advanced in a mainly unrestrictive regulatory space since the first recorded cryptocurrency transaction in 2010.

- **Firstly, between 2013 and 2018, the government's response to the rise of virtual currencies was cautionary.** It alerted users to the potential risks posed by cryptocurrency transactions. These concerns arose from its potential use in criminal activities such as money laundering, terrorist financing, and tax evasion.
- **Secondly, in April 2018, RBI effectively banned cryptocurrency trading.** However, the Supreme Court in 2020 overturned this ban.
- The court said that RBI can take other regulatory measures **instead of an outright ban through which risks** associated with cryptocurrency trading can be curbed.
- **Now, the draft Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021 has been introduced.** The draft Bill plans to criminalize all private cryptocurrencies while also laying down the regulatory framework for an RBI-backed digital currency.

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- Minister of State for Finance stated in the Parliament that regulatory bodies do not have a legal framework to directly regulate private cryptocurrencies. Then, how these currencies should be regulated?

What are the lessons that India could learn from other countries?

India can take a few lessons from the U.K., Singapore, and the U.S. UK. They have categorized cryptocurrency as property. This has made the way for cryptocurrencies to be included within a regulated legal framework in the country's economy.

- **The U.K. wants to regulate the working of crypto-businesses** while still imposing some restrictions to protect the interests of investors.
- There is no precise legal classification of cryptocurrency in Singapore, but the flexibility of cryptocurrency transactions to the **contract law framework of the country has been resolutely recognised and there is now a legal framework for cryptocurrency trading.**
- **In the U.S., the authorities** are taking an **open approach**, It led to the taxing and regulation of trade-in cryptocurrency.

Conclusion

- These approaches are country-specific and cannot be directly implemented in India. However, the global regulatory attitude towards cryptocurrencies gives valuable insights into the other ways to achieve balanced regulation.
- In India, the absence of an existing legal classification of cryptocurrency should not be the basis to ban its use. The government should use this as an opportunity to allow private individuals the freedom to harness a powerful new technology with appropriate regulatory standards.

7. Energy Efficient homes are key to low Carbon Economy

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS-3:- Conservation, Environmental Pollution, and Degradation

Synopsis: The demand for cooling appliances is bound to grow in the future to keep citizens healthy and productive. Thus, Energy Efficient homes will be the key to make India a low carbon economy.

Background:

- In the last three decades, India experienced 660 heat waves which caused 12,273 deaths.
- These intense heat waves are expected to rise with a rise in global temperatures due to climate change.
- This **rising frequency and growing intensity of heat waves** are resulting in increased demand for cooling in Indian homes.
- The growing demand for cooling will make India the world's largest energy user for cooling, but this area has not gained much significance in Indian homes.

Why India needs energy-efficient cooling in Indian homes?

- Firstly, it is going to play a huge role in India's **adaptation** to climate change.
- Secondly, energy inefficiency in Indian homes cooling system will have disastrous effects on mitigation efforts taken by India to **curb Greenhouse gas emissions.**
 - The **India Cooling Action Plan** projects the number of room air conditioners to become about four times in the next 10 years, and about 10 times in the next 20 years.

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- Thirdly, large-scale adoption of efficient cooling appliances is essential to achieve a low carbon economy as per the Paris climate deal.

Why Energy efficiency in homes remains underexplored in India?

1. Firstly, there is a **lack of data** regarding consumer's preference for energy-efficient cooling systems.
 - For example, how and why people make their purchase decisions.
2. Secondly, the implications of an increase in residential cooling demand have not been carefully examined by policymakers in India.
 - For instance, the factors which will determine the extent of future cooling demand have no empirical evidence.
3. Thirdly, energy efficiency **does not feature as a priority** in the purchase of cooling appliances.
 - For instance, only 7% of the households have an energy-efficient (star-rated) fan, and 88% of the coolers are locally assembled.
4. Fourthly, there is a **lack of awareness** about energy efficiency.
 - For example, one-third of the households are unaware of the **Star Labelling program**.
 - It is a government programme mandatory for refrigerators and air conditioners.
5. Lastly, there is the **higher upfront cost and low market availability** for energy-efficient appliances.

Way forward:

- Investment in cooling technologies, infrastructure is required to lock in energy-efficient consumption patterns.
- Awareness campaigns should be conducted on energy efficiency.
- **Subsidies and financial incentives** are needed to drive up the adoption of more efficient technologies.
- Efficient building designs can also help in reducing dependence on energy-intensive cooling technologies.

Indian homes can play a major role to achieve net-zero emissions but along with the usage of energy-efficient technologies, there is a need to promote **alternative cooling strategies**.

8. [Role of disruptive technologies in improving the health sector](#)

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs3: Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life.

Synopsis: Application of future Digital technologies in the health sector can lead to accessible, affordable, and quality health care. Further, it can reduce human involvement in risky functions.

Background

- Human involvement in diagnosis, treatment, and hospital care of infected patients puts them at greater risk of contracting the disease. For instance, many frontline warriors fighting COVID-19 have lost their lives.
- In this context, technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous systems, blockchain, cloud and quantum computing, data analytics, 5G can help in addressing the issue.

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- The new technologies can improve the welfare of societies and reduce the impact of communicable diseases. Further, it can reduce the chances of hospital staff contracting the infection.

Recent developments regarding the use of disruptive technologies for hospital care

1. One, according to global media reports, some established innovative field hospitals are using robots to care for COVID-19 affected patients.
2. Two, hospitals in China, are using 5G-powered temperature measurement devices at the entrance to flag patients who have fever-like symptoms.
3. Three, some robots are being used to measure heart rates and blood oxygen levels through smart bracelets.
4. Four, In India too, the **Sawai Man Singh government hospital** in Jaipur held trials with a humanoid robot to deliver medicines and food to hospitalized COVID-19 patients

How new technologies can improve the hospital ecosystem?

- **One, Blockchain technology** can help in addressing the interoperability challenges that health information and technology systems face.
 - The **health blockchain** will contain a complete indexed history of all medical data, including formal medical records and health data. Data will be sourced from mobile applications and wearable sensors. This will help in seamless medical attention.
 - Further, it allows for storing of data in a secured and authenticated network. Thereby, it will prevent erosion of Individuals' privacy and ensure data security.
- **Two, Big data analytics** can help improve patient-based services such as early disease detection.
- **Three, AI and the Internet of Medical Things**, or IoMT can support medical care delivery in dispersed and complex environments through Medical autonomous systems.
- **Four, Cloud computing** can facilitate collaboration and data exchanges between doctors, departments, and even institutions and medical providers. It will enable the best treatment.

How Digital technologies can be utilized to achieve "Universal health coverage" in India?

1. India needs to own its digital health strategy that works and leads towards universal health coverage and person-centered care.
2. India's digital health strategy should emphasize the **ethical appropriateness** of digital technologies, across the digital divide, and ensure inclusion across the economy.
3. Online consultation through video conferencing should be made a key part of India's digital health strategy.
4. Moreover, digital health strategy should utilise available local knowledge. Primary health centres in India should examine traditional knowledge and experience and then use it along with modern technology.
 - There are many instances where traditional knowledge has been utilised for preventing diseases.
 - For example, in Indonesia, where the experience of backyard poultry farmers was used to tackle bird flu.

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- Another example is the Ebola virus outbreak in Africa, where communities proactively helped curtail the spread much before government health teams arrived.

Challenges in developing Digital health strategy

- Standardisation of health data,
- Information sharing between Organisations
- Data security and data privacy, and
- High investments.

India's efforts in this direction should involve synchronization and integration, developing a template for sharing data, and reengineering many of the institutional and structural arrangements in the medical sector.

9. Rationale behind New Information Technology Rules, 2021

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 – role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges

Synopsis:

Social media is a direct product of the globalized internet, which connects people all over the globe. It significantly impacts economic, social, and political discourse in a country. Hence, the government formulated new Information Technology Rules, 2021 to regulate them and prevent their misuse.

Background:

- The internet has revolutionized the world, and we are now in the process of a transition from the industrial to the internet age.
- This transition would affect how we see economics, politics, society, governance, democracy, and our fundamental rights. Therefore, it becomes imperative to improve the regulatory framework over the internet and social media.
- It is in this context that new Information Technology Rules, 2021 were formulated by the Government of India.

About Social Media:

- Social media is a direct product of the globalised internet which connects people all over the globe.
- It allows people to converse with each other through profiles both known and anonymous. It allows the transmission of information in real-time across the world.

Information Technology Rules, 2021 related to Social Media:

- Social media companies are prohibited from hosting or publishing any unlawful information.
 - Information obtained in relation to the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, public order, friendly relations with foreign countries, etc. can be deemed unlawful. The government can **order takedown** of such information within 24 hours.
- The user should be **given a notice** before its content is taken down.
- The government can direct messaging platforms to tie the identity of the user with the message transmitted by him/her for strengthening **traceability**.
- The rules call for social media companies to publish a **monthly compliance report** as well.

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- Social media platforms are classified into **two categories** – social media intermediaries and significant social media intermediaries, the latter being platforms with a large user base.
- The significant social media intermediaries will be obliged to follow some additional measures like:
 - Appointing a Chief Compliance Officer, Nodal Contact Person, and a Resident Grievance Officer in India. All of them should be Indian Residents.
 - The chief Compliance Officer shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with the Act and Rules.
 - Nodal Contact Person will do 24×7 coordination with law enforcement agencies.
 - Resident Grievance Officer shall receive and resolve complaints from users. The officer must acknowledge the complaint within 24 hours, and resolve it within 15 days of receipt.
 - These platforms should also have a physical contact address in India, which should be notified on the website and apps.

Rationale behind New Social Media Rules:

1. **First**, the rules invoke a **minimum regulatory standard** on social media. This brings it to par with newspapers, magazines, and websites that are responsible for the content published over them.
 - The companies are **still considered as an intermediary and continue to enjoy immunity under Section 79** of the Information Technology Act.
 - i. Section 79 states that an intermediary shall not be liable for any third-party information hosted by it if it duly follows the guidelines released by the government.
 - Further, they have screening teams that can duly remove objectionable content.
 - i. For instance, Twitter deleted some tweets of former US President Donald Trump in January 2021 and later suspended his account.
2. **Second**, the freedom of speech enjoyed over social media is derived from Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution. It is **subject to the restriction of Article 19(2)** that includes public order, security of the state, defamation, etc. grounds. Hence, due restrictions can be imposed on social media.
3. **Third**, social media has become a **public square in which the most important conversations on politics and society are discussed**. Therefore, its regulation becomes imperative for overall societal wellbeing.
4. **Fourth**, social media is a **commercial product** that is being offered with the objective of money-making. Hence, it should be regulated like other commercial products.
 - The fact that a commercial product could be used for a social purpose does not make the product a social good.
5. **Fifth**, the big social media companies **sometimes attempt to regulate the policies of the government as per their will**. This may grow into economic exploitation and political intervention on a grand scale if not duly regulated.
 - Large-scale intervention can lead to disastrous results, as was shown by the East India Company's dominant control in the past which led to India's colonisation.

10. Problems with discoms need radical reforms

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: **GS3** – Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Synopsis: To completely recover from problems with Discoms, India needs radical reforms in the Power sector. Financial aid packages from Centre to Discoms forms only a part of a solution.

Background

- For long, the scenario has been that the Centre has to step in to aid Discoms and tackle the problems plaguing the distribution side of the power sector.
- However, the results of such interventions have not yielded any significant improvements in the health of Discoms.
- The analysis of the performance of [Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana \(UDAY\)](#) reveals the same.
- Analysis of the performance of UDAY and Problems with Discoms
- UDAY scheme was introduced by the centre to bring financial Turnaround, Operational improvement of Discoms. Further, it aims to reduce the cost of generation of power, to facilitate the development of Renewable Energy and Energy efficiency & conservation.
- Though some states witnessed an improvement in their financial and operational indicators, it wasn't sustained. There has been a sharp [deterioration in several parameters after the UDAY scheme](#).
- **First**, The UDAY scheme had envisaged bringing down these losses to 15% by 2019.
 - However, as per data on the UDAY dashboard, the **(Aggregate Technical & Commercial) AT&C** losses currently stand at 21.7% at the all-India level.
 - In the case of the low-income north and central-eastern states Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh the losses are considerably higher.
- **Second**, The UDAY scheme had envisaged eliminating the gap between power costs and revenue by now.
 - However, the gap between power costs and revenue stands at Rs 0.49 per unit due to the absence of regular and commensurate tariff hikes.
 - In the high-income southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana, this gap between costs and revenues is significantly higher.

Also read: [Problems faced by power sector in India](#)

What are the reasons for the problems with discoms?

- **Lack of metering:** Minimizing the AT&C losses is critical to improve the operational efficiency of Discoms.
 - However, even six years after UDAY was launched, various levels in the distribution chain (the feeder, the distribution transformer (DT) and the consumer) have not been fully metered.
 - As a result, it difficult to isolate and identify loss-making areas and take corrective action.
- **Decrease in revenue generation owing to the Pandemic**
 - Revenue from industrial and commercial users is used to cross-subsidize other consumers.
 - However, owing to the Pandemic the demands from industrial and commercial users is falling. This leads to stress on discom finances.
- **Absence of political consensus at the state level to raise tariffs:** Many states report losses as they could not eliminate the gap between power costs and revenue.

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- For instance, recently, Opposition parties in Karnataka recently protested against a tariff hike of 30 paise
- The Centre's **“Electricity for all” programme have contributed to greater inefficiency.**
 - Because, to support higher levels of electrification, cost structures need to be reworked. Similarly, the distribution network (transformers, wires, etc) need to be augmented. In the absence of such measures, losses are bound to rise.
- Suggestions to address the problems with discoms
- One, the creation of a **national power distribution company** to ensure procurement of electricity at competitive prices.
- Two, **deduct discom dues**, owed to both public and private power generating companies, from state balances. After that, the RBI can force states to take the necessary steps to fix discom finances.
- Three, **linking additional state borrowings** to the completion of distribution reforms.

11. Vaccination policy of India – Issues & Suggestions

Source: [Click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3

Synopsis: The vaccination policy of India should maintain a balance between the achievement of health goals and demands of supply constraints.

Introduction

Vaccines are a proven shield against the SARS-CoV-2 virus. They have prevented serious illness and death. A study of data from the UK collected between December 1, 2020, and April 30, 2021, showed that the [AstraZeneca vaccine had an effectiveness of 64% after one dose](#) and 79% after two doses, in protecting against severe illness and death.

- **Effectiveness of AstraZeneca vaccine:** A report by Public Health England showed that the AstraZeneca vaccine had an effectiveness of 71% after one dose and 92% after two doses in guarding against hospitalization due to the delta variant.
- **Effectiveness of COVISHIELD in India:** The first report of vaccine effectiveness from India, told an analysis of 8,991 staff who had been vaccinated between January 21, 2021, and April 30, 2021, mostly with Covishield. The protective effect of vaccination was **92%** against the need for oxygen and **94%** against the need for intensive care.
 - **No deaths were reported**, but about 10% of those who had received one or two doses were infected.
 - These data from the United Kingdom and India show that the **Covishield vaccine is working against the delta variant.**

What are the issues with the current vaccination policy of India?

- **Too much focus on herd immunity.** When vaccines seemed to be somewhere in the future with doubts over timing or supply, discussions on the pandemic focused on ‘herd immunity’ (*the percentage of the population that needed to be infected or vaccinated in order to slow the spread of infection*)
- **The opening of age tiers led to issues of supply.** A road map of the availability of vaccines and their supply to individual States is not clear.
- The Swedish strategy of limited restrictions and the Great Barrington declaration attracted much criticism. Many **scientific commentators considered it is cruel to follow a strategy that meant that a lot of people would get infected with the virus.**

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- **Anti-science statements made by some people have led to a situation where the public is confused** as to how best to cope with the coronavirus. Uncertainty on vaccine availability, doubt, fear, anxiety and depression are widespread.

Also read: [What is herd immunity?](#)

Suggestions to improve vaccination policy of India

Different needs at different levels require policy approaches that balance the achievement of health and societal goals with the potential impact and the needs of supply constraints.

- **Vaccinating a large number of people:** The strategy needs to achieve maximum impact. We need to vaccinate a large proportion of the population and extend it at a later stage to children to both prevent disease and slow spread.
- **Plan for children as well:** The advent of the delta variant made it clear that the previous plan to vaccinate a smaller part of the population is not right, and reaching up to 85% of the population might be required. **This means that along with all adults, we should be planning for children as well to achieve [Universal Vaccination](#).**
- **Vaccinating the high-risk group first:** We must vaccinate those most at risk from serious illness and death first based on the principles of public health. The high rates of previous waves in India may make it possible to immunize a large part of our population with a single dose, at least initially.
- **Ensuring expansive reach of the vaccine:** The vaccine should reach every village. Community leaders should be empowered with information and tools to broadcast the message that the vaccine saves lives.
 - The central government has [centralized vaccine purchase](#), but it must revisit the private sector allocation and give distribution to States, providing support when requested. The [CoWIN app](#) must not be a limiting factor in access to the vaccine.
- **An adaptive vaccination policy:** The vaccination policy must be adapted quickly to changing circumstances. We must create models to find a suitable vaccination strategy for younger populations.
 - If cases are climbing in a particular region, we should direct vaccine doses there to protect as much of the population. **High vaccination coverage in cities may protect rural areas.** The Government must trust its citizens and share the information as it is a notable aspect of the pandemic.
- **[Open sharing of the data](#):** The Government must trust its citizens and share the information that is solely available to it. A notable aspect of the pandemic is the absence of credible data from the government. This has led to speculative ideas based on poor or poorly understood information and misinformation.

Conclusion

Addressing the pandemic must include a strategy that ensures maximum impact. This can be done with an expansive vaccination policy that adapts itself on the go and covers the needs of every section of our society.