

**9pm**  
**Compilation**

**August, 2021 (Third Week)**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Third Week), 2021

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# General Studies Paper - 1

General Studies - 1

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**1. Prime Minister declares 14th August as Partition Horrors Remembrance Day**

**Source:** [The Hindu](#), [PIB](#), [PIB](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 1 – Modern Indian History from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues.

**Synopsis:**

In a fitting tribute to all those who lost their lives due to the partition of the nation and were displaced from their roots, the Government has decided to observe 14th August as the day to commemorate their sacrifice.

**Background:**

- The country celebrated 75th Independence Day on 15th August 2021. Nonetheless, the pain and violence of partition remains deeply entrenched in the nation's memory.
- Realizing this, the government has **declared that 14th August** would be observed as **Partition Horror's Remembrance Day**.

**Rationale behind declaring a Partition Horrors Remembrance Day:**

- It is a way of **saluting those sons and daughters** of our beloved motherland who had to sacrifice their lives in the frenzy of violence.
- It would **remind present and future generations** of Indians of the pain and suffering faced by the people during the partition.
- Furthermore, it will keep reminding us of the **need to remove the poison of social divisions** and disharmony.
  - For instance, the two-nation theory which was the basis of partition failed miserably with the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.
- It will encourage the masses to **strengthen the spirit of oneness**, social harmony, and human empowerment.

**Way Forward:**

- Given that the trauma was felt not just in India but in three countries, an attempt to **mark the day across the subcontinent** might have been more inclusive.
- It is necessary too, to remember not just the violence of 1947 but **also the colonial hand that cause the Partition**.
- Steps must be taken to hold the British Empire to account for and educate successive generations on the perils of imperialism, arbitrary map-making, and inhuman policy of divide and rule.

**2. On August 15, 1947, where was Bapu?**

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 1 – The Freedom Struggle — its various stages and important contributors/contributions from different parts of the country.

**Synopsis:**

Mahatma Gandhi was working for the welfare and unity of the nation on 15th August 1947. He enlightened the new leaders about their humongous responsibility towards the nation and appealed to the masses for sustaining the trust between Hindus and Muslims.

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### Background:

- On the midnight of Independence Day, the nation was in a joyful mood and grand celebrations were about to start.
- Nonetheless, a key pioneer of our Freedom Struggle i.e. Gandhiji (Bapu) was still working for the welfare of the country in Calcutta.

### Mahatma Gandhi's conduct before Independence Day:

- On the evening of August 6, Bapu boarded the Calcutta Mail at Lahore. From Calcutta, he was supposed to leave for Noakhali (now in Bangladesh).
  - **He had promised the minority community** that he would shield them during Partition (East Bengal became East Pakistan).
- Bapu arrived in Calcutta on August 9, 1947. A delegation of Muslims, led by the chief of Calcutta District Muslim League, Mohammad Usman, **pleaded with Bapu to remain in Calcutta to ensure the safety of Muslims.**
  - Bapu told them he would delay going to Noakhali if they guaranteed the safety and wellbeing of the minority community in Noakhali. However, if there was violence in Noakhali, he would go on an unconditional fast unto death.
- **On August 11, Bapu met with Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, the former Premier of Bengal.** Suhrawardy too voiced his concern about the safety of Muslims.
  - Bapu asked him to guarantee for **the safety of the Hindus in Noakhali** if he wished for him to stay back in Calcutta. Later, as Suhrawardy agreed Bapu stayed in Calcutta.

### Conduct on the Independence Day:

- **On August 15, 1947, Independence Day, He received several messages of congratulations, but he was not celebrating.** Furthermore, he was praying, fasting, and spinning khadi.
  - Bapu sent a message to the ministers of the cabinet of West Bengal in order to make them realize the humongous responsibility they hold towards the nation.
  - He wrote, "From today, you have to **wear the crown of thorns. Strive ceaselessly to cultivate truth and non-violence.**
  - He also advised them that they should always remember that **they are in the office to serve the poor in India's villages.**
  - At the prayer meeting that evening, Bapu congratulated Calcutta for the mutual trust displayed by Hindus and Muslims. Muslims shouted the same slogans of joy as the Hindus. **They flew the tricolour without the slightest hesitation.**
  - **What was more, the Hindus were admitted to mosques, and Muslims were admitted to mandirs.** Bapu had hoped that Calcutta would be entirely free from the communal virus forever.
- This is the wish with which Bapu ended his day, the day that India became independent in 1947.

### 3. India's water crisis: It is most acute for women

**Source:** [Down to Earth](#)

**Syllabus:** GS1 – Role of Women and Women's Organization, Population and Associated Issues, Poverty and Developmental issues, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies

**Relevance:** Implications of water crisis on women



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**Synopsis:** Water crisis affects women disproportionately compared to men. An analysis  
Context

India has 16% of the world's population, but possesses only 4% of the world's freshwater resources. India is water-stressed due to changing weather patterns and repeated droughts. And the worst sufferers of this crisis are mostly women.

Extent of water stress in India

- According to data from Central Ground Water Board, as many as **256 of 700 districts in India have reported 'critical' or 'over-exploited' groundwater levels**, which means the water table has significantly dropped in these districts
- India has become the **world's largest extractor of groundwater**, accounting for 25% of the total.
- 70% of our water sources are contaminated, and our major rivers are dying because of pollution.

Water crisis and women

This crisis of water puts women at a higher risk of vulnerability, since fetching water in India has been perceived as a woman's job for centuries. They need to walk miles to collect water from the nearest source. Water crisis impacts women in the following ways:

- **Affecting their participation in education, occupation and labor force**, since they need to spend more time on water collection.
- **Increasing marginalization** since water crisis affects their access to toilets, leading to indignity and insecurity
- **Affects their labour force participation**
- **Promoting polygamy**– there are increasing instances of polygamy in drought prone regions which is termed as **'water wives'**
- **Reduces access to clean sanitation, better physical and mental health** of women
- Leads to **social oppression** as it creates social issues like a lower level of literacy in women since many girls drop out of school to collect water.

Way forward

It is important to make central and state policies dealing with the water crisis. More emphasis should be given to gender inequality rather than gender sensitization and gender roles associated with water need to be ended.

#### 4. The big opportunity

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS – 1: Population and associated issues.

**Relevance:** This article explains the advantages of the rising young population.

Synopsis:

A rising youth population in India can provide many benefits to India.

Introduction:

According to various international studies, **the median age in India would be 28 years by 2022-23**, in contrast to 37 in China and 45 in Western Europe. This is an **enormous growth opportunity** as India will have the highest number of people in the workforce.

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### Challenges due to Covid-19:

1. As per an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) study, the equivalent of **five years or more of per capita income is likely to be lost** by the end of 2021 **due to Covid-19**.
2. The World Bank mentioned that the world would witness **deep global recessions** fuelled by lowered investments, displacement of human capital, and disintegration of global trade and supply chains.
3. The effects of increased use of plastics and the generation of bio-medical wastes during the pandemic will **cost, fisheries, tourism, and maritime transport industries**, an additional \$40 billion, according to a UN Environment Program report.

**Read more:** [IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report: Findings and Suggestions – Explained, pointwise](#)

### Advantages of rising young population:

1. India's **non-working population would be outnumbered** by the working population, leading to a **favourable demographic dividend**. This will accelerate urbanisation and the growth of industries.
2. The **purchasing power** of the populace will **increase**. It will **open up a bigger domestic market**, thus **attracting more investment** and increasing opportunities.
3. The **younger population will be more climate-conscious**. This can simply be explained by **younger generations seeing the real-time impact of climate change**. Further, they will be more inclined to act towards a greener tomorrow.
  - o This is also **clear by a UN report on climate change**. The report mention that close to half a million youth around the world have taken (or are taking) action against climate change through initiatives at their homes, schools, and communities.
  - o This is the reason the [Climate Change Performance Index \(CCPI\)](#), 2021, puts only two G20 (or Group of Twenty) countries — India and U.K. — in the top 10.

**Read more:** [Population control measures in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

### Challenges with rising young population:

COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns have deepened the Inequality in India.

The dominance of the informal economy makes the government subsidies and employment schemes a difficult one for all benefactors to reap the benefits.

### Suggestions:

1. The need of the hour is for **public-private partnership (PPP) models** to bridge the skill gap.
2. **Education and skilling are also key components** in enhancing the capabilities of the growing young population
3. **Labour-intensive sectors need to be better supported** for further job creation.
4. Government **policies must ensure** that they **comprehensively cover all aspects** aimed at increasing human development and standards of living.

### Terms to know:

- [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#)
- [World Bank](#)



## 5. The horrors of Partition must be remembered — but for the right reasons

**Source:** [The Hindu](#) and [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 1 – Modern Indian History from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues.

**Relevance:** Announcement of 14<sup>th</sup> August as “Partition Horrors Remembrance Day”.

**Synopsis:** The journey of remembrance should be to seek forgiveness and not to reopen wounds or reignite hatred

### Importance of Remembrance Day

It is an attempt to acknowledge the sacrifice, mass killings, and violence and to seek forgiveness for the crimes committed against humanity and to make sure not to allow these kinds of terrible events to happen in the future again

Various other countries have celebrated National Remembrance Day like Israel, Germany and Japan. India too has announced its remembrance day on 14<sup>th</sup> Aug started from this year

[Read More about Remembrance Day](#)

### Why does India need a remembrance day?

- There is no national memorial in India to remember the horrors that happened during the partition.
- Partition museum had been set up in Amritsar. It is established by a trust set up by a group of citizens, not by the government.
- Although academic work on partition studies is there, it is yet not able to reach a large section of people. It is now limited to students and the academic community.

### Why the date 14<sup>th</sup> Aug is a cause for concern?

- Choosing the date of commemoration as 14<sup>th</sup> Aug can bring more harm as the same day has been celebrated by Pakistan as Independence Day.
- It might also bring negative domestic political consequences, which can limit India's foreign policy options.
- There is the possibility to reopen wounds again, which can have dangerous consequences in future
- There is an increase in cases of communal violence in India even after 1947. From Jabalpur (1961) to Rath Yatra killings (1989) to Babri Masjid Demotion Violence (1992-23) to Gujarat (2002). So, announcing Aug 14 is not ideal.
- There have been various incidents happening across the country where the Muslim community has been targeted. These incidents are a threat to independent India's vision of “**Building a nation of communal Harmony**”

### What should we actually remember?

On the occasion of completing 74 years of independence, it is time to recall what is truly remarkable about our country — that it is home to an extraordinary spectrum of ethnicities, religions, languages and cultures.

We should grieve in silence & remember the people of all communities who lost their lives or were forced to flee their homes in the partition. For this, the government should also take the initiative to **build a national museum of partition to remember/ recall those events.**

### Way Forward

It is time to prevent the fragmentation of India on various fronts e.g. social and political, and we need to uphold India's image of Unity in Diversity

### 6. Fate of Afghanistan's karez system uncertain, but south India's surangam thriving

**Source:** [Down to Earth](#)

**Syllabus:** GS1- Salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

**Relevance:** Traditional methods of water conservation in India.

**Synopsis:** The *karez* system in Afghanistan, a legacy of its Persian cultural linkage, has suffered extensive damage in 43 years of war and stares at an uncertain future under the Taliban's second regime. But hundreds of miles to the south, a similar system called **Surangam system**, is thriving.

What is Karez system?

The karez system in Afghanistan is a legacy of its Persian culture. It has suffered extensive damage in 43 years of war.



Karez system

Surangam system of South India:

The surangam is usually found in **northern Kerala and southern Karnataka**.

This is basically a tunnel dug through a **laterite hillock** from the periphery of which water and moisture seeps out. However, constructing surangams is very difficult and they also have to be cleaned annually.





Surangam in Kerala

They are similar to **qanats** which existed in Mesopotamia and Babylon around 700 Before Common Era. By 714 BCE.



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### Utility of Surangam

1. **One Surangam served two-three houses** and the water was sweet and always available.
2. Used for domestic and agriculture purposes in dry areas of northern Malabar and more than half of these structures were constructed between 1977 and 1997.

### Theories on origin of Surangam system

#### **Theory 1: Karhada Brahmin theory**

The hypothesis relates the likely origin of the **suranga system to 18 Karhada Brahmin families** that had moved to the Kasargod area from Maharashtra in the 17th century.

- The karez systems in India extend from Madhya Pradesh till Bijapur and Bidar in Karnataka. Qanat / karez were dug in places that **were water-scarce** and had to be constructed over great distances.
- On the other hand, surangas were built as the **construction of wells was not economical**. None of the surangas in Kasargod have vents on them. The longest surangam is 300 metres long with eight vents and it is probably the only one with vents in Kasargod district.
- As per Karhada Brahmin theory, they had come to a place that had a lot of **laterite hills**. Laterite is a sedimentary formation which becomes harder on getting exposed to sunlight and air. It is used as a **building material** in Kerala.
- Kasargod did not have a good source of water. The Karhadas might have seen springs and might have started exploiting them.
- During the drier season, they might have dug into the slopes. As the springs receded, the Karhadas dug further into the hills. So, the tunnels became bigger.

#### **Theory 2**

1. When the Deccan Sultanates were taken over by the **Mughal and Maratha Empires**, the artisans might have migrated south and may have **constructed** these surangams after being patronised by the **Wodeyar kingdom of Mysuru**.
2. Tipu sultan's father, Hyder Ali had deposed the Wodeyar Maharaja and established the Sultanate of Mysuru.
3. During Tipu's reign, there might have been **knowledge transfer** either through migrants from the Deccan or because of Mangaluru port-based trade relations with Persia.

# General Studies Paper - 2



General Studies - 2

1. Social Media regulations: Slanting posts

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS – 2: Role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges

Relevance: This article explains the control of Social media data in India

Synopsis:

Social media platforms should have the same standards for the government and the Opposition  
Introduction

Several Twitter handles, associated with the Congress and its leaders, including its former president Rahul Gandhi, were blocked by Twitter in the last few days, for violating its user policy and the law of the land.

Twitter has revealed that the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) brought the violation to its notice. A petition in the Delhi HC seeking legal action against Mr. Gandhi has pointed out that his **post was in violation of Section 74 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and Section 23(2) of the POSCO Act 2012.**

- Both the sections mandate that **any material that might reveal** (directly or indirectly) the **identity of a child victim of a crime shall not be published.**

What is the issue with Social media regulations?

**Dual control over information is the major issue in social media.**

- The Centre claims that **only a police investigation could establish whether the content was altered or not.**
- Social media companies on the other hand claim a **right to unilaterally decide their user policy.**
- This is the **core conflict between the state and private companies** over controlling the information flow in a democratic society.
- Both the **state and the companies invoke public order and interest to justify their control** over information.

Suggestions:

State agencies **must exercise control over speech only in the rarest instances**, and that too **in the most transparent manner.**

Private companies **must be more transparent** in enforcing their guidelines and **reassure users that their standards** for those in power and those in the Opposition **are one.**

Terms to know:

- [National Commission for Protection of Child Rights \(NCPCR\)](#)

2. As Taliban makes a rapid military advance through Afghanistan, India too must brace itself for the consequences

Source: Indian Express ([Article 1](#)), [Article 2](#)) and [Times of India](#)

Syllabus: GS – 2: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Relevance: This article explains the recent development in Afghanistan

Synopsis:

The Taliban have seized Kabul. Now, India should be a first responder in the current crisis for humanitarian and longer-term political reasons.

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Introduction:

The Taliban first stormed to power in 1996, with an open demonstration of medieval cruelty and a barbaric transition to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

Now, two decades later, they are capturing one strategic city after another. Now, they have returned to Kabul also.

**Read more:** [India's future Afghan policy – Explained, pointwise](#)

Taliban rise to power again:

According to the latest reports, the militants control two-thirds of the Afghan landmass.

- The **Doha Agreement**, from which the US excluded the Afghan government in order to keep the Taliban happy, now does not matter.
- The Taliban **stepped up attacks soon after the Doha Agreement** concluded, carefully avoiding any engagement with existing foreign forces.
- A **UN report** has already pointed to the **continuing contacts between the Taliban and al-Qaeda**. Similarly, the influence of Pakistan is also present. The current Taliban cadres, instructed by half-educated teachers in Pakistani madrassas and training camps
- The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has estimated that **nearly 4,00,000 Afghan civilians have been forced to flee** their homes, due to fighting this year.
- There have been reprisal killings already, and **reports say 90 Afghan media outlets have shut down**.

The Afghan President has sent an offer to the Taliban to share power. But Taliban's are reluctant and try to win the entire Afghan. Recently, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani stepped down from power.

**Read more:** [India must directly engage with Taliban 2.0](#)

Why the US mission failed?

- The US has **never really considered Afghanistan of strategic importance**. For all its **\$1 trillion investment in Afghanistan** and its awareness of Afghanistan's mineral wealth, the US **never really invested in the Afghan economy** or attempt to integrate it into its economic sphere of influence (including India).
  - But the US did that after its interventions after World War II in Europe, East Asia, and later in the oil economies of the Gulf.
- Similarly, the US **did not invest in Afghan democracy**.

Outcomes of the Taliban rise

1. The immediate challenge is a **massive humanitarian crisis**. Hundreds of thousands are internally displaced, who have left war zones and taken shelter on pavements and parks in Kabul.
2. The **panic and rush for passports** and visas can be seen among those, who fear for their lives from the Taliban or their sponsors.

Suggestions for India:

With the Taliban in Kabul, the old debate in India on whether to talk or not to the Taliban is now academic. India has a presence in Afghanistan. So, India's solidarity and support for the Afghan people must continue.

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- The Taliban have announced that there will be no witch hunt, and it will respect a transitional process. So, India **should keep an open mind, wait and watch what they actually do** during and after the transitional process, assess how inclusive they are.
- India should also **facilitate emergency visas and evacuation of those close to India**, who will be under threat.
- India recently received an invitation to the “Troika Plus” talks in Doha. It should actively engage in that.

**Read more:** [Afghan Peace Process and India – Explained, Pointwise](#)

### Conclusion

The best choice for Afghanistan still is a negotiated settlement, instead of Taliban-dictated terms.

### Terms to know:

- [Troika Plus talks](#)
- [Taliban](#)

### 3. [An oath in whose name?](#)

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2, Fundamental Rights

**Relevance:** To understand the process of oath-taking

**Synopsis:** Time and again, the issue of oath-taking and in whose name oath is taken has been raised. The debate should be settled as per the constitution and the observations of SC

### Context:

Recently, some Karnataka ministers took oath in the name of Gaumata, Vijayanagara Virupaksha, farmers etc. This again raised the debate about oath-taking.

### Constitutional debate:

- On October 17, 1949 the item to be debated in the Constitutional assembly was oath-taking. Dr Ambedkar had proposed “We the people of India”. HV Kamath moved an amendment stating “In the name of God, we the people of India”.
- Thanu Pillai raised the point that this would make oath dependent on the matter of faith.
- This affects the fundamental right of faith as an individual has the right to believe in god or not.
- HN Kunzru also supported this view, stating that it opposes the very preamble which promises liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship.
- In the end, the matter was put to vote and HV Kamath’s amendment was rejected.

### Court’s view

- SC in 2012 observed that oaths should be taken in strict adherence to the constitution.
- In the case of MLA Umesh Challiyil, who had taken oath in the name of Sri Narayan Guru, SC observed that elected representatives should take oath in strict compliance to wordings of the constitution.
- The Supreme Court of India observed that the oath by an elected representative should be taken **“in the name of God” if the person is a believer** or should be **“solemnly affirmed” if the person is a non-believer**.

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- This would make the oaths of Karnataka legislators null and void.

### Way forward

- Constitution belongs to all the citizens whether that person is theist or atheist. And elected representatives have a greater responsibility for upholding the constitution.

### 4. Treating the invisible pandemic

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Health

**Relevance:** To understand the impact of the Pandemic on mental health

**Synopsis:** Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) report highlighted the impact on mental health by the pandemic. This needs a robust multi-stakeholder response at the central, state and local levels.

#### Introduction

India's response to disasters is reasonably good. But this is confined to visible damage and relief like providing houses, food grains or compensation.

What is often ignored is the invisible mental damage done to individuals. It is often confined to providing helplines.

#### Crisis phases:

Every disaster can be classified into pre-impact phase, impact phase and post-impact phase. Not every disaster may have a pre-impact phase, but the impact and post-impact phase will remain.

Covid pandemic is unique since the impact phase has lasted 14 months and has nearly impacted every one, in some way or the other. Survey back up this fact by revealing the prevalence of emotional disturbances.

#### Indian Scenario:

ICMR 2019 study revealed that 1/7 Indians is mentally ill. It identified that about 20 crore Indians need treatment.

National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) 2019 study revealed that one out of 3 people who committed suicide were torn by family problems.

Nearly 1/4th of people losing lives from self-damage are daily wage labourers.

**Read more:** [Naomi Osaka Episode and Mental health in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

#### Identifying the sections in need of mental support

Covid 19 has exacerbated such vulnerabilities. So six vulnerable groups need immediate attention:

- Family who lost their dear ones to Covid 19
- People who have or have had infections, and also their family members
- Healthcare workers and those involved in emergency care
- Those that have lost their job and suffered financial losses
- Those with pre-existing mental or physical illness
- Children, marginalized groups and elders.



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Steps to implement such a program:

1. Initiative should be coordinated by state governments and the module can be adapted to local needs.
2. Every district should have two coordinators from the mental health field.
3. A protocol should be evolved by a multidisciplinary mental health taskforce after detailed discussions.
4. We should rope in Psychologists, psychiatrists, medical, social workers, counselors, ASHA workers, NGOs and emotional aid workers for this humane task.
5. After screening, the multidisciplinary mental health taskforce will categorize survivors into groups based on the requirements — counselling, medication, or both, hospitalization, simple advice and information.
6. The taskforce should also have processes for directing emergency treatment of those with serious symptoms.
7. This should be followed by regular meetings, updates, discussing best practices, etc.

### Way forward

We should not wait for time to heal the mental health issues. Mental health intervention completes the rehabilitation cycle and makes it robust and holistic.

### Terms to know

- [Indian Council of Medical Research \(ICMR\)](#)
- [National Crime Records Bureau \(NCRB\)](#)

## 5. Tribunal reforms: what's abolished, what happens to pending cases

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS2- Various Quasi-judicial Bodies

**Relevance:** Tribunals in India, Justice delivery

**Synopsis:** Changes introduced by the Tribunals Reform Bill 2021.

### Context

The Supreme Court recently expressed its discontentment over the functioning of tribunals in the country. A Bench led by Chief Justice of India recently asked the government if it intends to shut down tribunals that have several key vacant posts. This came days after Lok Sabha passed the Tribunals Reform Bill to dissolve at least eight tribunals.

### What is the Bill about?

The Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2021 replaces a similar Ordinance promulgated in April 2021 that sought to dissolve eight tribunals that functioned as appellate bodies to hear disputes under various statutes, and transferred their functions to existing judicial forums such as a civil court or a High Court.

### Why tribunals are being dissolved?

Analysis of data of the last three years has shown that tribunals in several sectors have **not necessarily led to faster justice delivery** and costing more to the exchequer. This has led to the decision to rationalize the functioning of tribunals, a process that it began in 2015.



EIGHT TRIBUNALS DISSOLVED VIA BILL		
Act under which Tribunal was setup	Abolished tribunal	Where disputes are heard after abolition
The Cinematograph Act, 1952	Film Certification Appellate Tribunal	High Court
The Trade Marks Act, 1999	Intellectual Property Appellate Board	High Court
The Copyright Act, 1957	Intellectual Property Appellate Board	Commercial Division of High Court
The Customs Act, 1962	Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal	High Court
The Patents Act, 1970	Intellectual Property Appellate Board	High Court
The Airports Authority of India Act, 1994	Airports Appellate Tribunal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Central government (disposal of properties on airport premises left by unauthorised occupants)</li> <li>■ High Court (appeals against eviction orders)</li> </ul>
The Control of National Highways (Land & Traffic) Act, 2002	The National Highways Tribunal	Civil Court
The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999	Intellectual Property Appellate Board	High Court

What are the tribunals that are being dissolved?

Among the key ones are the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal (FCAT) under the Cinematograph Act, 1952; the Intellectual Property Appellate Board under the Copyrights Act, 1957; and the Customs Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal.

**Note:** Cases pending before the dissolved tribunals will be transferred to High Courts or commercial civil courts immediately.

Salient features of the bill

**Aims and objectives:** The Bill provides for **uniform pay and rules** for the search and selection committees. The move brings greater accountability on the functioning of the tribunals.

It states that the Chairpersons and Members of the tribunal being abolished shall cease to hold office. It also proposes **changes in the process of appointment of certain other tribunals.**

It states that the central government shall, on the recommendation of the **Search-cum-Selection Committee**, remove from office any Chairperson or a Member, who—

- has been adjudged as an insolvent; or
  - has been convicted of an offence which involves moral turpitude; or
  - has become physically or mentally incapable of acting as such Chairperson or Member;
- or

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- has acquired such financial or other interest as is likely to affect prejudicially his functions as such Chairperson or Member; or
- has so abused his position as to render his continuance in office prejudicial to the public interest.

**Constitution of Search-cum-Selection Committee:** The Bill brings in the Chief Secretary of the state and the Chairman of the Public Service Commission of the concerned state who will have a vote and Secretary or Principal Secretary of the state's General Administrative Department with no voting right. The Chief Justice of the High Court would head the committee, will not have a casting vote.

**However,** experts fear that the lack of specialization in regular courts could be detrimental to the decision-making process.

### 6. India's fate is tied to the rest of the world

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS2- Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests

**Relevance:** Evolution of India's foreign policy.

**Synopsis:** It was through its global interactions, India defined itself throughout its history as an independent nation

India and the world

India's fate has been closely tied to the rest of the world.

After independence

1. India required **active engagement** with a variety of partners for its **survival, security, and development.**
2. Independence and Partition left behind a messy territorial legacy. India's first leaders opted for **flexible and friendly relations with both the U.S. and the Soviet Union** and their respective allies.
3. In fact, India initially received the bulk of development and military assistance from the West. It was only from the mid-1950s onwards that the Soviet Union extended support. India also played an activist role in the **decolonizing world.**

After Cold War

The 1991 Gulf war resulted in a balance of payments crisis and the liberalisation of the economy. The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the 1993 Mumbai bombings, and the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir presented grave new security challenges.

However, the period that followed witnessed some important developments:

- **the advent of the Look East Policy and relations** with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations;
- the establishment of diplomatic ties with Israel;
- the signing of a **border peace and tranquility agreement with China;**
- initial military contacts with the U.S., and preparations for nuclear tests.

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The Atal Bihari Vajpayee government built further upon these developments:

- conducting a series of tests in 1998, **return to normal relations with most major powers** within two years.
- At the same time, efforts at normalising ties with Pakistan were frustrated by the **Kargil war**, the hijacking of Indian Airlines flight IC-814 to Kandahar (Afghanistan), and the 2001 attack on India's Parliament.
- These years also witnessed a rapid growth of the Indian economy, fuelled by the **services sector**, and a rising consumer market.

After 2004, the government worked extensively to resolve the outstanding question of India's **nuclear status**. But, the global financial crisis in 2008-09 presaged a slight change in approach.

Beginning in 2013, a **more assertive China began** to test India on the border and undermine Indian interests in South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region.

Implications for India

1. India's was successful in **consolidating territorial gains**, in accelerating economic growth, and in positioning itself in a **leadership role**.
2. Following the **1962 war with China**, Pakistani military adventurism resulted in the 1965 war.
3. The question of Indian nuclear weapons acquired greater urgency following China's test. Economic strides made, including the **Green Revolution**, undertaken with **foreign technical and financial assistance**.
4. **Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation** and the **Bangladesh war** altered India's relations with both superpowers.

### Conclusion

**COVID-19 pandemic** and its adverse effects on economic growth prospects, coupled with intensifying competition with China and turmoil in Afghanistan, will determine India's fate in the future.

However, India has **greater means to tackle them**: the sixth-largest economy in the world, well-trained and professional military, growing network of **international strategic and economic partners**.

### 7. PM emphasis on less government interference is the way to go

**Source:** [Business Standard](#)

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

**Relevance:** **To understand the direction of the nation.**

Introduction:

PM Modi vision/Speech on Independence Day:

1. The government seeks to minimize government intrusion in public lives
2. The government has repealed unnecessary laws and regulations e.g. The government has ended 15,000 compliances.
3. There is emphasis on deregulation and freedom from state and bureaucratic interference
4. For example: The opening up of mapping and surveying to firms, which thereby were empowered to collect geospatial data.

### Gaps between the vision and the reality

Actions of the government at various levels have not met such standards/visions:

1. The policy on geospatial data is, unfortunately, more of an exception than the rule
2. Instead of declining, Government's role has in fact increased in the Economy. e.g. creation of a haphazard import-substituting industrial policy in the guise of "Make in India"

### About the new vision in recent Independence day speech

The PM announced a [Gati Shakti Scheme](#). This is a 100 trillion scheme for developing "holistic infrastructure". However, it is unclear what this means, and how it is different from the Rs 100-trillion investment in infrastructure that the prime minister has talked about in two previous Independence Day speeches.

There were some priorities that seem realistic and cost-effective. These include

- The regulatory support to entrepreneurs and start-ups in Tier-II and Tier-III towns
- The government is making investments in Energy security, environmental security, and national security. All three are closely interconnected.
- Focus on renewable energy production, making India energy-independent, and of new technological advances that might be suitable for India such as green hydrogen.

### Way Forward:

It is time that government should spend less time on coming up with enormous targets that are unlikely to be achieved. Instead the government should focus more on doable and forward-looking policies

### 8. Return of Taliban has implications for India

**Source:** Indian Express ([Article 1](#)), [Article 2](#)) and [Times of India](#)

**Syllabus:** GS – 2: India and its neighborhood- relations.

**Relevance:** This article explains the recent developments in Afghanistan.

Synopsis:

Delhi must maintain vigil against a resurgence of cross-border terrorism that could quickly destabilize Kashmir and escalate the conflict between India and Pakistan.

Introduction

The rapid collapse of the Afghan government and the triumphant return of the Taliban will have a considerable impact around the world. The restoration of Taliban rule in Afghanistan with Pakistan's support undoubtedly presents some very serious potential challenges for Indian security.

**Read more:** [As Taliban makes a rapid military advance through Afghanistan, India too must brace itself for the consequences](#)

How did the US and USSR intervention in Afghanistan shaped India's history?

At the end of 1979, the Soviet Union launched a massive military invasion to protect a communist regime in Kabul. The US and Pakistan responded by unleashing a religious jihad.

These Jihads compelled Russia to withdraw in 1989.

1. The **Pakistan army used the jihadi armies** to gain control of Afghanistan and **launched a proxy war against India**, especially in the Punjab and Kashmir regions.



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2. The turbulence of the 1990s saw **deepening conflicts between India and Pakistan**. Both countries **conducted nuclear weapon tests**, and the Pak-backed Taliban rule was established in Afghanistan.

**Al Qaeda**, hosted by the Taliban, **launched terror attacks against the US** on September 11, 2001.

1. The **US retribution brought an end to Taliban rule** and compelled Pakistan to reconsider its policies.
2. Further, after 2001, there has also been a **significant expansion of the India-US strategic partnership**.

**After the withdrawal of US** forces under the [Doha Agreement](#), **Pakistan's Afghan policy regained its prime**.

The policy of the Taliban at present:

After capturing Kabul, the Taliban leaders are mentioning the following policy.

- The foreigners will have all the right to leave.
- Taliban will protect the lives and properties of Afghan people.
- The Taliban have announced that there will be no witch hunt, and they will respect a peaceful transitional process of power.
- Further, the Taliban will also respect the rights of women.

**Read more:** [Afghan Peace Process and India – Explained, Pointwise](#)

Challenges with Taliban in power:

1. Taliban might renew the support for international terrorism.
2. Pakistan might redirect the jihadi groups that fought with the Taliban towards India. Pakistan-based jihadi groups might turn their attention to Kashmir.
3. Further, the Taliban will also face troubles in balancing their religious ideology with the imperatives of state interests.

**Read more:** [India must directly engage with Taliban 2.0](#)

Suggestions for India

*Immediate initiatives*

1. India should securely **evacuate Indian diplomatic personnel** and other citizens from Afghanistan. This will require a major logistical effort.
2. The government of India must also **offer refuge to those Afghans who have worked with Indian initiatives** and are desperate to avoid potential retribution from the Taliban

*Diplomatic initiatives*

1. India must make **all possible efforts to get the international community to hold the Taliban to its word** on letting all foreigners leave with peace, protecting the lives of all Afghan citizens, and respecting international humanitarian law.
2. **India also chairs the Taliban Sanctions Committee** of the UNSC. It will have an **important role in framing the international response to the Taliban's demands** for the lifting of all sanctions against its leaders.
3. Similarly, India should also **make the international community provide humanitarian assistance to the large number of Afghan people** displaced by fighting.



*Domestic initiatives*

1. India must **maintain vigil against a resurgence of cross-border terrorism** that could quickly destabilize Kashmir and **escalate the conflict between India and Pakistan**.

**Read more:** [India's future Afghan policy – Explained, pointwise](#)

**Terms to know:**

- [Troika Plus talks](#)
- [Taliban](#)

**9. Powerless MPs, MLAs: Lawmakers don't question laws in part because anti-defection rules snuff out all dissent**

**Source:** [TOI](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2 Parliament and its functioning

**Relevance:** This article discusses the disruptive functioning and degrading quality of the Parliament.

**Synopsis:** Anti-defection rule was passed with the right intent of checking dissent. However, it is now choking the freedom of speech and expression in Parliament.

**Functioning of Parliament:**

Laws badly drafted by bureaucrats escape lawmakers' scrutiny. **Rush job legislations** are becoming a **problem to the judiciary** also as bills are not properly discussed by legislators or properly scrutinized by the house committees. There are also **frequent disruptions** in the functioning of the house.

For example:

- During 1st Lok Sabha (LS), there was an average of 135 sittings a year, while 16<sup>th</sup> LS has averaged 66 sittings.
- This problem is even bigger for State Legislative Assemblies.
  - According to PRS Legislative Research, UP, Bengal, Kolkata annually-averaged 24, 40, 53 assembly sittings and 100, 122 and 306 functional hours between 2017 and 2019 respectively
- The more worrying thing is that **state assemblies pass hugely consequential laws**, for example, on inter-faith marriage that is subject to no legislative interrogation.

**Read more:** [Functioning of Parliament: Challenges and way forward – Explained, pointwise](#)

**Reasons behind lack of discussion**

The **root cause** of this problem is the **1985 Anti- defection law** that obliges MP/MLA's to obey the party whip. Governing party MPs and MLAs cannot question bills drafted by the executive, even if they want to.

This practice is very much different from the legislative functioning in the UK & the US. There, individual legislators have the discretion to dissent over the bills, policies of their party leadership & even can force change them. They played a meaningful role in contrast to India where the legislator's role is reduced to a yes or no.

**Way Forward**

Dissent and defection are not the same. Adequate space should be provided for dissent in the parliament.

**Terms to know**

- [Whip](#)

• [Anti Defection Law](#)

**10. Our ADP model will unlock the power of data to improve lives**

**Source:** [LiveMint](#)

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

**Relevance:** To understand the Aspirational district programme (ADP)

**Synopsis:** ADP has been lauded for its result-driven approach. It becomes important to understand its features.

**Introduction**

- United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) lauded India's aspirational district program (ADP)
- It is the world's largest initiative in result based governance, reaching 250 Million people in 112 districts.
- It led to significant improvements in health, nutrition and education.
- Furthermore, it is based on an innovative 3C approach of competition, convergence and collaboration.

**Read more:** [Aspirational District Programme – Achievements and Suggestions – Explained, Pointwise](#)

**Working of ADP**

- Every month districts are ranked based on the progress they have made on key indicators like health, education, agriculture etc. This allows accurate assessment of the scheme and policy.
  - Earlier there was a lag of 4-5 years of any data collected, and it becomes available.
- Proliferation and adoption of technology have been game-changer. High-speed internet and mobile have changed the scenario.
- Big data and AI can further transform the analysis and dissemination of data.

**Possible areas of improvement**

The government needs to focus on the quality of data. For instance, there is a need to overcome errors in data entry, lack of standardization, skewed incentives to inflate data etc.

**Approach to data-driven governance:**

ADP has provided a scalable template for the affordability of administrative data. But this can be improved by the following ways.

- Since the ADP involves over 80 data points from 112 districts, it can **tap the power of automation to check large volumes of data** effectively.
- The ADP also should also commission an **independent third-party household survey** to get household-level data and to cross-check the field level data.

**Way forward**

Result based governance will improve the government services. Further, they help the government to course-correct appropriate policies and programs.

**Terms to Know**

- [United Nations Development Programme](#)

## 11. Supreme Court remarks on tribunal law is latest flashpoint between legislature, judiciary

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2 Role and power of Parliament and Judiciary

**Relevance:** To understand the tussle between Judiciary and Parliament

**Synopsis:** Friction between Judiciary & government over interference in each other domain  
There is a fresh tussle between the Judiciary and legislature over the powers and limitations of law-making on the recently passed Tribunal Reforms Act.

### Tribunal Reforms Act 2021:

- It sought the abolishment of at least seven appellate tribunals under various statutes.
- The bill also revived provisions of tenures, age criteria, and search cum selection committee for tribunal appointments.
- These provisions were earlier struck down by SC judgement in Madras Bar Association vs Union of India as it interferes with the independence of the Judiciary.

### Reasons for dissent

- Under the amendment, there is minimum age criteria of 50 years/ 4year tenure for the appointment of advocates as members of tribunals. The Supreme Court(SC) found this capping as arbitrary
- Government, on the other hand, says it will bring a specialized talent pool of advocates to pick from.
- The judiciary feels its powers are being curtailed, and Parliament wonders whether the judiciary should interfere to this extent.

### Other cases relate to Tribunals

**Roger Mathew vs Union of India:** SC struck down an amendment to the 2017 Finance Act, passed as a money Bill. The amendment altered the structure and functioning of various tribunals. In it, the bench directed the government to formulate fresh norms on the appointment of tribunal members.

**Madras Bar Association in 2010 & 2015:** Both the cases challenged various provisions relating to the establishment of the National Company Law Tribunal. In these judgements, SC had interpreted provisions relating to the appointment of members to align with the independence of the judiciary.

### Way forward:

There is a need to attain the right balance as per the constitution and for the welfare of the people.

### Terms to Know

- [National Company Law Tribunal](#)

## 12. Nutrition Security should be part of our covid response

**Source:** [LiveMint](#)

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Health & associated challenges with that

**Relevance:** To study the nutritional status of India

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**Synopsis:** The nutrition scenario is not looking good in India. The pandemic has further worsened it. There is an urgent need for policymakers to focus on nutrition.

### Findings of India's 2015-16 Health Survey:

- One in every three children in India is stunted.
- More than 50% of adolescent girls and pregnant women are anaemic.
- Almost 80% of mothers do not receive full antenatal care during their pregnancy

This was the situation when all government-run health and nutrition programmes were fully functional and easily accessible. Now, the situation has much more worsened during the corona times. Pandemic has had a negative impact on people:

- There is a **decline in uptake of health services** like antenatal checkups, counselling, consumption of micronutrient supplements among pregnant women
- There is a **decrease in dietary diversity** due to food insecurity led to adverse consequences on maternal and child nutrition
- There is a **reduction in food intake** among 90% of the households
- **Disruption in the supply of Mid-Day Meals** because of the closing of schools.
- **Loss of jobs** has made the houses more vulnerable as now they struggle for basic food

### How to address the nutrition crisis?

1. **Food and Nutrition Security:** It is crucial to address the “hidden hunger” problem, especially among vulnerable communities like pregnant & lactating women, children’s etc while making policies of food security programmes in accordance with current needs.
  - Pandemic emphasized the need for local nutritious food & community-based initiatives to tackle the problem of food and nutrition insecurity. Poshan Matka Initiative in MP and promotion of Nutrition Gardens in UP is a step in this direction
2. **Micro Nutrient supplementation:** Various initiatives have been done by many state governments like distribution of iron and folic acid, calcium tablets to pregnant & adolescent girls, Vitamin A supplementation to children to address the nutritional requirements & immunity problems.
3. **Food Fortification:** It is the process of deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply. Various states like MP, Kerala, and Odisha have introduced fortified staples & rice in their social safety net programmes. The centre should also adopt fortified staples nationwide in their safety net programmes

### Way forward

- We must realize that nutrition cannot wait.
- Policymakers should look beyond calorie intake and focus on nutrition.

### Terms to know

- [Mid-Day Meal Scheme](#)

### 13. Case for third party funding

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Arbitration and associated process

**Relevance:** To study the arbitration methods.



**Synopsis:** Third-party funding in Arbitration should be explored, with sufficient caution, to expedite access to justice.

### **Third-Party Funding in Arbitration/Litigation Funding**

- It is the process in which someone who is not involved in an arbitration provides funds to a party to that arbitration in exchange for an agreed return.
- This practice is **widely used in commercial arbitration**, as this process improves access to justice by providing advance funding & support for the expensive, lengthy litigation process.
- Historically, this form of funding was prohibited under doctrines of maintenance & champerty

### **Present Scenario**

- Now, the rules have been relaxed in various jurisdictions including the UK, the US, Canada and Australia as more focus is on access to justice.
- In India, “**non-lawyer third-party funding**” is **lawfully admissible**, i.e. where there is no personal interest of the participating advocate.
- The practice of 3<sup>rd</sup> party funding must become prevalent in India as it will not only open access to the court system but also businesses to manage their litigation position in a better way.

### **The debate around third party funding**

- The main area of concern is the disclosure of the type of funding.
- We can learn from Hong Kong Inspirational Arbitration Centre Rules. The rules stipulate that when a funding agreement is concluded, the funded party must notify the other party. After that, the arbitral tribunal or emergency arbitrator in writing of the fact that a financing agreement has been concluded, along with the identity of 3<sup>rd</sup> party sponsor.

### **Way forward**

- We have seen organizations come up like the Indian Association for Litigation finance. So, India should explore third-party funding, keeping in view it increases access to justice

### **14. The script of the new endgame in Afghanistan**

**Source:** [The Hindu](#), [Indian Express](#), [Times of India](#), [Livemint](#) and [The Economic Times](#)

**Syllabus:** GS – 2: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

**Relevance:** This article explains the recent developments in Afghanistan.

Synopsis:

Taliban will have to show moderation if they wish to be accepted as a member of the global community.

Introduction

The U.S. forces vacated the Bagram airbase (near Kabul) on July 2. Within six weeks, the Taliban captured Kabul. This shows the brittleness of Afghan security forces.

Afghanistan today is in a condition that is far worse than what existed when the Russians withdrew in the 1990s.

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How the situation is different from the 1990s?

1. In the 1990s, the Taliban were a band of outlaws. But today, they are recognised by powers such as the U.S., Russia, and China, and are on the brink of gaining a country.
2. In the 1990s, Russia had to contend with a superpower (the US) to hold the region. But this time, the US withdraws from Afghan without any credible outside power.

How did the US decision to withdraw impact it?

The US has long been searching for an honorable exit. The U.S. decision to withdraw (after the **Doha Agreement**) **results in three important signals.**

1. The US **failed to safeguard the interests of the Afghanistan people.**
2. The **U.S. had acknowledged the Taliban's supremacy** in return for the safe passage of their troops.
3. **In 2001**, the US decided to take a **global war on terror**. Beginning with Afghanistan, the US went through Iraq, Libya, and Syria. **All with mixed results.**

All this has diminished the image of the U.S. in Asia. In light of this, US's claim to 'make America great again' sounds extremely impossible.

**Read more:** [As Taliban makes a rapid military advance through Afghanistan, India too must brace itself for the consequences](#)

How did the US decision to withdraw impact China?

The US now regards China as its principal strategic competitor. While the US struck in Afghan, China started asserting its claims in the East and South China Seas.

To tackle China effectively in the Indo-Pacific, the US needs resources and attention. With the US decision to withdraw from Afghanistan, the **US now will have better options and greater resources in dealing with China.**

On the other hand, the **absence of the US in Central Asia provides an opportunity for China** in that region.

**Read more:** [Afghan Peace Process and India – Explained, Pointwise](#)

How do the old terror outfits get benefits out of Afghanistan?

- After two decades of active involvement in the affairs of Afghanistan, and spending over a trillion dollars in the process to defeat terrorism and al-Qaeda, **the U.S. has left Afghanistan without achieving any of its objectives.**
- Further, there has been a resurgence in al-Qaeda activities recently.
- The IS, after some earlier setbacks, is again regrouping and currently poses a real threat.
- So, the **collapse of the Afghan state will ignite many old threats in West Asia.**
- India – Afghanistan relations

**Read this post to know about India's Afghanistan investment.** The other investments are,

- India also provides **assistance to Afghan nationals under its Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) programmes.** So far, more than 65,000 students have studied in India under various scholarships, and there are 15,000 such students presently.
- Under the **Pakistan-Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA)**, Pakistan provided Afghan traders access to its Wagah border with India, thus allowing Afghan exports to reach India. The agreement, however, does not allow Indian goods.

**Read more:** [India's future Afghan policy – Explained, pointwise](#)

What India needs to do?

India needs to implement the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 to protect the minorities in Afghanistan.

**Read other suggestions from [Return of Taliban has implications for India](#)**

International relations with Taliban's Afghanistan:

- Among Afghanistan's neighbours, India and Iran are two countries that would find accommodation with a Taliban-dominated Afghanistan very difficult. This is due to their warm relations with the Karzai and the Ghani regimes in the past two decades.
- The Taliban will need Pakistan at least in the short and medium term. So, Pakistan will maintain cordial relations with the Taliban in the near future.
- Relations between Taliban Afghanistan and Uzbekistan and Tajikistan may not be easy, but will not lead to any major problems for now.

**Read more:** [India must directly engage with Taliban 2.0](#)

Conclusion

The situation in Afghanistan represents a severe setback for India. Afghanistan under the Taliban would remain the 'sick man of Asia' for generations to come. Because, taking over a country by force is one thing, but governing it effectively is quite another matter.

**Terms to know:**

- [Troika Plus talks](#)
- [Taliban](#)

## 15. Doctor at the door

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

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

**Relevance:** The article highlights the problems that our healthcare system is struggling with

**Synopsis:** Doorstep delivery can mitigate the effects of disruption caused by pandemics

**Introduction:**

Even before the start of the pandemic, health experts warn India of a health epidemic – one that involved Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD). During the pandemic, **faults in our healthcare system were seen visibly** when **access to institution-based treatments was severed** suddenly. There is a need for states to introspect how to strengthen the healthcare setup to prevent this from happening again.

### **An initiative of Tamil Nadu (TN)**

TN suffers from a high burden of NCD. The state has very low community control rates for hypertension (7.3%) and diabetes (10.8%). To work on this, it introduced the “Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam” scheme aimed to take healthcare to the doorsteps of the people.

- It is a **community-based scheme** to tackle and treat NCDs and to address the crucial issues of prevention and early detection
- It included **population-based screening** for 18 plus population for 10 common conditions—hypertension, diabetes, oral, cervical and breast cancers, TB, Leprosy, kidney disease, Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and mental health
- Delivery of drugs-hypertension, diabetes to patients above 45 years of age

### Impact of NCDs on India

According to India: Health of Nation's States report: 55% of the total disease burden in India were caused by NCD in 2016. This burden has been increasing across all states from 1990 to 2016.

### Way forward

There is a need to necessitate uninterrupted access to health care services, especially when the correlation between NCDs like hypertension, diabetes etc and Corona was clearly known. States should take an example from the TN model and prepare themselves for the upcoming epidemics. They have to ensure that similar disruption will not happen again.

### 16. Keeping an eye on China's expanding nuclear stack

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests

**Relevance:** Implications of China's expanding nuclear arsenal

**Synopsis:** The scope and prospective size of China's nuclear capabilities is not known clearly. India should closely watch this build-up and work towards enhancing its own capabilities. An analysis of China's expansion of its nuclear arsenal.

Context

Satellite images from **Xinjiang province** in the west of the country suggest it is building a nuclear missile silo field, a recent report from the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) says.

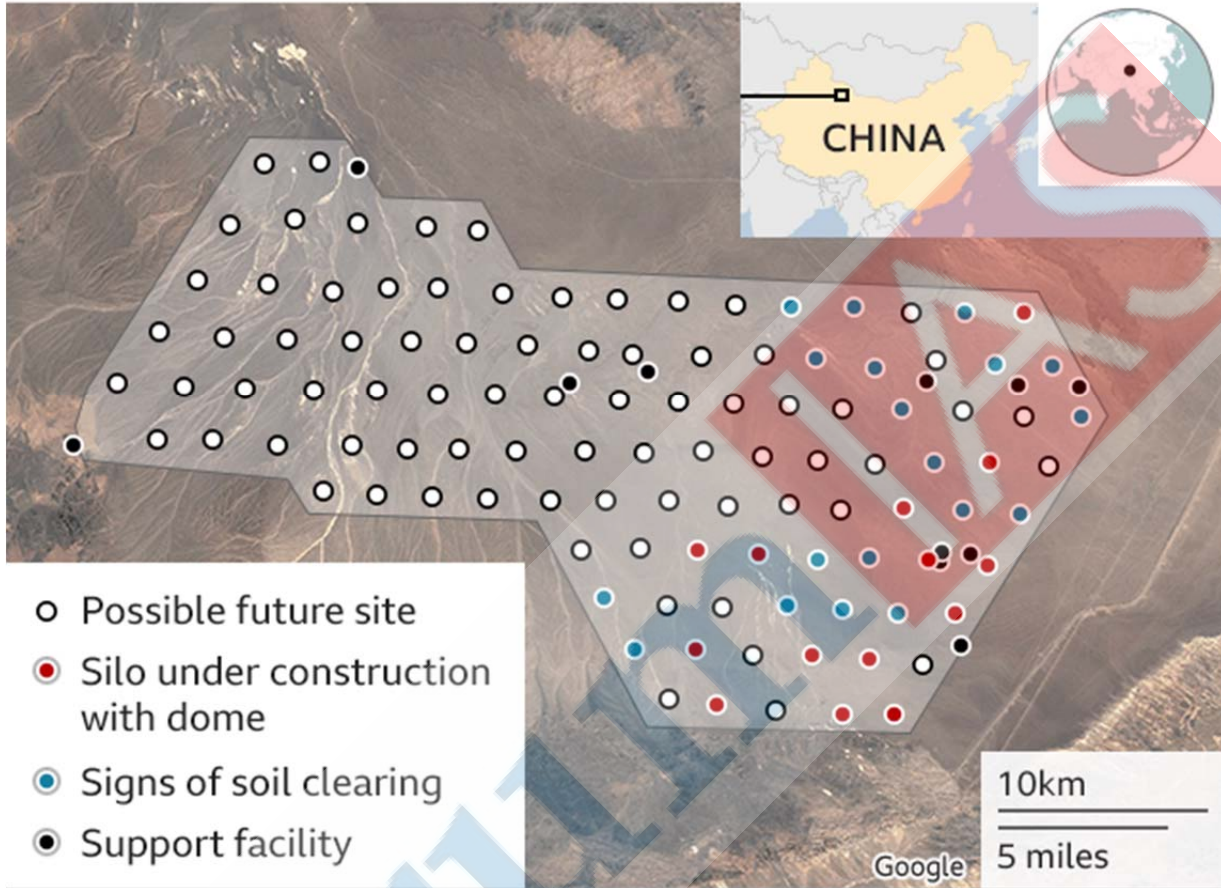
The site is believed to host 110 silos.

- This development comes against the backdrop of evidence that **China had already built a site with 120 silos** in the arid **region of Yumen**, in the Gansu province.
- These events indicate that China is fielding a larger nuclear force based on fixed land-based capabilities



# China building missile field

Missile silo field under construction



Source: Kristensen/Korda FAS 2021

BBC

Source: BBC

What is a missile silo?

It is a vertical cylindrical structure constructed underground, for the storage and launching of intercontinental ballistic missiles. The structures typically have the missile some distance below ground, protected by a large “blast door” on top. They are usually connected, physically and/or electronically, to a missile launch control center.



#### Soviet ICBM silo

The *missiles* are stored underground to provide protection from the natural elements and from attack.

#### China's nuclear arsenal

- Chinese nuclear forces stand at roughly anywhere between **250 to 350 nuclear warheads** according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) as well as the Federation of American Scientists (FAS).
- China's nuclear tipped ballistic missiles forces, whether land-based or sea-based, have certainly improved in quantity and quality.
- It's Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) capabilities and Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) capabilities in the form of the **Dongfeng-41 (DF-41)** and the **DF-26**, respectively, are its most potent land-based missile systems.

#### Reasons behind current expansion by China

1. **Increase the survivability of its arsenal** against a first strike from their nuclear adversaries, most prominently the United States. Washington, which possesses a larger arsenal, stands at 3,800 warheads, and paired with its growing missile defence capabilities poses a threat to Chinese retaliatory nuclear forces. However, other countries too figure in China's nuclear expansion such as Russia and India, even if Russia is not an overriding concern presently.

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2. **To mislead enemies:** The current silo-based missile expansion being undertaken by China can also be to mislead and deceive enemies by hiding actual number of nuclear tipped warheads.
3. **A credible nuclear deterrent:** Land-based nuclear capabilities, like silos also mean that for its enemies China will be a country with a huge number of targets to strike. The larger the target list for any potential opponent, the greater the chances of China's arsenal surviving a first strike, thereby boosting the credibility of China's nuclear deterrent. In all probability, China is expanding its nuclear forces to withstand a first strike and then execute a retaliatory attack that would defeat its enemy's missile defences.

### Implications for India

The growth in China's nuclear arsenal **might not have an immediate impact on India**, but its development of land-based nuclear silos in the Xinjiang province should worry decision-makers in New Delhi given the region's proximity to India.

- **On boundary disputes:** It is likely to have an impact on the ongoing boundary stand-off between the two countries in Eastern Ladakh. Fixed land-based nuclear capabilities give the Chinese an advantage in consolidating their territorial gains in Depsang, Demchok and Gogra-Hotsprings. It is likely to produce a suppressive effect against any conventional military escalation.

### Way forward

The strategic balance between China and India is unlikely to be altered because of the Chinese nuclear expansion, but New Delhi should keep a close eye on its neighbour and work on enhancing its own strategic capabilities.

### Terms to know

- [SIPRI](#)

### 17. Madras HC's CBI reform ideas may be unpalatable to GoI. But change along similar lines is sorely needed

**Source:** [Times of India](#)

**Syllabus:** GS -2 – Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

**Relevance:** This article explains the issues surrounding the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)

**Synopsis:** The Madras High Court's direction to reform CBI, is a reminder for the government to pursue reforms in the organization.

#### Introduction:

Recently, the Madras high court issued 12 directions to CBI. These directions are aimed at reforming CBI as a whole. These include apprising GoI of its **infrastructure, personnel, and funding requirements**. The court even asked the Centre to **pursue structural reform, making the agency an independent body** like EC and CAG.

#### About the case:

Recently, CBI made a claim that they were **lacking resources to investigate a Rs 300 crore cheating case** after a victim raised doubts about the state police probe. CBI has taken similar pitiful stances and pleaded overburden in the past. This dent the agency's residual public standing.

So, Madras HC inquired into CBI's affairs and issued 12 directions.



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Other issues with the CBI:

**High backlog in recent years:** Data submitted to Madras HC indicates that between 2001 and 2020, its conviction rate topped 65% in most years. However, against 20,804 cases registered in this period, only 7,539 cases were seen through trial, indicating a high backlog.

**Not enough investigators:** Despite India's massive economic growth between 2000 and 2020, **CBI's manpower has only marginally risen** from 5,796 personnel to 7,273. The agency has **flagged forensics as the area where investigations face huge delays** due to a shortage of manpower.

About reforming CBI and the government decisions:

The government is reluctant to reform the CBI. For instance, earlier, the Gauhati HC had held CBI's creation as unconstitutional. But the government seek a stay on the ruling.

Successive governments haven't shown interest in improving the agency's performance. So, the court itself mentioned **CBI as a "caged parrot"**.

**Read more:** [Limits of CBI jurisdiction](#)

Suggestions to improve performance of CBI

- The government can implement the recommendations of the Madras High Court. Now it is for governments to **proactively take steps that meet the needs** of a premier national investigating agency.
- The government can **enact a proper law governing its functioning, funding and accountability**. At present, CBI is operating through the sketchy Delhi Special Police Establishment Act.
- The government has to **avoid ambiguity in the promotions of CBI officers**. At present, State police inspectors and IPS officers on deputation get preference over CBI cadre in promotions to top echelons.

**Read more:** [The need for CBI to become an autonomous body](#)

**Terms to know:**

- [Central Bureau of Investigation \(CBI\)](#)

### 18. How can we guarantee the Speaker's impartiality?

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2 Parliament and State Legislatures—Conduct of Business, Powers & Privileges and Issues Arising out of these.

**Relevance:** To understand the role of the speaker in the functioning of the Indian parliament.

**Synopsis:** Either allow Parliament and state legislatures to descend into terminal decline or make the Speaker truly independent and let every legislature perform its constitutional function

#### Introduction

The main reason behind declining in the functioning of Parliament & State assemblies is the lack of independence and impartiality of the speaker

#### Features of Indian Constitution

- India adopted Westminster's model of governance.
- Members of Parliament enjoy the same powers as that of the House of Commons.
- Speaker is the supreme authority in Lok Sabha (LS) like in the United Kingdom.



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### Role of Speaker

- Being the supreme authority, his primary duty is to ensure the orderly conduct of the business of the House.
- There are two essential qualities of the office of Speaker: Independence and impartiality
- Speaker has the power to decide what issues will be taken up for discussion
- He has the sole discretion to permit an adjournment motion or calling attention notice if the issue is of urgent public importance.

In the words of:

- **V Mavalankar** “Once a person is elected Speaker, he is expected to be **above parties, above politics**”
- **Pandit Nehru** referred to the Speaker as “the **symbol of the nation’s freedom and liberty**” and emphasized that Speakers should be men of “outstanding ability and impartiality”
- **MN Kaul and SL Shakhder**, in their book “Practice and Procedure of Parliament” refer the Speaker as the **conscience and guardian of the House**.

### Why the position of the speaker is under question

In various judgement of Supreme Court on Anti Defection, the court pointed out the main cause for the partisan role of speakers in assemblies. The main reason behind that is **speaker belongs to the active ruling party**. This result in the frequent disruptions of the House.

### Impact of frequent disruptions of house

1. It not only impacts the prestige of the house but also **stalls the primary function of the legislature**: to make laws for the good governance of the country with proper debates and discussions.
2. Frequent disruptions lead to the **passing of bills without much discussion**. For e.g. in the present session, not a single bill was referred to any Parliamentary committee – as highlighted by Chief Justice of India.
3. Another consequence is **delegated legislation empowers the executive** and bureaucracy. E.g. power of retrospective notification given to the executive.

### Suggestions

Separation of power is the basic structure of the Indian constitution. If that ceases to exist, our foundation of democracy will get weaker.

It is therefore suggested that the speaker of every legislature should resign from his political party to honour the constitutional obligation of impartiality & independence. For instance, in 1967, late N Sanjiva Reddy resigned from his party when he became the Speaker.

**Read more:** [Functioning of Parliament: Challenges and way forward – Explained, pointwise](#)

### Way forward

If the office of the speaker is not made impartial, it will lead to the decline of Parliament. So, there is an urgent need for course correction.

## 19. What women bring to the 21st century workplace

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

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

**Relevance:** To recognize qualities of women and map them according to socio-economic needs

**Synopsis:** There is a need to see more women in positions of power, and that can only happen if they are recognized and enabled for their strengths and not for acting 'like men'

Introduction

Women comprise 48% of the population, but yet a fraction of them are the active drivers of India's economic growth.

### Perception against women

- Today the world is chasing the skills like AI and computing. Many reports, including World Economic Forum, highlighted the **role of emotional intelligence, creative problem-solving and critical thinking**. All these skills happen to be **innate to women**.
- Though traits like **empathy, compassion & sensitivity** that women are gifted with are considered weak, they are actually **strong**. Leaders should equip themselves with these traits to solve problems in today's work world.

### Present Education system

Our education system mainly trains us in technical knowledge & academic skills. But in contrast, most of the companies give less importance to degree and are looking for "smart generalists"

### What needs to change?

1. There is a **need to broaden the vision & aspiration of women** belonging to low-income communities. Presently, they have **limited access to jobs** related to creative and emotional intelligence
2. **More leadership roles should be assigned** to women not only on paper but in the reality, especially in Small & Medium Enterprises (SME) that create the majority of employment

### What approach needs to be adopted?

There is a need to adopt the multi-stakeholder approach so that women from lower-income groups can aspire to become financial analysts, copywriters, product managers etc. Gender, income, background, type of college should not act as deterrence in their path

### Employment scenario

Employability is becoming a socio-economic and humanitarian crisis. The causative factor is inequality. Youth and women from elite institutions are more likely to get jobs as they are equipped with soft skills demanded by the market.

So, there is a need to create a mechanism that enables seekers from a less privileged background to develop soft skills.

### Way forward

It is up to corporates and the market to realize and fill this gap. They should make an effort towards creating equal opportunities and a secure environment for women. This will enable us to beat gender and socio-economic inequality.

### 20. The police we need

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

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

**Relevance:** To understand the demands of the contemporary police system.

**Synopsis:** As society and polity are in transition, there is an urgent need to bring transformative changes in police management to meet contemporary needs.

#### What citizens aspire from police

1. To **treat all the individuals equally** irrespective of their financial status—rich or poor
2. To **receive the services that they are entitled to** – without paying any bribes. However, most people are not able to access these basic services.
3. Given the prevalence of IT, the **police are expected to be tech-savvy**.
4. The police should have **good conduct, empathy, and be responsive**.

#### Personnel management

It is important to manage the police personal.

- There is a need to **appoint brilliant & straightforward officials** to the public positions.
- **Nepotism or postings** and positions based on linkages and contacts **cannot be allowed**.
- Supreme Court (SC) mandate of the **process of selection of DGP** is the right step in this direction. The **state government should now make the appointment of three names approved by UPSC**.

#### Way Forward

India needs officers who are responsive, honest & hard-working, and not who instil fear amongst people.

### 21. The significance of the "there is no data" answer

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability

**Relevance:** To understand the government's reluctance to release data

**Synopsis:** Governments have the tendency to escape public scrutiny. In recent days, this has resulted in the government resorting to not releasing data on sensitive issues.

#### Introduction

It has often been found that governments have not provided data for issues that may show the government in a bad light.

#### This is evident in many cases:

- A World Bank report indicated 40 Million migrants lost their jobs. But the Government has said it has no Data.
- When Government was asked how many health workers lost their lives in the pandemic, Government replied that it has no data.

### Situation before pandemic

The same thing was witnessed even prior to the Pandemic:

- The government decided not to release Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) data on Household Consumer Expenditure Survey as elections were around the corner.
- Leaks from this data had suggested a slump in consumption expenditure.

### What are the reasons for not giving data:

- Reluctance for opening up to scrutiny by public and opposition
- To deflect the accountability to State Governments.
- It also allows the government to change or rewrite the narrative.

### Widening information gap

While the State is creating huge data-driven infrastructure like Aadhar and yet denying the data to the public. This widens the information gap between Public and state.

### Way forward

The state is creating **information asymmetry** by not revealing necessary information. This **ultimately results in a power asymmetry**. To avoid this, the **state must remember that truth and information is the basis of any democracy**.

## 22. Arms and the Women

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population

**Relevance:** To understand women's entry into the army

**Synopsis:** Gender parity in the army is happening at a slow pace and is mostly led by the courts.

Introduction

Recently, PM announcement to [allow girls for admission in Sainik School](#) is a welcome move that will prepare girls for equal roles & life in the military

**Read more:**

- [ITBP inducts first women officers on combat service](#)
- [SC rules in favour of permanent commission for women officers in Navy](#)

### Supreme Court (SC) judgements to bring women equal to men in the army

1. **In Feb 2020 judgement:** The court asked the government to abide by its own policy and grant Permanent Commission to women in Short Service Commission (SSC). The court also directs the government to give women command postings in all services other than combat.
2. **In Secretary, Ministry of Defence vs Babita Puniya & Ors:** the Court pointed out the “significant role” played by women since their induction in the army in 1992. So extending permanent positions to women SSC officers is a step forward in bringing equality of opportunity in the army.
3. In the recent judgement, **SC allowed women to sit for National Defence Academy (NDA) exam** as the current policy is based on “gender discrimination”.



### Why permit women?

There have been arguments about the violation of Articles 14, 15, 16, 19 of the Indian constitution, which upholds the values of equality & allows equal, non-discriminatory opportunities at work. These provisions have been violated by the denial of granting equal opportunity to eligible women.

**Read more:** [Finally, gender parity in the Indian Army](#)

### 23. Back to basics

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Issues related to the development and management of Education

**Relevance:** Focus on inclusive and quality education.

**Synopsis:** It is important for India to work on ways to strengthen foundational education for children

### Impact of the pandemic on children's education

Pandemic & lockdowns have had a serious impact on the education system. There have been:

1. Cases of alarming drop-out rates from school
2. Migration of children from private to government schools because of inability to pay the fees.
3. Increasing abuse of children at home
4. Rise in inadequate nutrition & so on

### Problems that need to be addressed

There are some major factors that need to be addressed at the foundation level:

1. **Nutrition:** As per UNICEF, India should focus on the nutritional intake of children. Children, depending on their age & gender, need to consume 1000-3200 calories per day
2. **UNDP Human Development Report 2019** mentions that If the foundational learning is weak, and students are automatically promoted, then at higher grade students will struggle to grasp concepts.
3. **National Education Policy (NEP):** NEP 2020 proposed pedagogical to teachers, but the content-heavy curriculum forces the teachers to adopt instructional rather than creative approaches.
4. **Skilled Teachers:** NEP 2020 entrusted the intellectual development of kindergarten children from the unprivileged sections to matriculation. This will not fulfil the task of making these students into creators, as they lack expertise. Also, the proposal to upgrade their skills using the online method is grossly inadequate. These problems have to be addressed.

### Suggestions

- The government should recognize that EdTech is a resource of the privileged.
- The government should mobilize students of higher education to work for 3 to 6 months in underdeveloped areas.
- Private companies should also come up with mentorship programmes.

### Way Forward

If the government wants to achieve the goal of SDG 4 (Quality Education), then the government need to work on a war footing.

### Terms to know

- [United Nation Development Report \(UNDP\)](#)
- [National Education Policy \(NEP\)](#)

### 24. The Abraham Accord as India's West Asia bridge

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – International Relations

**Relevance:** Study impact of Abraham accord on India

**Synopsis:** The signing of the Abraham Accord has helped India to remove strategic obstacles & aided defence cooperation

Introduction

India welcomed the Abraham Accord as it will bring peace and stability to the region. This accord is beneficial for India as it removed the long strategic obstacle for India: to maintain the balance between the Arab world & Israel.

#### About Abraham Accords:

These are a joint statement made between Israel, the United States and the United Arab Emirates on August 13, 2020. It also refers to the agreement reached between Israel, Bahrain and the UAE to normalise relations between them.

[Click here to read more about Abraham Accords](#)

#### How is India, strengthening the relationship with West Asian Region

1. India conducted “Zayed Talwar” naval exercise with the UAE. This will further help to deepen the fast-developing strategic cooperation between both countries
2. Visit of Indian Army Chief in Dec 2020 to the UAE & Saudi Arabia, becomes the first chief of the Indian army to do so
3. Indian Navy Chief's visit to the UAE & Oman. During the visit, the chief signed a deal with Oman for the access to Duqm Port, including dry dock to be used by the Indian Navy

#### Relationship with West Asia

- Maintaining energy security is vital for India, given India meets 80% of its oil requirements via imports.
- India has increased strategic defence relations with West Asian countries. This included the IAF visit to Saudi Arabia in 2015 to hosting the Iranian navy in 2018.
- As tensions between Iran, Israel & the USA escalated, the Indian Navy carried out [operation Sankalp](#) which escorted 16 Indian-flagged vessels a day.
- The Abraham accord may pave the way for greater defense relations with West Asian countries.
- Right from NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) days, West Asia has been the focus of India's foreign policy and will remain so in the near future.

### Relationship with Iran

Iran, as a part of West Asia, plays a significant role:

- India used Iranian airspace & facilities to evacuate its diplomatic staff from Kandahar. This shows a level of strategic interest and commonality at play on certain issues in the region
- Projects like the Chabahar port & Chahbahar-Zahedan rail project plays a critical role in India- Iran relations.
- Recent visits by various ministers on both sides highlights strategic cooperation between both countries despite the sanctions by the USA or Iran conflict with other West Asian countries.

### Way forward

India's assertive role in West Asia will be reflective of its interest and its greater role in West Asia and the world.

## 25. Collegium's list of recommendations to Supreme Court breaks a deadlock — and leaves a trace

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 Structure, organization & Functioning of Judiciary

**Relevance:** To understand the issue of deadlock in judicial appointments

**Synopsis:** The main problem behind the judicial appointment process is its opaqueness. No reasons are given for the choice of those selected or left out. This was not always so.

Introduction

Recently, the Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India NV Ramana recommended nine names for appointment as judges to the top court. This is heartening, as it may also open the possibility of the first women chief justice of India.

Nearly after 22 months of deadlocks, the news of appointments of Judges to the High Court (HC) can pave the way for better access to Justice.

The beginning of the end of a deadlock between the government and the Judiciary over the appointments in HC is welcome news.

**Read more:** [The Collegium System – Explained Pointwise](#)

### Issues with Collegium

There are problems with the opaqueness of the judicial process.

- Earlier, in 2017, the collegium had decided that the decisions of collegium will be put on the website when they are sent to the Government.
- However, there have been instances of opaqueness. For instance, In May 2019 the 2017 recommendation was reversed by the then collegium.

### Way Forward:

Given the vitality of the Judiciary, it is important that it preserves its integrity and maintains public trust. Further, more women judges need to be elevated in the high courts.

**Read more:** [Issue of Gender Gap in Judiciary – Explained, Pointwise](#)

## 26. Lessons from India's all cause mortality rate

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues related to development and management of services related to health

Relevance: To understand the impact of Covid 19

Synopsis: There have been allegations of the government suppressing the death data. This can be derived from the estimate of excess deaths during the pandemic period.

### Estimates of excess death

Excess deaths are the deaths that have occurred over and above normal death.

It is difficult to estimate the deaths caused by Covid-19 as specific data is not available. However, reference can be taken from excess deaths caused by Pandemic, data of which can be taken from sources like civil registration system.

Data shows that there was an estimated “excess deaths” of 3.5 – 3.7 million nationwide from April 2020 to June 2021. This amounts to 35% more deaths than expected. The numbers are alarming as they can increase as more data comes in.

### Deaths during the pandemic period

We have limited data related to death registration. In most of the states, either the data is incomplete or unavailable. Moreover, there is a problem with the organization of data.

Data taken from 12 states like AP, Bihar, and Haryana etc, shows six million deaths, which are 1.3 Mn more than the expected deaths. Extrapolating this to Pan-India, it may reach around 2.8Mn, which is 8.5 times the official Covid-19 death toll.

### Global Trends

- India's surge in mortality places India lower than Mexico but significantly higher than the USA.
- However, we cannot be sure how many of India's excess deaths were because of Covid-19.

Though, as per the [latest National serosurvey](#), 60-70% of the population might have been impacted. This could mean a majority of India's excess deaths could have been because of Covid 19.

### State-wise trends

- States like Kerala, HP, Punjab show lower excess mortality than expected.
- AP and MP on the other hand show excess mortality.
- Around 2/3<sup>rd</sup> deaths took place in the Covid wave of May 2021.
- Thus, this calls for the need to close the gaps in the registration system.

### Way Forward

Though the cause is difficult to determine what is evident that there was a significant surge in death rates during the pandemic. This calls for the need to strengthen the civil registration system.



## 27. What ails mid-day meal scheme's implementation?

**Source:** [Business Standard](#)

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes

**Relevance:** issues with the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)

**Synopsis:** Analysis of data shows that India has fewer states now providing egg in mid-day meal schemes, even fewer are provisioning fruits and only a third of the states/UTs are giving milk to children.

Context

In June 2021, the Kerala High Court put a temporary stay on a controversial order passed by the Lakshadweep administration banning chicken and meat from the mid-day meal scheme. While passing the order, the division bench asked the government why it was upsetting the food habits of the region.

Lakshadweep is among the few states which offer meat and chicken to its school going students as part of the mid-day meal programme.

Issues with MDMS

Analysis of annual work plan and budget reports from the states for 2015-16 and 2020-21 shows the following issues:

### On provisioning of meat/chicken:

- While five states offered meat/chicken/fish in their mid-day meal scheme in 2015-16, the **number has now reduced** to three. (Tripura only offers chicken sometimes, whenever local social workers provide it).
- Jammu and Kashmir has **stopped offering meat products**, and so has Nagaland.
- In fact, of all the states, **Lakshadweep remains the only state** which offers a meat/chicken/fish diet four times a week to its school-going children.

### On provisioning of eggs:

- Although the National Institute of Nutrition has recommended egg as part of the mid-day meal diet, **less than half of the states and UTs** have implemented the scheme.
- According to 2020-21 data of the 36 states and UTs, **only 15 offered egg to students**.
- There is a **wide variation** among states in the provisioning of eggs. In Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, the states serve eggs five days a week; in Odisha, Puducherry and a few other states, it is served twice a week.

### On provisioning of fruits:

- Milk and fruits are **rarer commodities**. Even though demands have been made to include milk in mid-day schemes, analysis shows that only 11 states till now have made provisions to serve milk—higher than 8 in 2015-16.
- **Only 6 states made provisions to serve fruits in 2020-21**, and the count has declined from 2015-16 when 12 states were serving fruits.

### Centre's expenditure

- The **centre's expenditure on mid-day meal programmes has remained constant** over the years.

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- In 2014-15, the centre allocated Rs 11,051 crore towards mid-day meal scheme programme, the following year allocation had fallen to Rs 9,236 crore. In 2019-20, only Rs 9,699 crore was allocated towards the programme.
  - The centre shares 60% of the cost in the programme with the rest borne by the states.
  - In the case of union territories, the entire cost is borne by the government of India and for the north-eastern states the share is 90:10.
- Success under MDMS
- **Reduction of stunting:** A recent study published in Nature Communications showed that the prevalence of stunting was significantly lower in areas that implemented the mid-day meal scheme in 2005. Women who received mid-day meal benefits in school were less likely to have stunted children.
- **Increasing enrollment:** One of the goals of the mid-day meal scheme was to increase enrollment. Some areas like Jammu and Kashmir still use eggs and other items as incentives to drive enrollment in schools.

**Also Read:** [Mid-day meals leave a long-lasting impact](#)

### Suggestions

- **Provisioning of milk, eggs and fruits** can help provide micro-nutrients for the body.
- The calorie and nutritional prescription is based on the nutrient gap that is prevalent in children of different age group. Hence, the **food under MDMS should be seen just as a supplement**. It should fill the nutritional gap in the diet of the children, not substitute it

### 28. How are Rajya Sabha members punished for misconduct in the House?

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Functioning of Parliament

**Relevance:** To understand the suspension of the members of Rajya Sabha

**Synopsis:** There have been incidents of misconduct inside the house. The recent incident raises the question of action that should be taken against such members.

#### Introduction:

- There are speculations in the Rajya Sabha (RS) over the punishment to MP for the misconduct.
- Chairman has the power to conduct smooth proceedings of the house.
- If any rules are violated, the Chairman has the power to initiate disciplinary action.
- But the Rules of the House **do not empower Parliament to inflict any punishment** on its members **other than suspension** for creating disorder in the House.

#### Suspension rules of RS

**Rule 256 of the Rajya Sabha's Rules of Procedure:** Specifies the acts of misconduct.

- Under this, an MP can be suspended for disregarding the authority of the Chair or wilfully abuse the rules or obstruct the business of the house.
- However, the power to suspend an MP is vested in the house, not the chairman. The chairman only names the member, while the Parliamentary Affairs minister or any other minister moves the motion for suspending the member.

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### Terms of suspension

- The maximum period of suspension is for the remainder of the session
- Suspended members cannot enter the chamber or attend the meetings of the committees
- He will not be eligible to give notice for discussion or submission
- He loses the right to get a reply to his questions

### The procedure followed

- **When the misconduct is noticed by the chair**
  - Punishment or punishing action is usually taken immediately. Punishing members long after the occurrence of misconduct is rare.
- **For the acts of misconduct by the MPs outside the House**
  - A privilege committee is constituted.
  - The privilege committee investigates the matter and recommends the course of action, and the House acts on it.

### Appointment of the special committee

- These ad-hoc committees are appointed **only to investigate serious misconduct** by MPs **outside the house**.
- These are usually appointed when the misconduct is very severe and the house is deciding to expel the member.
- No special committee is required to go into what happens before the eyes of the presiding officer in the House. As per the rules of the House, they need to be dealt with then and there.

### Some incidents from the Past

- The first case of expulsion occurred in 1951. A committee was appointed to investigate the conduct of an MP who accepted financial benefits from business houses to canvass support for them in the government and Parliament. He was found guilty and was therefore expelled
- Another committee was appointed in 2005 to inquire into the issue of MPs accepting money for raising questions in Parliament. The MPs linked to this matter were expelled.

### Way forward

The rules do not grant any other power than suspension. It is time to tighten such rules for misconduct inside the temple of democracy.

### 29. History over geography

**Source:** [The Hindu](#), [Indian Express](#) and [Business Standard](#)

**Syllabus:** GS – 2: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

**Relevance:** This article explains the recent developments in Afghanistan.

Synopsis:

The geopolitics that happened in Afghanistan provided a new strategic boost. This is the best chance for India to focus on maritime power and opportunity rather than overland threats

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### Background

Please read the following two articles for a better understanding.

1. [The script of the new endgame in Afghanistan](#)
2. [Return of Taliban has implications for India](#)
3. [New Delhi's Af-Pak: Old friends versus old foes: Should India accept Taliban, betray Afghans or support resistance movements like Saleh's?](#)

About Afghanistan (the global battlefield) and its geopolitics



Source: Maps of India

Afghanistan has always been the ultra-poor, deeply conservative, tribal, sparsely populated and loosely governed land-locked nation. At present, the nation lying between the warring great powers of the day. That makes it a **battlefield for global powers. With enormous collateral damage and no benefits.**

For instance, **Imperial Britain and Czarist Russia in the 19th century**, the **Soviet Union and the US in the 20th century**, the US and stateless pan-national al Qaeda in the 21st century.

Its location made it the “bali ka bakra” or **sacrificial goat in the Great Game, the Cold War and the War on Terror.**



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Geopolitics since the entry of Pakistan:

1. Pakistan came into being only in 1947 and **inherited colonial India's borders to the west**. Pakistan's only utility to the US-led Western Bloc was where it sat on the world's map. Thus bringing Pak into the western formal military alliances.
  - This geography made it the frontline state in the first Cold War because it shared a long border, a religion, tribal ties and access to Afghanistan.
  - There are instances where the US conducted flying of U-2 spy planes over the Soviet Union from Peshawar.
2. Pakistan became doubly important in 1971 as physical and political proximity with China.
3. Pakistan had lost its history-shaping geo-strategic blessing after the disintegration of the USSR. This was also when a US warming up to India and the [de-hyphenation of its policy](#) on the subcontinent began.

**Read more:** [Afghan Peace Process and India – Explained, Pointwise](#)

Geopolitics of India

1. India inherited about 15,000 km of land borders. On the day it became independent, about a half of it was abutting Pakistan (East and West Pakistan). The next major boundary sharing between China. So, China emerged as a threat in less than a decade.
2. Even after the creation of Bangladesh, India's strategic thought became land border-oriented. India constantly thought of Pakistan, terrorism, China and became reactive and defensive.
3. This took away India's attention from the vast 7,500 km-plus coastlines. India's coast constitutes some of the world's most important sea lanes, with enormous exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and island assets on the east and the west, a region of incredible opportunity.
4. For 75 years, India's **strategic thinking has been so distracted** by a land threat.

Geopolitics and the stability in Afghanistan

1. **Russia** wants to ensure that the Taliban virus doesn't infiltrate the Central Asian republics. As Russia is making cordial relations with them
2. **China** also has similar concerns for the following reasons.
  1. China does not want the Taliban to tie up with the Muslim Uyghurs.
  2. A stable Afghanistan is vital for their mega CPEC investments.
2. **Pakistan has zero capacity to threaten India through Afghanistan**. This is because of the following reasons.
  1. The US did not help Pakistan as they helped the Taliban to defeat the US
  2. China wants peace and stability in Afghanistan, so any attempt to promote terror will negatively impact the development of Pakistan.
3. About the return of the Taliban and Geopolitics of India
4. The fall of Kabul and the consequent knock-on effects in the region will have several potential implications for India's foreign policy and its strategic choices and behaviour.
5. The return of the Taliban to Kabul has effectively brought **India's 'mission Central Asia' to rest**. This is because,
  - There is **little physical access** to India with the north-western landmass. Further, India's interest also shifted towards Indo-Pacific

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- The developments in Afghanistan could **nudge India to seek stability**, if not peace, with Pakistan.

So India needs to set aside Pakistan and Afghanistan and **start focusing on our maritime power and opportunity**. This is India's greatest opportunity in 75 years to shift its strategic gaze from the north to the south.

### Terms to know:

- [Taliban](#)

### 30. Preparing India for a sporting future

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS2- Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors

**Relevance:** Sports ecosystem in India

**Synopsis:** Though India has a large and talented population as well as a history of sporting excellence, but still it has struggled to raise medal count. A look at the causes and suggestions to bring a change.

#### Context

In Tokyo 2020, India won first gold in athletics, the hockey team did wonders and there were successes in other sports such as discus throw, golf, fencing, etc.

The **Target Olympic Podium Scheme, Khelo India and the Fit India Campaign** have laid the foundations for greater success.

#### Issues with India's sports ecosystem

1. One issue is the **inability to create the right supporting atmosphere**.
2. Sports generate much interest, but there is a wide gap between **incentives and participation**.
3. **Lack of grassroots sporting culture**. India needs regional leagues to provide an opportunity for young athletes. Also, university system can be transformed into an oasis for Olympic excellence.
4. The **conventional route is bureaucratic**. It needs to be simplified, with yesteryear's sports persons leading the charge.
5. Another issue is **the rise of modern technology**. This generation gives much importance to play station than playing fields, leading to a lack in physical sports activity.
6. Lastly, there is need for a **shift in parental attitude** towards sports. With government, and the corporate sector support for our players, they will realize that sports make for an attractive and honorable career.

#### Suggestions/Measures

1. Encouraging states towards **"One State, One Sport" outlook** to bring a focussed approach. They can prioritize one game or promote a few based on the available talent pool, natural interest, climatic conditions and available infrastructure.
2. Corporates in India should adopt **"One Sport, One Corporate"**. It can help in budding talent, building leagues, enhancing the fan experience, marketing as well as merchandising to enhance the financial kitty of players.
3. The **National Education Policy** also consists of mechanisms that will **make sports education an attractive option**. For example, India's first sports university in Manipur.

4. The **sponsorship pattern has transitioned from FMCG brands to new FinTech**. This can be a win-win for players, corporates, and the game itself.

**Must Read:** [Sports sector in India: issues and challenges – Explained](#)

### 31. Faith and Marriage

**Source:** [Indian Express](#), [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Fundamental Rights

**Relevance:** To understand the issue of interfaith marriages

**Synopsis:** Dubious legislations cannot be allowed to criminalise interfaith marriages

#### Introduction:

Gujarat HC has recently struck down certain provisions of the 'Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act, 2021' which are contrary to the fundamental rights of the citizen.

- Many states like UP, MP, Himachal and Gujarat have brought laws against forced conversion like "Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment Act) 2021.

**Read more:** [Issue of interfaith marriages and laws in India](#)

#### What do the laws say?

- They have created 'conversion by marriage' as one of the illegal forms of conversion. However, the vagueness of the provisions gives police the power to hold police inquiries.
- The law also allows an aggrieved person, anyone related by blood to lodge an FIR.
- This often subjects the couple or bride/groom to criminal proceedings.

**Read more:** [What are the issues in anti-conversion law?](#)

#### What do the courts say?

- Gujarat HC has stalled some provisions of the Act and has stopped initiation of criminal proceedings against such couples unless they have there were any of the illegal elements involved.
- This is also in line with Supreme Court (SC) rulings that states cannot police private lives and personal choices guaranteed under Article 21 of the constitution.
- In Shafin Jahan Vs Ashokan case, the SC made it clear that the **right to marry is an integral part of a person's choice**.

#### Way Forward

The Gujarat HC's reading of the law will hopefully have a bearing on other courts where similar laws have been challenged.

#### Terms to know

- [Article 21](#)

### 32. Arrest is not always a must, says Supreme Court

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-2 Judiciary and the Fundamental Rights

**Relevance:** To differentiate between the right to arrest and need to arrest

**Synopsis:** Supreme Court (SC) mentioned that arrest provision in law does not mean that government can use power indiscriminately to crush the personal liberty

#### Introduction

- Recently, the SC has held that merely because **the law allows arrest, it doesn't mean that the State can use the power** indiscriminately.

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- This ends up crushing the personal liberty provided under Article 21 of the constitution.
- Certain provisions of CrPC like section 170 (presenting accused at the time of filing the charge sheet) should **not be construed as a right to arrest**.

**Read more:** [SC: Arrest should not be done as routine](#)

### **When does the occasion to arrest arise?**

The occasion to arrest can be understood by the following points.

1. When custodial investigation becomes necessary.
2. When the crime is a heinous crime.
3. When there is the possibility of influencing the witnesses or the accused.

### **What should be done?**

- A distinction should be made between the power to arrest and the justification to exercise it.
- If an arrest is made a routine, it can cause incalculable harm to reputation and self-esteem.
- If the accused is cooperating, then there should be no compulsion for the investigating officer to arrest.

### **Way Forward**

There is a need to strike the right balance between thorough investigation and the rights of the accused.

### **Terms to know**

- [Article 21](#)



# General Studies Paper - 3

General Studies - 3

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**1. PM pledges to make India energy independent by 2047, cites fuel bill**

**Source:** [Business Standard](#)

**Syllabus:** GS -3 – Infrastructure: Energy

Introduction:

The Prime Minister of India has announced new goals during his Independence Day Speech. What are the Goals announced by the Prime Minister?

**Energy Independent India by 2047:** The Prime Minister has announced a target of making India an 'Energy Independent' nation by the time the country reaches 100 years of India's independence, in 2047.

Present Energy Situation:

1. India at present spends more than Rs 12 trillion annually on energy import.
2. India announced a goal in 2015 to make a 10% cut in crude oil import dependence by 2022.
3. This target is far from being achieved and the country's import reliance has only risen. Instead of cutting imports by 10 percent, its proportion has continued to rise from 2015.
  - o Annual **domestic crude oil output has fallen** to below 30 million tonnes (mt) in 2020-21 from 35.5mt in 2015-16. Due to this, the total crude oil import has risen to 226 mt.

How India is moving towards Energy independent?

1. The Indian Government plans to make India energy independent by 2047 through various schemes such as 20% Ethanol blending and providing an impetus to electric mobility among others.
2. **Net Zero Railway Emission by 2030:** Indian Railways has set a target of becoming Net Zero Carbon Emitter by 2030.
  - o The Indian Railways plans to achieve its Net Zero Carbon emitter target through a mix of electrification, improving energy efficiency of locomotives and trains. Further railways also planned a green certification for installations and stations, fitting bio toilets in coaches and switching to renewable sources of energy.

What has been achieved so far in railways?

1. Around 71% of the total Broad-Gauge (BG) network of Indian Railways has been electrified by March 31, 2021.
2. The Central Organisation for Railway Electrification plans to electrify all BG routes of the Indian Railway by December 2023.

Global Green Energy Hub in India:

1. The Government of India has announced the [National Hydrogen Mission](#) to make India a Global Green Energy Hub.
2. Green Hydrogen is pure hydrogen generated by using renewable energy such as solar power and wind energy. The by-products are water and water vapour.

## 2. On top of the scrap heap (On Vehicle scrappage policy)

**Source:** [Business Standard](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Government policies and interventions, Environmental pollution

**Relevance:** On vehicle scrappage policy

**Synopsis:** Vehicle scrappage policy is a step in the right direction, but its success is predicated on fulfillment of several conditions. A look at some of such factors.

Background

- **Read here:** [PM launches scrap policy for unfit vehicles](#)

**Must Read:** [National Vehicle Scrappage policy – Explained](#)

**Note:** Please go through above articles before moving forward.

Issues/concerns

1. **Cooperation of the states:** The Motor Vehicles Act falls in the Concurrent List of the Constitution, so some of the tax breaks announced in the policy will require the cooperation of the state governments, which levy annual or lifetime taxes on motor vehicles, and it is as yet unclear whether states are on board.
2. **Lack of infra:** India lacks the necessary eco-system, in the shape of automated fitness centers or sufficient scrapping centers. Here, too, the cooperation of the states would be necessary. The creation of large-scale scrapping centers may be uncertain, too.
  - Though a vibrant raddi industry exists for old vehicles, it is largely unorganized and piecemeal. An organized business linked to the policy will require large-scale logistics and real estate, which could limit the business to larger enterprises rather than micro, small, and medium enterprises.

Way forward

For the policy to work, it is critical for the government to come up with clear incentives for scrapping centres so that they are up and running before the policy comes into effect. Without these, the policy, which has the potential to generate a decent level of unskilled-level employment, will end up like the e-vehicles policy, where the lack of recharging centers has constrained the expansion of the industry.

## 3. The temptation of a sunscreen to cool the planet

**Source:** [Mint](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

**Relevance:** Fighting climate change and its impacts.

**Synopsis:** Analysis of Solar-Geo engineering as a possible solution against effects of global warming. An analysis.

Context

In the background of the latest **IPCC** report on climate change, expectations from 26th United Nation Climate Change Conference (**UNFCCC**) have increased. However, as the effects of global warming worsens, we should also look towards lesser-talked about solutions like Solar-Geoengineering.

What is solar geoengineering?

Solar geoengineering is a specific form of albedo modification in which highly reflective particles are introduced into the atmosphere to increase Earth's albedo. This would **reduce incoming**

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**light** (radiation) from the sun, and thereby decrease the amount of energy (heat) reaching Earth's surface.

Solar geoengineering methods

- **Placing of huge mirrors in the orbit**
- **Brightening of natural clouds**– by spraying over sea formations which will radiate the solar rays back into the space
- **Reduce cloud density**– so that they trap less long-wave radiation keeping earth cool
- **Generating sea-foams** which can compensate polar glacier melting by acting as a natural reflector.
- **Addition of reflective aerosols into stratosphere** – it will interfere with our weather patterns, ocean currents, marine life etc.

Issues/Concerns

As there is no precedent of such kind of geoengineering project, so the costs and the risks involved are still unknown.

### Conclusion

The option of a global reflective shield needs to be there in the global agenda for multilateral climate talks. Its risk should be weighted against rewards. India in the meanwhile should study the option on its own to arrive at conclusion shaped by scientific findings.

**Terms to know:**

- [IPCC](#)
- [UNFCCC](#)

### 4. [Learning from China \(On economic growth & development\)](#)

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

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

**Relevance:** Agriculture reforms on the line of China are necessary to improve living standards

**Synopsis:** The focus of India's economic policy has to be on quality education, skill development, and agriculture reforms. Lessons from China.

Context

Post independence we have achieved several milestones like, reducing poverty, improving literacy, increasing life expectancy etc. Green revolution also played an important role in achieving food security.

But, it is equally important to look after the failures as well. This can be done by evaluating how other nations have performed, especially those which started with a similar base or even worse conditions than us. If some countries have done better than us, we should not hesitate to learn from them.

Comparison with neighbours

- **Pakistan** – independent India has done better than Pakistan if measured on a per capita income basis.
- **Bangladesh** – its per capita income is marginally higher than India
- **China** – Though started at a similar position, China is much ahead of India both in terms of GDP and per capita income.



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The real comparison of India should be with China, given the size of population of the two countries and the fact that both countries started their journey in the late 1940s.

Reason behind China's progress

China started changing track to **more market-oriented policies**, beginning with agriculture, from 1977.

- It introduced the **Household Responsibility System** and liberation of agri-markets which led to an annual average agri-GDP growth of 7.1% during 1978-1984. This led to increase in farmer's real income, giving scope for introduction of more agricultural reforms.
- It also created a **huge demand for manufactured products**, triggering a **manufacturing revolution** in China's town and village enterprises.

Suggestions for India

- **Liberating agri-markets**– China's reforms started with agriculture, and India till date had been avoiding agriculture reforms.
- **Increasing purchasing power of people**: For manufacturing to grow on a sustainable basis, we have to increase the purchasing power of people in rural areas by raising their productivity and not by distributing freebies. It requires investments in education, skills, health and physical infrastructure both by the government as well as by the private sector
- **Population control**- China adopted the one-child norm from 1979-2015. As a result, its per capita income grew much faster. India's attempts to control its population succeeded only partially and very slowly. Poor education, especially that of the girl child, is at the core of this failure.

### 5. India's first leopard reserve offers lessons in coexistence, conservation

Source: [Business Standard](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

Relevance: Ecosystem conservation via community participation.

Synopsis: Communities have long co-existed with leopards in Jhalana (Rajasthan) which is India's first leopard reserve declared in 2016.

Benefits of leopard conservation

- Stray dog population is kept under check
- Forest acts as a temperature and pollutant sink
- Leopards scavenge carcasses of cattle that villagers would otherwise find difficult to dispose
- Issues
- **Human-wildlife conflict**: Increase in leopard population along with decline in prey population could lead to human-wildlife conflict
- **Accidental deaths**: Forests cut off by state and national highways is leading to accidental deaths of leopards
- **Inbreeding** among the leopards

### Conclusion

Developing viable animal corridors is the only solution to address all these issues.

**Terms to know:**

- [Indian Leopard](#)

**6. [The toxic drug impurity imperiling Indians](#)**

**Source:** [Live Mint](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life

**Relevance:** The role of Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) in administering safe pharmaceutical drugs.

**Synopsis:** Detection of carcinogenic compounds in commonly used drugs has plunged the global pharma industry into crisis mode. India's drug regulator has done little to protect citizens.

**Background**

Research has found that many drugs produced by global pharmaceutical industry have the presence of **N-Nitroso-dimethylamine or NDMA**. These contaminated drugs include ranitidine, tuberculosis drugs (rifampin and rifapentine), diabetes drugs (metformin and pioglitazone) and sartan group of blood pressure drugs.

**What is N-Nitroso-dimethylamine or NDMA?**

1. NDMA and many of its related compounds together called nitrosamines are **strong carcinogens** among animals, and likely have the same effect in humans.
2. Nitrosamines are often formed whenever so-called nitrosating agents (compounds containing oxidised nitrogen, for example) react with compounds called **amines** in an acidic environment.
3. The US, European Union and Australia prohibit sales of many popular drugs that can break down into a potent carcinogen like NDMA.

**Risks associated with NDMA**

- Through research, it was found that nitrosamines **trigger cancers** in multiple species. Epidemiological studies hinted strongly that nitrosamines were carcinogenic in humans too.
- One of the most challenging aspects of controlling nitrosamines in drugs is that they are toxic even at tiny levels.

**Prevalence**

Low levels of nitrosamines can be found in several everyday products and even natural resources such as air and water. Several foods have it, including cured meats, cheese and beer. Even drinking water can have it, as can the polluted air.

- In fact, some of the **most potent toxins in tobacco smoke** are nitrosamines. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends an upper limit for NDMA in drinking water.

**Steps taken by global regulators**

Actions so far have included recalling and suspending sales of contaminated batches, widespread testing of samples, and the introduction of new quality control measures to prevent future contamination.

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All these actions have happened in full public view, with the regulators sharing their decisions continuously with patients, doctors and manufacturers. **For instance**, In Canada, manufacturers are required to test samples from their batches multiple times during the drug's shelf life, to make sure NDMA is below safe limits.

Further, in the US, the nitrosamine discoveries have led to lawsuits against the makers of ranitidine and sartans.

India's reaction

Indian drug regulator, the **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)**, has barely communicated with consumers over this issue. CDSCO currently doesn't impose any standards for nitrosamines.

Since 2019, CDSCO has only directed state drug regulators to inform pharma companies to **"verify their products"** and to **"take appropriate measures to ensure patient safety"**.

- Directions issued do not ask companies to recall or suspend sales of their products if nitrosamine levels are high, nor to conduct risk assessments. It is also unclear if CDSCO independently tested Indian drug products for nitrosamines, instead of merely leaving it to manufacturers.
- In fact, the CDSCO's four central drug-testing laboratories do not have the equipment required to do such tests. Recently, joint drugs controller of India, said these labs did not have instruments called **Liquid Chromatography-High Resolution Mass Spectrometry systems (LC-HRMS)** which are crucial for measuring nitrosamines.

Due to lack of any substantial directions from CDSCO, some firms have conducted recalls, but others continue to sell their products.

### Way forward

When the US FDA learnt of NDMA in the tuberculosis drugs, rifampin and rifapentine, it took a temporary decision to increase the allowable level of NDMA in these drugs, because no alternative drugs were available for this deadly disease. And pulling them from the market immediately would have caused dangerous shortages.

CDSCO needs to make these decisions too. But there is no public record of the agency having weighed the risks and benefits of ranitidine, sartans, metformin or other contaminated drugs before allowing them to be sold freely. Nor is there any record of the agency testing these drugs. This lack of communication has left many consumers with little faith in the agency.

### Terms to know:

- [CDSCO](#)

### 7. [We've successfully made Covid vaccines. Now, India must focus on drug development](#)

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology

Relevance: Issues related to the development and production of new antibiotics

Synopsis: Efforts should be initiated to consolidate existing strengths in pharmaceuticals and support the country's antibiotic needs

Challenges posed by AMR

- India has one of the highest levels of antibiotic resistance. It complicates not only the treatment of life-threatening infections, but also endangers outcomes in routine hospital procedures.

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- Moreover, the benefits gained through medical advances are nullified when patients contract drug-resistant bacterial infections.
- The pandemic, had further complicated the situation. Around 3-4% COVID patients are acquiring secondary bacterial infections. A recent ICMR study reported high mortality rate of 56% among Covid patients infected with resistant bacterial infections.

Issues in development of new antibiotics

- Poor return on investment,
  - The complexity of discovering novel antibiotics for multidrug-resistant pathogens,
  - The high cost of bringing a novel antibiotic to the market,
  - Irrational use that renders drugs ineffective and contributes to their short market-life.
- Therefore, required level of attention and resources are not channelled in to this.

This has impacted new drug development and research has stagnated with all major pharma companies exiting the arena.

Worse, antibiotics, recently discovered and developed in the West, do not find their way to India in a timely manner. For instance, Antibiotics such as imipenem/relebactam, and meropenem/vaborbactam, available in the US and EU for more than two years now, are yet to be introduced in India.

**Must Read:** [What is Anti-Microbial Resistance \(AMR\)? – Explained](#)

Suggestions

1. **Timely infusion of funds:** The development of the Covid vaccine in India was made possible by the timely infusion of funds as a result of advance purchase payments to companies involved in production. The Covid vaccine story needs to be replicated to support the country's antibiotic needs.
2. **Plan to develop new anti-microbials:** India needs to put together a plan for developing new anti-microbials. As a first step, the government needs to recognize the deficiencies in the production pipeline.
3. Efforts should be initiated to **consolidate the country's existing strengths** in pharmaceutical by engaging relevant actors.
4. Independent studies demonstrating the therapeutic value of novel drugs could contribute to identifying drugs whose development can be undertaken.

### Conclusion

Despite constraints, the antibiotic space in India has seen a few successes. For instance, The novel combination **cefepime-zidebactam** discovered in the country is found to be highly effective against multidrug-resistant pathogens.

It is time that such valuable leads from Indian laboratories mature into ready-to-use drugs for the country's patients. That will provide a strong impetus to making the country atmanirbhar in healthcare.

### 8. [The message from the IPCC report](#)

**Source:** [The Hindu, Livemint](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Environment

**Relevance:** Fighting the climate-change crisis

**Synopsis:** In light of the recent IPCC 6<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report, measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change and the ways to prevent further damage to our environment are discussed.



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What needs to be done?

- Focusing on definite cumulative emission targets, keeping equity and historical responsibility in view
- Immediate emission reductions by the developed countries with phase-out dates for all fossil fuels
- Massive investment in new technologies and their deployment
- A serious push to the mobilization of adequate climate finance
- Put all energy use on the electricity grid, and then decarbonize the sources. This means that nuclear and renewable sources of energy will have to rise dramatically, while the internal combustion engine gives way to the electrical motors for transportation.

India's options

The IPCC report's warnings for India are particularly dire. Hence, for India, faster carbon reduction is no longer an option. Moreover, the impact of global warming will fall disproportionately on the less well-off in India. But an accelerated path to carbon neutrality requires significant investments. The only way forward is the following:

- A **combination of restraint and efficiency** on one hand, combined with **low-cost green innovation** on the other
- Immediate steps in terms of adaptation and resilience to extreme weather events—heatwaves and pluvial floods, for instance.
- Afforestation, switching to electric vehicles and renewable energy must accelerate

**Terms to know:**

- [Equilibrium climate sensitivity](#)

### 9. EVs are the future but a premature transition through bad policy is undesirable

**Source:** [TOI](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Changes in Industrial Policy and their Effects on Industrial Growth

**Relevance:** India's Electric Vehicle (EV) policy

**Synopsis:** An EV policy that is biased towards a premature transition to EVs can have unintended consequences. A look at the consequences and a way forward.

Background

Around 81% of the 18.6 million vehicles sold in 2020 were two-wheelers. Hence, the transition from an industry dominated by vehicles run through internal combustion engines to EVs, will be in sync with India's climate change goal.

But, the inherent enthusiasm for EVs should not lead to unsound policy changes.

**Must Read:** [Global Electric Vehicles Outlook 2021](#)

Govt support

To quicken the transition to EVs, GoI provides a subsidy to lower the cost of ownership, and some states top up with yet another subsidy. This supportive policy environment has encouraged both traditional manufacturers and newer ones such as Ola Electric to enter the EV market.

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Impact of unsound policy changes

In 2019, Niti Aayog proposed all two-wheelers running on combustion engines be banned by 2025. Such unsound policy prescriptions need to be analyzed in terms of the following two consequences:

- **Combustion engines subsidize EVs** as fuel taxes have emerged as one of the biggest sources of revenue for government, and one that supported the budgets in a pandemic. Revenue stability matters, as governments perform many indispensable functions.
- **Strategic issues:** Separately, there are strategic issues to consider. China dominates both processing and manufacturing of Lithium-ion batteries. Moreover, mineral ores and concentrates for them are found in just a few countries, with China again having a key position.

Thus, a policy which pushes for a premature transition to EVs can have unintended consequences.

Way forward

For now, India's subsidized EVs should focus on competing with combustion engine vehicles, which have consistently met escalating tailpipe emission standards.

**Note:** Tailpipe emission standards specify the maximum amount of pollutants allowed in exhaust gases discharged from an internal combustion engine of a vehicle.

### 10. Wheat, rice lost in transit in last 4 years could have fed 82.30 million Indians for a month

**Source:** [Down to Earth](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Storage, Transport and Marketing of Agricultural Produce and Issues and Related Constraints

**Relevance:** Issues with Public Distribution System (PDS)

**Synopsis:** Findings and recommendations of the Standing Committee report on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution (2020-2021) on India's food storage and transit infrastructure, and the Decentralized Procurement Scheme (DCP).

Findings

#### On Transit and storage infra

1. **Wastage and pilferage loss:** In the last four years, about 4 lakh tonnes of wheat and rice has been wasted as transit and pilferage losses, revealed a Standing Committee report. The subsidized food, if distributed properly would have been enough to feed 82.30 million people for a month.
2. **Huge amount of transit losses:** The transit losses amounted to more than Rs 1000 crore in just the last four years (till October 2020).
3. **Pending cases:** The committee questioned the actions taken against the officials responsible for transit losses and the cases that are still pending.
4. The findings above show the dismal state of India's food storage and transit infrastructure.

#### On DCP Scheme

- Only 23 states have implemented the Decentralized Procurement Scheme (DCP) so far — 15 to procure rice and eight to procure wheat — despite the scheme being in place for 23 years.

**Must Read:** [What is the Decentralized Procurement \(DCP\) scheme?](#)

Recommendations

**On Transit and storage infra**

- The committee recommended Food Security of India (FSI) to **prepare new standards, guidelines and checklists** to mitigate the losses and make officials, workers more aware.
- It also asked for a framework to **deal with the pending cases** of corruption, excise duty and related matters.

It suggested **stricter steps to circumvent negligence and corruption** in the distribution process of subsidized food grains by FSI.

**On DCP scheme**

- The scheme is **not yet mandatory** for states, but the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution should **encourage them to implement it**. The scheme will not only help reduce the cost of distribution, but also aid distribution of grains on minimum support price, the committee said.
- The Centre should help states implement the system by **delivering basic services** within a dedicated time frame, the committee added.
- The committee has requested that the central government **speak with state governments to make them better understand the challenges** associated with the scheme and try to resolve them.

**Must Read:** [Food security in India and its challenges – Explained](#)

Steps already taken

**On Transit and storage infra**

Govt responded to committee's findings by stating that several steps have already been taken, like

- **Farmers are now provided the minimum support price online.** Agencies are also being paid through the e-payment system.
- The quality of cereals has always been questionable. Thus, **quality-related parameters are being made public.**
- **Regular inspections:** The procurement process is being **regularly inspected** and action is being taken against those who are found guilty.
- **Tagging of produce:** The produce is tagged at every step of the process — from the mills to the depot. Some sensitive districts have been identified for special monitoring.
- **CCTV cameras are also installed** in all the godowns. In addition, committees have been formed to redress the grievances of the contractors.
- **Distribution monitoring:** Several steps have also been taken to monitor the distribution. For example, selling in the open market is done only through e-auction. Stock quality is checked by joint sampling.

Future steps

**On Transit and storage infra**

- **Monitoring of transportation system:** The transportation system will be closely monitored to check transit loss, especially in routes where damages often occur, the ministry informed.

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- **Consignment squad:** An independent consignment squad will be formed to look after loading and unloading at railway stations.

### 11. Bad loans: Prevention is better than cure

**Source:** [Business Standard](#)

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

**Relevance:** Issues related to banking sector in India

**Synopsis:** In managing the bad loan problem, IBC should be the last resort for banks.

Context

The Standing Committee of Parliament attached to the Ministry of Finance has taken stock of The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and made suggestions for improvement.

Different models of insolvency resolution

There are two models for resolution of firm insolvency.

1. One is the **credit-in-possession model**, which is the model in the UK, where control over stressed assets passes to creditors.
2. The other is the **debtor-in-possession model**, which is the model in the US, where the debtor remains in control.

In India, creditors decide the future of an insolvent firm with the help of an administrator called the **Resolution Professional (RP)**. The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) is the adjudicating authority.

Issues with insolvency process and suggestions

- **Resolution Professional (RP):** It turns out that the RP is a weak link in the chain. The Parliamentary Committee made critical observations on RPs. The regulatory authorities have pursued disciplinary actions against 123 RPs in a total of 203 inspections carried out so far.
  - **Suggestion:** The Committee wants a self-regulatory body to oversee professional standards for RPs akin to the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.
- **Issues with NCLT:** As for the NCLT, its processes are plagued by delays. There are delays of over 180 days in 71% of cases. One reason for that is, as in the judiciary, several positions on the NCLT bench remain unfilled. The NCLT is 34 members short of the sanctioned strength of 62 members. The longer the insolvency process takes, the lower will be the value that creditors will realize. Bidders will factor in the delays in the price they quote. Banks will end up losing as a result.
  - **Suggestion:** The Committee wants cases to be admitted within 30 days.
- The Committee is concerned about the large haircuts (*A haircut refers to the lower-than-market value placed on an asset being used as collateral for a loan*) banks have taken in some cases
  - **Suggestion:** Setting up a benchmark or threshold haircut to be set.

Suggestions/Measures

- It is more important to get the estimate of liquidation value right and to get as many parties to bid as possible. For this, it may be useful to create an **Office of Independent Evaluation at the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)** similar to the one that obtains at the International Monetary Fund.



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- **Revisit Clause 29 (A) (c):** This clause bars promoters from bidding even if they are not wilful defaulters. It needs to be revisited. Where loans have gone bad for reasons beyond the control of promoters, it is worth giving them the opportunity to take part in the auction process under the IBC.
- **Extend pre-pack to corporations:** The Committee suggests that the “pre-pack” format offered to micro, small and medium enterprises be extended to corporations.
  - In “pre-pack”, banks and the firm agree to a resolution before the case is referred to the NCLT. If banks and the firm can agree on a resolution, why go through the IBC process. The normal IBC process should be a last resort.
- **Improve risk management by banks:** Lastly, risk management at banks needs to improve. It requires, among other things, considerable improvement in bank governance. The composition of boards, the selection of independent directors, compensation for independent directors (at public sector banks), the accountability of boards and other issues must be addressed. The RBI must press ahead with its recent efforts to overhaul board governance.

### Terms to know:

- [IBC](#)

## 12. Why funding sports is an Olympian hurdle?

**Source:** [Live Mint](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Sports Infrastructure

**Relevance:** Issues related to Development of Sports in India

**Synopsis:** India’s spending on sports other than cricket is rising steadily, but still a lot needs to be done to bridge the gap.

Issues with sports dev in India

### 1]. Insufficient Financial support from Government

1. The Union budget outlay on sports is classified under two broad categories. The first is ‘**encouragement and awards to sportspersons**’, which includes support to sports federations, awards and incentives.
2. The second is **the ‘Khelo India’ scheme**, which aims to build a culture of sports in India from the grassroots, and upwards via infrastructure, competition, and opportunities.

However, the actual spend under both these initiatives has been lower than the budgeted amount in recent years.

As a result, India **spends less on sports**. For instance, Australia’s sports budget in 2020-21 was around ₹1,850 crore. India, with a population of about 50 times Australia, spent 14% less.

### 2]. Poor Private support

- **Small contribution:** The corporate sector’s support to build Indian sport is significantly small compared to the government. CSR has been the main route for private sector investments in sports in India. Classified as corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds, private sector investments in Indian sports account for about ₹250-300 crore in a year.
- **Lack of long-term commitment:** What’s lacking in private support are funding instances where the vision is big and is matched by a funding commitment over several years. For example, in 2018-19, there were only 13 instances of a corporate making a sports grant of above ₹5 crore.

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- **Issues with PPP model:** The PPP model for sports development also remains constrained due to the lack of a standardized model and a lack of incentives for states to integrate PPP into their sports policies, according to a 2016 report co-authored by consultancy KPMG and the industry body Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

### 3]. Governance Issues in Sporting Federations:

The sporting entities in India have a legacy of fiefdoms, opaqueness, corruption and a lack of compliance, which has even resulted in bans from the international agencies. In addition, these federations have struggled to raise finances

### 4]. Lack of Institutional design for sports development

As per the Indian Constitution, sports come under the ambit of states, and there is no law governing sporting activities for the entire country.

- To address this issue, the Union ministry of youth affairs and sports notified the **National Sports Development Code** in 2011, which specified the principles for good governance of all national sports federations (NSFs).
- However, there is a **lack of clarity** over whether these principles are binding on various sporting bodies and institutions.

**Must Read:** [Target Olympic Podium Scheme](#)

Learnings from the UK

- India can draw lessons from models that other countries like U.K have adopted. Following a dismal show in the 1996 Olympics, where it finished 36, Britain has over the years transformed its sports landscape.
- Sports management was professionalized, and UK Sport, a government agency, was set up as a singular entity to enhance its Olympic medal count. In 2019-20, it spent about ₹1,500 crore).

Reforms needed

According to the KPMG report, the following interventions will be crucial.

1. **Private sector organizations and non-profits will have to be incentivized** to participate in sports development through a combination of monetary and tax incentives.
2. Since sports is a high-risk career, it is imperative that **adequate financial security** is provided to athletes to enable a more lucrative career.
3. Further, **sporting federations should be governed by former sports persons** with a proven ability to lead sporting bodies, rather than politicians or bureaucrats.
4. Lastly, the **PPP route should be utilized to develop world-class sporting infrastructure**. In the US, sports are well integrated with the education system, with college sports competitions being popular as well as rigorous.

### Conclusion

The shining performance of India's sportspersons in Tokyo, shows that there is no dearth of talent in India. However, to identify, groom and nurture promising prospects for world-beating athletes will require concerted effort, investment and cooperation among all key stakeholders of the sports industry in India.

### 13. Start up and Stand Tall (On India's start-up ecosystem)

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3- Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

**Relevance:** Demographic dividend and role of start-ups in Indian economy

**Synopsis:** India@75 is on the height of change and, it needs a golden era of global entrepreneurship, technology, and innovation for India@100.

Context

While India has historically and culturally been an entrepreneurially-driven nation, the last decade-and-a-half has witnessed a significant change in the landscape — from the founding of new startups, to global investor interest, to the advances made in infrastructure and policies.

India's unique position in the world

1. First, India has **62% of the population in the working age** group. And the ability of the young generation to take risks, move fast, and disrupt things without fear, has become the biggest asset today.
  - o Indians likely to have an estimated 850 million internet users by 2030 and, it has the opportunity to be a global game-changer.
2. Second, in 2021 alone, Indian startups have raised \$20 billion in funding. The **startup economy** has brought new business opportunities, **innovation, tech-centric approaches** and job creation across sectors. It paves the way for innovation and expanding global footprint.
3. Third, according to Nasscom, **India has 50-plus strong "Unicorn club" in 2021**, the country now finds itself at the epicentre of entrepreneurship.
  - o *unicorn refers to any startup that reaches the valuation of \$1 Billion.*

**Must Read:** [An ambitious goal for India's 100th year of Independence](#)

Growth of start-up ecosystem in India

Today, India is home to more than 40,000 startups and is building a robust tech and internet infrastructure. The steady rise of Indian IT companies in the 2000s, a large talent pool of a skilled workforce, increased expendable income, and rising capital inflows have all contributed to this.

- Indian startups are also taking big strides in **building synergies and partnerships** with global entities.
- Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, Indian startups have rapidly innovated to **provide indigenous, tech-enabled solutions to combat challenges**.
- One of the paradigm shifts has been **systemic shift to online education** and remote learning at scale.

What more can be done?

- Education, reskilling, and upskilling of our workforce is crucial.
- Apart from **policy-level decisions**, India's corporate sector should cultivate **entrepreneurialism**, and create partnerships to build impactful technology solutions, sustainable and resource-efficient growth.
- Focus on developing solutions that allow businesses in key sectors to meet goals of national importance.

**Conclusion:**

The **collective efforts of the public and private sectors to improve physical and digital connectivity** will help unlock the untapped potential of rural and semi-urban India to truly lead Industry 4.0.

**Terms to know:**

- [Industrial Revolution 4.0](#)

**14. Reserves: The RARE model in India**

**Source:** [Business Standard](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Effects of Liberalization on the Economy

**Relevance:** Foreign Exchange reserves in India and issues related to it

**Synopsis:** India should do away with the prevailing RARE model of reserves in a phased manner.

Context

The foreign exchange reserves in India are close to \$620 billion. Recently, a parliamentary panel and the Union Minister Nitin Gadkari observed that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is possibly holding excessive reserves.

RARE model

RARE stands for **Reserves for Atmanirbharta, Ratings, and Exchange rate stability**. However, the first two of the three objectives are not explicit; only the third is.

Reasons behind huge forex reserve by RBI

RBI maintains a huge forex reserve under the RARE model.

1. **First**, to supplement the policy of **Atmanirbharta**. There has been an emphasis on atmanirbharta (self-reliance). It is about pushing exports and discouraging imports. This policy is keeping the current account deficit in check.
  - o But given the large capital inflows, there is a need for the RBI to absorb the extra dollar inflow and increase its reserves. And, purchases of foreign currencies by the RBI keep the rupee on an average at a low level.
2. **Second, to achieve decent international ratings:** The fiscal situation in India is quite weak, which is why the international ratings of the Indian sovereign are consistently very low. In fact, if the RBI was not holding a very large amount of reserves, the ratings could have been lower still.
3. **Third, to maintain exchange rate stability.** If the dollar fluctuates significantly, the RBI can buy or sell dollars to ensure stability. Large reserves can **avoid a collapse in the external value** of the rupee.

Why India needs to relook RARE model?

- Sustaining the rupee at a low level for long may not end well. In Japan, the policy of low yen was brought to an abrupt end through the **Plaza Accord** with the US in 1985. Hence, we need to be careful with any important **“disequilibrium” price**. India is already on the US list of possible currency manipulators.
- India now has **flexible exchange rates and inflation targeting**. Flexible exchange rates facilitate adjustment, and inflation targeting prevents prices and the exchange rate from going out of control.



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- In order to be able to settle our obligations in the future, we should have adequate assets, not huge amount of liquid assets in form of huge forex.

### Measures

- There is need to **raise the tax-GDP ratio** and provide for a **tax on sudden and large capital flows** that can cause negative externalities.
- India can buy **additional credit** in normal times. The availability of credit line on reasonable terms has improved over time. So, there is no pressing need for large reserves.

### Terms to know

- [Plaza accord](#)

## 15. Beating plastic pollution (On plastic waste management rules)

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

**Relevance:** Issue of Plastic waste management

**Synopsis:** Effective implementation of New Plastic Waste Management Amendment rules offers a solution to address plastic pollution

### Context

Central government on 12<sup>th</sup> of August notified The Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules which acknowledges the gravity of pollution caused by plastic articles of everyday use.

The decisions follow recommendations made by an expert group constituted by the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals two years ago.

### The Plastic Waste Rules

Some major provision of the new rules:

- The manufacture, sale and use of some single-use goods made with plastic, polystyrene, and expanded polystyrene, such as earbuds, plates, cups, glasses, cutlery, wrapping and packing films, is prohibited from July 1 next year
- Carry bags must be at least 75 microns thick from September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and 120 microns from December 31 next year, compared to **50 microns at present**.

**Note:** For detailed provisions of the new rules, please read the article below

**Must Read:** [Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021](#)

### Extent of plastic pollution in India

- India has generated 34 lakh tonnes of plastic waste in 2019-20, of which **only 60% has been recycled**
- 6 of the top 100 global producers of polymers which produces large quantity of plastic waste are based in India.
- According to CPCB report, 22 states in India have announced ban on single use plastic but, it had little impact on outcomes

### Issues with plastic waste mgmt

- **With regard to policy-** India's policies on environment are divergent, they are intentionally good but poor on outcomes

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- **With regard to implementation by state-** lack of strong will from state governments to replace municipal contracts
- **With regard to recycling-** because of lack of segregation, considerable amounts of plastic waste cannot be recycled
- **Patchy regulation-** This led to prohibition on movement of plastic waste to other states which have recycling capacity.

**Conclusion:** The international view is changing, and support for a UN Plastic Treaty is growing. The majority of G7 countries are supportive of cleaning up the oceans through a charter in the interests of human wellbeing and environmental integrity. Now that the Centre has adopted a broad ban, further pollution must end.

**Also read:** [Plastic pollution in India](#)

### 16. [India's climate mitigation plans face a threat as Earth warms](#)

**Source:** [Business standard](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

**Relevance:** Implications of climate change on the renewable energy sector in India.

**Synopsis:** Threats posed by climate to India's renewable energy sector and possible solutions.  
Context

India recently renewed its target for renewable energy installation to 450 GW by 2040 from earlier 175 GW by 2022.

But this plan is threatened by climate change, since weather extremes in India is hurting the sustainability of solar and wind projects. This calls for additional investment in projects for mitigation and forecasting technologies.

Threats to renewable energy sector

Climate change is threatening renewable energy sector in the following ways:

- **Decline in wind speed:** The average wind speed in the five key wind power generation states: Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, has declined. Due to back-to-back cyclones and changing monsoon patterns combined with heavy rains impacted the wind speed. This led to **40% reduction in wind energy production.**
- **Changing weather patterns** also brought more cloudy days, affecting solar power generation. Major solar energy producing states such as Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka saw solar power generation fall 7-15% over last year.
- Recently published 6th assessment report by IPCC has warned that such trends may likely continue.

Suggestions/measures

- **Investing in digital solutions** which help monitor weather changes, and plan generation accordingly. They enhance performance optimization and predictive maintenance, thus improves efficiency
- **Investing in taller wind turbines** and more efficient generators to tackle the lack of windy sites and sporadic wind movements.

## Conclusion

India's focus for climate mitigation is based on renewable energy capacity addition, whereas climate extremes are impacting generation. Thus, there is need for the government to realign the focus, keeping in mind the challenges of climate change.

**Must Read:** [IPCC 6th Assessment report](#)

## 17. Palm oil and environmental, social challenges in India: The road ahead

**Source:** [Down to Earth](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

**Relevance:** importance of palm oil for India

**Synopsis:** Oil palm is a valuable economic crop and a source of employment across developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Importance of palm oil and various challenges associated with its production. A brief look.

Context

Oil palm is a valuable economic crop and a source of employment across developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It allows small landholders to participate in the cash economy and helps improve living standards of the local community.

However, it leads to various **environmental and social challenges** such as **deforestation, conversion of peat land into plantation, violation of labour rights** etc.

Palm oil consumption in India

- India consumes 10% of the total global production of palm oil and is a net importer of palm oil. India produces less than 0.7 million tonnes of palm oil annually, while it imports around 7.4 million tonnes
- Demand for palm oil is driven by high consumption due to its various advantages in food industry in India
- Since domestic production is not sufficient to meet the demand, India **imports** around 9 million tonnes of palm oil annually
- Most palm oil imports in India originate from **Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand**, accounting for over 90% of total imported volumes in 2019 and 2020
- According to FAO's **State of Food Security And Nutrition in the World report**, 194.4 million people are still undernourished in India and palm oil provides a cheap solution to address the issue

Benefits of palm oil cultivation

- **Food security and nutrition**– Global production and demand for palm oil are increasing rapidly. The cultivation of palm oil is more advantageous than other vegetable crops like soy, sunflower and mustard, with 4-10 times the output per unit of land. This makes its cultivation critical to global food security and nutrition
- **Low prices and neutral taste**– which enhances oil accessibility to people below poverty lines
- **Versatile nature**– it can be easily blended with mustard, coconut, groundnut and sesame, oil which are locally produced and traditionally used vegetable oils in Indian cooking
- **Raw material** for Indian bakery industry, which is projected to reach \$12 billion by 2024.

Issues with Palm oil

Because of its damaging effect on environment such as deforestation and peatland destruction, there is need for a sustainable supply chain.

The **deforestation risk** associated with palm and its ecological footprint is not realized given negligible media attention and the absence of on-product labelling

What needs to be done?

- **Responsible production**– Palm oil can be produced responsibly without damaging the environment. As the largest importer, India needs to drive the demand for sustainable palm oil.
- The **signing of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement** paves the way for the creation of one of the world's largest FTAs, and it can be used to set a high bar for the import of high-deforestation risk palm oil into India.

**Must Read:** [State of Food Security And Nutrition in the World report](#)

### 18. [India must push for women's rights in land ownership](#)

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Land reforms in India.

**Relevance:** To understand the pattern of women's ownership of land.

**Synopsis:** Despite enabling laws, women's land ownership are still lagging. This needs concerted social efforts and more vocal claims by women.

#### **What is the challenge?**

- Despite 15 years of the passing of the Hindu Succession Amendment Act (HSAA 2005), the access of women to the property is still poor.
- Literature shows women's land ownership would improve their well-being, improve children's health and education, reduce domestic violence etc.

#### **What does the law say?**

- HSA 1956 had given substantial rights, but there were two major inequalities:
  - Inheritance of agricultural land devolved according to land reform laws was gender unequal.
  - Daughters were excluded from coparcenary rights (joint heirship) in the family property.
    - While Kerala abolished joint property, states like AP, TN amended HSA to recognize unmarried daughters as coparceners.
- But the discriminatory clause for agricultural land still remained.

#### **What is the status on the ground?**

- The first challenge was with respect to the data of gendered ownership, as it was not easily accessible, neither by NSSO survey nor by agricultural surveys.
- There were also issues of people citing incorrect data.

#### **Results from ICRISAT's longitudinal data (2009-2014)**

- Women were found to own land in only 16% of the sampled 1,114 rural landowning households.



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- Women constituted only 14% of all landowners and owned only 11% of the land, with an average area of 1.24 ha relative to 1.66 ha for men.
- Most of the **landowning women** had **acquired land** through their marital families, typically **as widows and not as daughters** through parents.
- Very few women were co-owners in joint family property, and over half the owners of both genders were aged 50 or more.
- The state-wise variance was also observed, as female landowners constituted 32% of all landowners in Telangana but only 6% in Odisha.

### Factors leading to lower ownership of land by female

- Fathers fear losing control over land if given to married daughters.
- Daughters fear damaging family relations if they claim their shares.
- Policymakers fear land fragmentation.

### Way forward

- India urgently needs more gender-disaggregated data on land ownership, and innovative policies to increase women's actual ownership.
- Women should raise their claims more vocally.

### Terms to Know

- [Hindu Succession Act](#)

## 19. [Single-use plastic ban: Reading the fine print reveals ominous loopholes](#)

**Source:** [Down to Earth](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

**Relevance:** New Plastic Waste Management Rules 2021 and issues associated with it

**Synopsis:** The recently announced Plastic Waste Management Rule 2021 prohibits 20 identified single-use plastic items by 2022 to tackle the issue of plastic pollution. However, civil societies have raised some concerns with the new provisions.

**Must read:** [Beating plastic pollution](#)

### What is Single Use Plastic (SUP)?

Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021 define SUP as “a plastic commodity intended to be used once for the same purpose before being disposed of or recycled”.

20 SUP items have been identified to be phased out on the recommendation of an expert group constituted by the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals (DCPC) under the direction of the Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers on SUP.

## Assessment methodology

Utility Index- parameters (100)	Environmental impact- parameters (100)
Hygiene (20)	Collectability (20)
Product safety (20)	Recyclability (20)
Essentiality (20)	Possibility of end of life solutions (20)
Social impact (20)	Environmental impact of alternate products (20)
Economic impact (20)	Littering propensity (20)

Each factor assigned 20 points, which adds up to each pillar having a total of 100 points.

The product that scores low on utility and high on environmental impact should be considered for immediate phase out.

### Issues with the rules:

- **Selection of the items** – Some of the items which are low on utility, but high environmental impact are left out of the rules, thus benefiting big corporations.
- **Discriminatory provisions**– Schedule for phase out does not cover a range of SUPs generated by fast-moving consumer goods companies (FMCGs) such as cigarette filters, plastic water bottles etc. rather they impact MSME's.
- **Plastic packaging waste outside the rules**– Plastic packaging, which contributes to almost 60% of the total plastic waste generated, is not listed for being phased out. It was proposed to be collected and managed in an environmentally sustainable way through the extended producer responsibility (EPR) according to the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016. However, the EPR for plastic waste management remains only on paper, due to non-compliance by companies and weak enforcement by authorities.
- **Exemption of compostable plastic**– Compostable plastic is exempted, but India does not have an existing labelling mechanism to differentiate fossil-based plastics from the compostable ones. This loophole could be misused to label 50-micron plastics as compostable.
- **Moratorium**– Notification gives a 10-year moratorium to the plastic industry, rather than pushing the plastic industry to invest in relevant research and development and ensure use of recycled products in their non-food packaging applications.
- **Exemption to Multi-layer plastic (MLP)**– The 2021 amendment have exempted MLP from the list of items to be phased out for another 10 year.

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### Global best practices:

Here are some global best practices regarding management of plastic waste:

- **European Union**– it has come up with a clear vision in the form of EU plastics strategy which gave the industry a three-year window till 2021 to phase out 10 identified SUP items
- **Israel**– it has proposed to levy double purchase tax on SUP and disposable plastic ware. The move is expected to reduce usage by 41 per cent

### 20. Second-generation bioethanol: It is time to launch it headlong

**Source:** [Down to Earth](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-technology, **Bio-technology** and issues relating to Intellectual Property Rights

**Relevance:** Going from waste to wealth for producing clean energy

**Synopsis:** Second generation bioethanol can help us reduce our oil import dependency. A brief look at its advantages.

Context

On the eve of 75th Independence Day, Indian PM announced a new goal of transforming India into an ‘energy-independent’ nation by 2047. However, the earlier set target of reducing crude oil import dependency by 10% by 2022 is still far from being achieved.

The recent announcement of the country’s target of 20% ethanol blending in petrol (E20) by 2025 can play a key role in reducing the crude oil imports and bolstering India’s energy independence. India currently blends approximately 8.5% ethanol with petrol.

About bioethanol

Bioethanol is an alternative to fossil transportation fuel. It is categorized as first (1G), second (2G) and third-generation (3G), based on the source of raw material used for bioethanol production

- **First generation** (1G) bioethanol uses corn seeds and sugarcane as raw material. There is not enough food for everyone; so the use of 1G is a major concern. However, some countries have enough raw materials to manufacture 1G.
- **Second generation** (2G) bioethanol uses inedible farm waste left over after harvest. Corn cobs, rice husks, wheat straw and sugarcane bagasse can all be transformed into cellulose and fermented into ethanol
- **Third generation** (3G) bioethanol uses algae grown in wastewater, sewage or salt water to produce bioethanol.

India has been promoting 2G bioethanol to achieve its E20 target.

Benefits of 2G bioethanol

- Unlike 1G bioethanol, 2G **does not use food resources** having no impact on food security
- 3G bioethanol has issues with respect to **economic cost**.
- It also **reduces agricultural waste burning issue**, thus helps in reduction of air pollution

**Terms to know:**

- [Ethanol Blended Petrol \(EBP\) Programme](#)

## 21. Finding work is work in progress (COVID's impact on jobs)

**Source:** [Times of India](#)

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

**Relevance:** Dealing with economic implications of COVID

**Synopsis:** Reversing the pandemic hit to the job market is only a first step. The real jobs challenge still lies ahead. A brief look at the impact of COVID on the job market and the future challenges.

Context

Economy is coming to pre-covid level by witnessing a swift recovery. The Nomura India Business Resumption Index, which tracks the pace of business resumption has risen above its pre-pandemic level of 100 for the first time since the pandemic began last year. However, despite the sharp economic recovery, the job market challenges appear complex.

Impact of pandemic on jobs

- **Uneven impact**– High-skilled jobs in sectors such as IT and finance witnessed less impact due to shift to Work From Home (WFH) but WFH is not feasible in contact-intensive services such as hotels, restaurants, travel and tourism, which require physical proximity. Also, the low-skilled jobs in the manufacturing and construction sectors took an economic hit due to the pandemic.
- **MSME's impacted most**– Small firms have been hit harder than big firms due to pandemic. MSME's had no option but to cut wage costs to remain afloat.
- **Increase in unemployment**– According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), unemployment rate stood at 8% in mid-August 2021, marginally higher than the 7.8% in February 2020
- **Job losses**– the pandemic has led to employment loss for 6.6mn workers. Around 10.9mn workers have dropped out of the labour force and are no longer actively seeking work.
- Why recovery in jobs market is slow?
- **Slow pace of vaccination**– vaccinating a majority of the adult population is widely expected to take until end-2021, at the earliest. Until then, the economy remains vulnerable to pandemic shocks
- **Hesitancy of firms**– Firms will want to assess the durability of demand before starting on full-scale hiring
- **Sectoral issues**- job recovery will be faster for formal sector workers than for the informal sector. For informal sector workers, returning to pre-pandemic level of employment is likely to take much longer due to fear of contracting Covid-19
- **Business closures**– Many MSMEs, restaurants and small businesses have permanently closed, leaving no jobs behind for some.

Opportunities brought by pandemic

- The pandemic has **accelerated the pre-existing trend towards digitization** and e-commerce. Telemedicine, delivery and fintech are a few examples of sectors that have witnessed fast-paced growth during the pandemic
- **Supply chain relocations** as firms adopt a **China plus one strategy** have opened up newer opportunities for India to integrate into global value chains and create new manufacturing jobs.



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### Challenges

- **Business travel will likely decrease** in a post-pandemic world. Meetings, incentives, conferencing, exhibitions (MICE) type of tourism will likely decline
- **Demand for commercial office space may be lower**
- **Automation may reduce employment intensity** of manufacturing, hurting low-skilled workers
- **More market concentration**, as big firms becoming even bigger, while small firms are closing down, which could hurt job creation.

### Measures

- Re-skilling and upskilling of the worker is need of the hour.
- Creating an enabling ecosystem for MSMEs to thrive by reducing compliance costs, funding costs.
- More jobs will need to be created in the infrastructure and construction sectors.
- An ecosystem for startups to gainfully employ India's youth is needed.

### Terms to know

- [China plus one strategy](#)

## 22. [More feed, better productivity \(On Sub-Mission on Fodder and Feed\)](#)

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Direct and indirect farm subsidies

**Relevance:** livestock sector in India, doubling farmers income

**Synopsis:** Government has recently announced Sub-Mission on Fodder and Feed for livestock sector.

### Background

About **200 million** Indians are involved in dairy and livestock farming, but lack of quality fodder and feed has resulted in sub-optimal productivity levels.

### Issues with livestock sector

- **Lack of fodder:** A study by the Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute has observed that for every 100 kg of feed required, **India is short of 23.4 kg of dry fodder**, 11.24 kg of green fodder, and 28.9 kg of concentrate feed.
- **Lack of fodder leads to low milk productivity:** Indian livestock's **milk productivity is 20%-60% lower** than the global average.

### What is the need of revised scheme?

- [National Livestock Mission](#) was launched in 2014. It focused on supporting farmers in **producing fodder from non-forest** wasteland/grassland, and cultivation of coarse grains.
- But this model could not sustain fodder availability due to **lack of backward and forward linkages** in the value chain. The good quality green fodder is only available for about three months during the year. So, the ideal solution would be to ferment green fodder and convert it into silage.

Also, the significance of Sub-Mission on Fodder and Feed is underscored by the fact that livestock is the **major source of cash income** for about **13 crore marginal farmers** and is an **insurance** in the event of crop failure.

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Features of Sub-Mission on Fodder and Feed

**Objective:** increasing productivity, reducing input costs, and doing away with middlemen.

**Availability of green fodder**

1. Under the fodder entrepreneurship programme, farmers will receive subsidies and incentives to **create a consistent supply chain of** green fodder throughout the year.
2. Entrepreneurs can then **convert it into silage** and sell it at nearby markets at one-tenth of the price of concentrate/dry feed ensuring affordable quality fodder to dairy farmers.
3. It provides for 50% direct capital subsidy to the beneficiaries under the **feed and fodder entrepreneurship programme** and 100% subsidy on fodder seed production to identified beneficiaries.
4. It intends to **create a network of entrepreneurs** who will make silage (the hub) and sell them directly to the farmers (the spoke).
5. The large-scale production of silage will **bring down the input cost for farmers** since silage is much cheaper than concentrate feed.
6. The scheme will provide **50% capital subsidy up to ₹50 lakh towards project cost** for infrastructure development and for procuring machinery for value addition.

Who can avail the benefit?

Private entrepreneurs, self-help groups, farmer producer organisations, dairy cooperative societies, and Section 8 companies (NGOs).

**Conclusion**

An effective implementation of the scheme will play a major role in increasing the return on investment for our farmers.

### 23. [A BIT for FDI \(On the need to renew BIPA\)](#)

**Source:** Business Standard

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Investment Models.

**Relevance:** Taxation laws in India, Issues with BIT

**Synopsis:** Repeal of retrospective tax law gives government the opportunity to renew the 70-odd Bilateral Investment and Protection Agreements ([BIPA](#))

Impacts of BIT and retrospective taxation

BIT and retrospective taxation increased international arbitration cases.

1. First, India has never been comfortable recognizing investments from abroad when they are **asset-based**. It sought to promote an **“enterprise” based definition** for greenfield investment as a more suitable example of foreign direct investment (FDI).
2. Second, issue of **national treatment**, which the department of economic affairs in the finance ministry notes, should be the **sole non-discrimination standard** to be applied to all companies investing in India. To qualify for it, companies have to demonstrate they have a permanent business establishment in India, as well as agree to some new yardsticks such as data localization and sourcing requirements. If they do not do so, there could still be problems for investors to invoke [BIT](#) to protect their interests.

Evolution of BIT policy

1. From 1993, India began to sign International Investment Agreements. Less importance was given to the consequences of these agreements as India needed the foreign money.

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2. In 2011, in **White Industries of Australia and Coal India case**, the arbitration went in favour of the Australian firm.
3. In July 2012, the government set up a committee to review these agreements which recommended for a **uniform BITs regime** that India should adopt with all countries.
4. But as per United Nations Conference on Trade and Development noted, the new framework was not designed “as an instrument for investment promotion”. It was drafted to **safeguard India as a host State** from the large number of investment treaty claims.
5. The model BIT with the retrospective law allowed the government to tax indirect transfers of an Indian capital asset. Foreign investors have argued that the rights of **punitive taxation** written in the BIT are similar to **expropriation**.

The Indian tax department had argued there can be no restriction in its power of taxation. Now by 2018, India had the largest number of international arbitration cases.

Why India needs to renew BIPA?

1]. First, countries **assure foreign investors** when inviting their investment that their administrations will provide tax certainty. If that certainty comes unstuck, BIPA comes into play.

- For instance, **China** does not have a BIPA and there are several countries with such agreements that do not draw in money from abroad.
- They are costly and the publicity surrounding the action makes foreign investors nervous.
- **New options are now available to investors to avoid having to live under a BIPA.**

2]. Second, India discovered this fact once it had begun with attempts to enter global bond indices. Fund managers for foreign investors have said **India has to list its government debt papers in European depositories**.

- The process helps investors **avoid exchange or tax losses**.
- Despite these innovations, BIPA retains its importance for investors who buy or develop physical assets in India.

3]. Third, the Model BIT of 2016 inserted clauses that **tilt strongly in favour of the sovereign**. That is why no BIPA has been renewed since 2017 when most of them expired.

### Conclusion

The BIT framework has the opportunity to be reworked. However, the challenge with this move is that it would **circumscribe the rights of the tax department**.

### 24. [A report that is at odds with access to knowledge](#)

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: **GS 3** – Issues relating to intellectual property rights

Relevance: To understand the copyright act

Synopsis: The copyright act should provide education for all. It should also respect the rights of publishers. So we need to attain a balance between the two.

### Journey of Education through court cases

Supreme Court (SC) in various judgements has expanded the right of education

1. **Miss Mohini Jain vs State of Karnataka & Ors**, — **Emphasized on the Right to Education (RTE)**. Thus, the **86<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act, 2002** inserted Article 21-A in the

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Constitution of India to provide **free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of 6-14** years as a Fundamental Right

2. **Anuradha Bhasin vs Union of India, Avinash Mehrotra vs Union of India:** The court broadens the horizons of RTE by making it **obligatory on government and civil society**.
3. **Farzana Batool vs Union of India:** The Court states, although **professional education is not a fundamental right, the government should take necessary measures** to secure the right to education at all levels

### **The standing committee report and Copyrights:**

The **Parliament Standing Committee on Commerce in its recent report** highlighted the worrying state of education. The committee suggests curtailing “fair dealing provisions” under Indian Copyright law. As the **law enables access to the work without copyright’s holder assent**. This provision **poses a detrimental impact on the publishing industry** and authors who are dependent on royalties

### **Court view in the DU photocopy case and Committee recommendations:**

In this case, the court adopted a wider **understanding of educational exceptions** enumerated in the list of “Fair Dealing provisions” in the Copyright Act. The court allows

- **Section 52(1) (1)** allows the reproduction of any work by teacher/pupil in the course of instruction. The court held that the **course of instruction does not confine to time & place of instruction**.
- Court also permitted the content reproduction as long as it is justified by special purpose under Section 52
  - Section 52(1)(a) provides for the right to a “fair dealing” of any copyrightable work

The Parliamentary committee in its report mentions that the **conflict between educational institutions and copyright owners does not bode well for the “overall literary culture and image of the country”**.

So, the committee requested the government to **make amends in Section 52 of the law** to allow **copying only in government-owned institutions**. Also, to provide regulations on **how much content can be copied** & for storage of copied works in digital formats

### **A flawed View**

But the committee’s views are flawed on many counts:

- They betray the reason for being, granting copyrights in educational content. The committee misunderstood the role of ‘fair dealing’ in this context.
- Having quantitative restrictions on the extent of permissible copying would not be apt. Instead of this, steps should be taken to make education more equitable and fairer.

### **Looking backwards**

Coronavirus has further revealed the challenges as the provisions failed to handle the scenario of dissemination of digital education.

The committee should have recommended measures to amend section 52 to meet the demands of today’s challenges.



## 25. Why the Global South needs birds and bees more than the North?

**Source:** Down to Earth

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

**Relevance:** Implications of the decline in pollinator population

**Synopsis:** World's biodiversity is facing a risk from reduction of pollinators such as bees, butterflies, birds, bats, etc. It is believed that the risk is greater for most of the developing world. A brief look.

Context

A recent study on the causes and effects of the dramatic decline of pollinators has raised concerns for Africa, the Asia-Pacific and Latin America.

Concerns

- **On livelihood**– Declining population of pollinators can impact the livelihoods of rural population.
- **On yield from crops**– Yield of pollinator-dependent crops is becoming unstable and categorized as “serious” in South America, Asia, Africa and Oceania while it is “moderate” in Europe and North America.
- **Threat of extinction**– Around 40% of the invertebrate pollinator species, particularly bees and butterflies, face extinction across the world as per report by **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**
- **On nutrition**– it can affect nutrition and livelihood of the people since pollinated crops are of notable nutritional and economic value to livelihoods and well-being
- **On ecosystem services**– that provide food and wellbeing to millions, particularly in the Global South are threatened by this declining trend
- **Global risk**– Reduction in the quantity or quality of food, fibre, fuel or seed that can be produced as a result of pollinator loss, is another global risk

Causes behind pollinator decline

- Destruction of habitat through natural as well as man made causes
- Improper land-use such as excessive grazing
- Excessive use of fertilizer and increased trend of monoculture farming
- High pesticide use to increase the yield of crops
- Climate change is considered as fourth leading cause behind declining population of pollinators

Significance of the findings

According to the 2016 assessment report by **Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)**, pollinator-dependent food production increased 300% over the past half century, thus these findings become more important.

Importance of pollinators

An impact on pollinators will have cause negative effects for humanity too. These small creatures play central roles in the world's ecosystems, including many that humans and other animals rely on for nutrition. If they go extinct, human species would be in serious trouble.

Way forward

A focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation in pollinator research and conservation strategies is the need of the hour.

**Terms to know:**

- [IPBES](#)
- [Food and Agriculture Organization](#)

**26. HAS IBC DELIVERED ON ITS LOFTY PROMISE?**

**Syllabus:** GS Paper 3, Indian Economy,

**Source:** [Live Mint](#)

**Relevance:** IBC process is one of the most important aspects of industrial growth.

**Synopsis:** IBC Process has been a mixed bag of achievements and challenges. This article highlights issues and achievements of, and ways to improve the IBC process.

Recently, the chairperson of the standing committee on finance, Jayant Sinha informed parliament about the issues in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

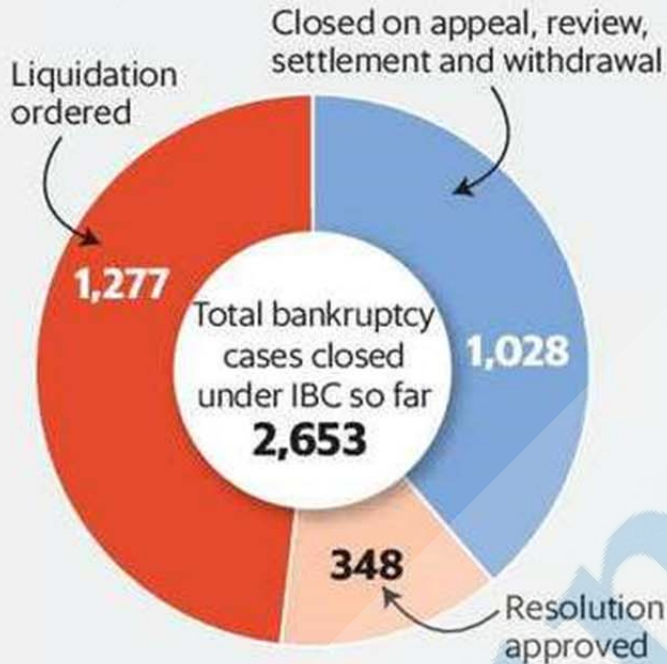
**Issues raised in IBC by committee**

1. Steep and unsustainable haircuts taken by financial creditors (as high as 95% in some cases).
2. More than 71% of the cases remain pending for more than 180 days. It points to a deviation from the original objectives of the Code.
3. Nearly half of the 2,653 companies, which have gone through the IBC process, received orders for liquidation, instead of resolution.

**Read more –** [Insolvency and bankruptcy code](#)

## MIXED OUTCOME

**Chart 1:** While the IBC was supposed to help turnaround sick businesses, many actually end up getting liquidated.



**Chart 2:** But in value terms, around 70% of the distressed assets have been rescued and only 30% went into liquidation.



\*At the time of commencing bankruptcy proceedings  
Data as of March, 2021  
Source: IBBI

Source: Live Mint

### Positive impacts of IBC

**Operational creditors:** Under the earlier regimes, **operational creditors**, who are in the nature of unsecured creditors, **could not initiate bankruptcy proceedings**. Now, vendors whose payments are not paid and even workers whose dues have not been cleared can take a defaulting business to a bankruptcy tribunal. **IBC has brought discipline and fear** in the minds of borrowers. More than half of the bankruptcy cases so far have been initiated by operational creditors.

**Average resolution time:** The **average resolution time** has come down from 4.3 years in the earlier regime to 1.6 years under IBC, as per the World Bank's 2020 ease of doing business report.

**Recovery rate in India:** The **recovery rate in India** (as a share of the claims made by creditors) stood at 71.6%, compared to 81% in the US. The recovery rate in Norway, the best performer in this parameter, is as high as 92.9%.

### Causes Behind challenges facing IBC process

**High liquidation:** High liquidation is also due to the size of a business, e.g. a small business without physical assets, inactive for years will have to be liquidated for sure. Whereas big businesses are valuable. Thus, the majority of the high asset business got their resolution plans approved.

The size of the business also matters. For instance, a one million-plus tonne capacity steel plant is more likely to get a buyer than a 200,000-tonne plant.

**Procedural hurdle:** One such procedural hurdle is the share of vacant positions in the various benches of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). According to official data, about half of the 63 NCLT positions are vacant.

### Suggestions to reform IBC process

The **vacancies in NCLT** are creating hurdles to meeting the strict timelines mandated under the bankruptcy resolution process. Thus, steps to fill vacancies must be prioritized.

A key pending suggestion is the **automatic admission of IBC cases in tribunals**. Since a record of default is available when an insolvency case comes for admission, it could become an automatic process.

**Dilution of section 29A of the IBC**, if the failure of a well-governed insolvent firm can solely be attributed to economic conditions. The section currently disallows a promoter under whose watch the firm defaulted on repayment from bidding for the assets.

### 27. [Beyond bank accounts](#)

**Source:** [Business Standard](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Inclusive growth

**Relevance:** RBI has published the Financial Inclusion Index (FI- Index)

**Synopsis:** Given the need to attain equitable growth, it is important to Focus on financial inclusion. The study of RBI report becomes important in this regard.

[Click here to read about FI-Index](#)

### What is the need for Financial Inclusion?

Financial Inclusion is the process of ensuring affordable financial products and services that meet the need of individuals. The government over the years has worked to connect more households to the financial system



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For this, the government also launched Jan Dhan accounts and the use of direct benefit transfers. However, the RBI index acknowledged this, that mere opening of bank accounts or transferring the government benefits will not serve the purpose

### What needs to be done

1. **Provide financial literacy** to people and encourage them to keep their savings with the banking system and invest in financial products.
2. Also, the government has to make sure that the person is **able to access the account frequently with relative ease**. For this, technology will play the great role

### Benefits of Financial Inclusion

- It will not only **help individuals** or lower-income groups but will also **increase financial savings** at the aggregate level.
- This will further help **boost investment over time** and **increase long-term growth potential**.

However, many financial products — particularly insurance products — have been mis-sold to a large number of middle and upper-middle-class investors. These incidents can affect trust and defeat the very objective of financial inclusion.

### Way forward:

Financial institutions are based on trust. This government and all regulators must work to build trust.

## 28. The space race is getting harder

**Source:** [Business Standard](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – S&T

**Relevance:** Understanding the impact of the new space race

**Synopsis:** A vast technological gap is opening up as humans race to colonize the solar system. A brief look into the space race of the past and the implications of the new age space race.

Why launching objects into space is hard?

India is among only a dozen nations that have put an object in orbit. The reason so few have succeeded is because launching objects into orbit is hard.

- Things stay in orbit only if they achieve a speed horizontal to the earth of 27,000 kmph. If this “escape velocity” is not achieved, the object falls back.
- The restrictions that physics imposes on rocket design are what makes this difficult: Over 90% of a rocket’s weight is just fuel.

Advances in rocket tech

Advances in rocket technology happened abroad in two phases.

- **Phase 1:** The first was the decade of the 1960s. Russians put the first object in orbit, first satellite, first man in orbit, first spacewalk. Within a decade, from the late 1950s to the close of the 1960s, the world went from having no satellites to humans on the moon.
  - But after that was achieved, the high costs, boredom from the American public and the failure of the Soviet moon rocket ended the energetic race.

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- **Phase 2:** After 1972, the US went from having the capacity to put humans on the moon to limited capacity in lower earth orbit (LEO), a few hundred kms. After the Space Shuttle programme ended a decade ago, America had no ability to put humans even in low earth orbit.
  - Today that capacity exists only with Russia, using its very old rocket, China and the private firm SpaceX.

Reasons behind the new space race

In the last few years, a new space race has begun. This time it is being driven by **private companies** and **China**. This time the motivations are different.

- America wants a **base on the moon**, there are plans in place to colonise Mars
- There are **plans to mine asteroids** for rare minerals and bring them to earth, to permanently occupy Mars and, in fact, even to change its climate to make it more earth-like.

Implications

- **Technological gap is developing:** This new space race means that a vast technological gap is opening up and will continue to open up between those doing this (few pvt companies, USA and China) and the rest of the world's nations. This gap will not merely be limited to the access to potential new resources, but will also empower them with the new technologies that they will develop over the next decade.
- **Emergence of Spinoff tech:** Spinoff tech from the first space race and the tens of billions of dollars pumped into innovation six decades ago produced the portable computer, the mouse, Lasik, artificial limbs, freeze-dried food, water purification and GPS. More breakthroughs of this magnitude will come, first to the entities that develop them, and perhaps then for wider commercial use.
- **Colonization of planets:** We must consider also what colonies of humans, possibly of many nationalities, on another planet will mean for earth. The idea of nation-states and borders will appear to be a little silly when our species is colonizing the solar system.

### Conclusion

India must consider the implications and what this new space race means for us in a future that we are rapidly moving into.

**Must Read:** [Why ISRO's launch of Earth-watching satellite failed?](#)

### 29. India's looming water crisis and urgent measures to address it

**Source:** [Livemint](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

**Relevance:** Measures needed to address India's water crisis

**Synopsis:** The groundwater table in India is falling at faster rate than ever, and thus we need radical changes in agricultural practices along with other measures to address the water crisis of India.

Context

India is facing a water crisis. Water tables in many states including Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh have declined by thousands of feet. Tanks and wells are going dry, while some rivers

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are getting shrunk. Water rationing is routine in many urban areas, while in many villages women are walk longer distances to fetch water.

Significance of groundwater

- At 250 billion cubic metres per year, **India is the world's largest consumer of groundwater**. It consumes more than China and US, the next two largest combined.
- India's **gross cropped area has increased by over 120 million hectares** since the 1980s, mainly due to an increase in groundwater irrigation, especially through tube-wells. In the past 40 years, about 84% of the increase in net irrigated area has come from groundwater.

Factors behind groundwater decline

1. **Green revolution:** One of the ecological consequences of the policies carried out under Green Revolution, is the decline in groundwater. Due to policy incentives from government, farmers were able to sow high-yielding & **water-intensive** crops, like rice & wheat. *(To produce a kg of rice 2,800 ltrs of water is required, while a kilogram of wheat takes 1,654 ltrs on average.)* This established a Rice-Wheat-Cropping-System (RWCS) in areas, unsuitable for such crops. Water for such crops came mainly from tube well irrigation, leading to a decline in groundwater over the years.
2. **Cropping patterns:** Our policies to ensure food sufficiency and assure farmers income have unfortunately caused crop distortions that have led to excessive drawing of groundwater and its depletion. Minimum Procurement Price (MSP) is one such example.
  - Though MSP is announced for 23 crops, but the majority of procurement done by the government at MSP is for wheat and rice. Both these crops are water guzzlers.

Measures needed

We need to implement the following in our agricultural practices and in the management of water:

1. **Shift in cropping pattern:** Agriculture consumes about 90% of India's water supply, and of this, 80% is consumed by just three water-guzzling crops: rice, wheat and sugarcane. Thus, we need to incentivize a shift in cropping pattern towards nutri-cereals, pulses and oilseeds.
2. **Procurement strategy**– Around 95% procurement at MSP done by the govt is of rice and wheat alone. This causes farmers to grow more of such crops. Hence, government should encourage procurement of other crops such as jowar, bajra, ragi pulses etc. under MSP to promote crop diversification.
3. **Introduction of water-saving seed** varieties even for rice and wheat
4. **Promoting water saving techniques** such as rice intensification, conservation, tillage, drip irrigation, and **direct seeding of rice**. As per field trials, these practices can save between 17% (Rajasthan) to 80% (Tamil Nadu) of our blue water compared to conventional practices.
5. **Regulating groundwater**– Groundwater use in India is completely unregulated, resulting in its overexploitation. Hence, legislation to regulate the use of groundwater is most urgent. States can adopt the model Groundwater Bill 2017 to local conditions and pass their own legislation

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6. **Rejuvenation of catchment areas of rivers**– the local communities could be given monetary benefits to protect catchment areas and keep river basins healthy, free from encroachment. Farmers, local communities can act as agent of change to preserve the groundwater.
7. **Role of the govt:** Government has a crucial role in aggregating the local initiatives and scaling them up. Top down administrative arrangements will have to be replaced by participatory, bottom-up systems led by farmer producer organizations (FPOs) along the lines of the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union. Governments need to support the development of these institutions.

**Must read:** [India's water crisis: It is most acute for women](#)

### Terms to know

- [Blue water](#)

### 30. [Why attempts to boost oil palm farming may work?](#)

**Source:** [Business Standard](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Major Crops – Cropping Patterns in various parts of the country, Issues related to Direct and Indirect Farm Subsidies and Minimum Support Prices

**Relevance:** Analysis of National Mission on Edible Oils

**Synopsis:** In light of the recently announced scheme to boost production of palm oil in India, a brief look at previous such attempts, their impact and the overall issues involved with palm oil cultivation.

Context

In order to boost domestic production of palm oil and make the country self-sufficient in the cooking medium, the government recently announced a Rs 11,000-crore National Mission on Edible Oils.

**Must read:** [Cabinet approves implementation of National Mission on Edible Oils- Oil Palm](#)

### The target:

- Mission plans to raise oil palm cultivation to one million hectares by 2025-26 and 1.7-1.8 million hectares by 2029-30
- The domestic palm oil production is targeted to rise three times to 1.1 million hectares by 2025-26 under the Mission and 2.8 million tonnes by 2029-30

Present scenario

- India consumes 10% of the total global production of palm oil
- **Import dependency:** Since domestic production is not sufficient to meet the demand, India is a **net importer of palm oil**.
- Demand for palm oil is driven by high consumption due to its various advantages in food industry in India
- Most palm oil imports in India originate from **Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand**, accounting for over 90% of total imported volumes in 2019 and 2020.

Challenges with palm oil cultivation

- **Forest loss**– As per estimate by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the expansion of oil palm plantations is likely to cause four million hectares (more than twice the size of Kerala) of forest loss



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- **Deforestation of high biodiversity areas**– Deforestation would most likely occur in high biodiversity areas such as Borneo, Papua New Guinea, Sumatra and the Congo Basin in Africa
- **Impact population of endangered wildlife**– deforestation may impact populations of endangered wildlife such as Sumatran Tigers, Rhinos and Orangutans
- **Impact on human health and livelihood**– forest loss can have adverse impacts on people's health and disrupts local livelihoods.
- **Contribute to Global warming**– forest loss can lead to release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere that contribute to global warming.

Previous attempts to boost production

- **TMOP**: In 1991-92, the Department of Agriculture Started the Technology Mission on Oilseeds and Pulses (TMOP) in the potential states
- **OPDP**: A comprehensive centrally-sponsored scheme, Oil Palm Development Programme (OPDP) was taken up during 8th and 9th Plans
- **ISOPOM**: Support for oil palm cultivation was given under the Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM) during 10th and 11th plan
- **OPAE**: The Government of India had also supported a Special Programme on Oil Palm Area Expansion (OPAE) under RKVY during the year 2011-12 with an objective to bring 60,000 hectares under Oil Palm cultivation
- **NMOOP**: The National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP) was launched during 12th plan, in which Mini Mission-II (MM-II) was dedicated to oil palm area expansion and productivity increases. It is being implemented in 13 states which includes Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Goa.

Achievements under prev initiatives

- **Area expansion** under oil palm from 8,585 ha in 1991-92 to 316,600 ha by the end of 2016-17
- **Increased production** of fresh fruit bunches (FFBs) and crude palm oil (CPO)
- At present, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are major oil palm growing States
- Why previous attempt failed?
- **High gestation period**– farmers had to wait for four years for the trees in India to start yielding palm fruit bunches to give palm oil and palm kernel oil.
- **Small landholding**– Indian farmers generally have very small farm holdings which makes investment difficult.
- **Lack of private investment**– corporate sector investments in oil palm are limited compared with Malaysia and Indonesia.

**Must read:** [Palm oil and environmental, social challenges in India](#)

**Terms to know:**

- [World Wide Fund for Nature \(WWF\)](#)

### 31. [Welcome rethink on FTAs](#)

**Source:** [Business Standard](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Effects of Liberalization on the Economy, Changes in Industrial Policy and their Effects on Industrial Growth

**Relevance:** Significance of International trade to Indian Economy

**Synopsis:** Increasing exports is important criteria for India's sustained economic growth in the future.

Context

The government seems to be resetting its position on trade policy. The Union commerce secretary recently said that India would fast-track free trade agreements (FTAs) as the country needed to engage with the rest of the world. Since the world is moving towards bilateral and regional trade arrangements, such deals would be important.

What is an early harvest" agreement?

Recently, during an interaction with export promotion councils, the Union Commerce and Industry minister said that "early harvest" agreements with a host of countries, including the UK and Australia, were progressing fast.

- An early harvest deal is a precursor to an FTA, in which the trading partners reduce tariff barriers on limited goods to promote trade.

How protectionism will impact India's trade potential?

Economists have pointed out that since 2014, tariffs have been increased in about 3,200 product categories, affecting about 70% of imports.

The progressive reduction in tariffs after 1991 resulted in an export boom and helped India grow at a higher rate in the first decade of this century. However, a reversal in this policy position has affected trade over the last several years.

Why India needs to focus on exports & global trade?

1. **Economic recovery:** India needs to focus more on trade at this point because of its domestic macroeconomic position. Recovering from a contraction, the Indian economy will grow at a higher rate this year, but sustainability in the medium term remains uncertain.
2. **Exports will boost growth:** The government's ability to drive demand will remain constrained because of existing higher levels of deficit and debt. Therefore, exports could become a driver of growth if the policy is carefully adjusted.

Suggestions/Measures

1. The government should **re-evaluate the overall tariff policy** to strengthen India's position as a more open economy.
2. Indian industry should become more **competitive and not seek protection.**
3. A **review of the position on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** is also required. It is likely that conditions in FTAs with the European Union, or the UK, would be testing as compared to the RCEP. If India is open to FTAs with other countries and groups, the RCEP should not be an exception.

Why India Should Join RCEP?

One of the biggest concerns to join RCEP both from an economic and strategic point of view is the presence of China. However, staying away from the RCEP is not an answer.

- In today's complex supply chains, it may not be easy to distinguish goods coming into India from other countries with significant value addition in China.

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- Besides, being a member of the most dynamic trading bloc **will allow India to become part of the global supply chain**, which will make it more competitive and help utilize other FTAs that are being negotiated more effectively.

### Conclusion

The way the government reshapes its trade policy in the near term will determine India's growth trajectory in the medium to long run.

### 32. Nehru's real big mistake: Heavy industry wrongly got priority in 1950s. So even at 75, India isn't rich

**Source:** [Times of India](#)

**Syllabus:** GS Paper 3, Indian Economy, Economic reforms since independence

**Synopsis:** Nehruvian Socialism has been criticized for many of India's present problems. This article explains the main cause behind that.

#### Introduction

Nehruvian Socialism has often been criticized for India's economic failures in the initial decades. Nehru's push for a progressively larger share of the public sector has been tagged as the main cause of failure. However, it is not correct. Instead, the push for highly capital-intensive heavy industry, at a time of capital scarcity, was the main reason.

#### What was the conventional approach to industrialisation?

The conventional approach to making the nation self-sufficient would have been to follow the import-**substitution industrialisation (ISI) model**. This model works in 4 stages, at every stage, a particular type of activity requires protection and promotion:

1. In the first stage, the assembly activities.
2. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage, components production.
3. Further, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage, machines, necessary to produce components and assembly activities.
4. Lastly, in the 4<sup>th</sup> stage, machines, to produce machines.

#### What was the approach followed by Nehru?

However, Nehru never saw protection as the means to industrialization or self-sufficiency. Instead, he adopted exactly the opposite sequence that the ISI model recommended. He placed heavy industry consisting of products such as steel and machines at the beginning of the process. Nehru saw the heavy industry as essential for self-sufficiency.

#### Consequences of Nehru's approach

**Low availability of capital:** Despite **reserving available capital for heavy industry**, the scale of production in each product line within the heavy industry still remained suboptimal. It was because of the scarcity of capital compared to the requirements of heavy industries.

**Light manufacturing activities:** Whereas, **light manufacturing activities** were left for households and small enterprises. Due to low capacity, these activities also remained subject to production at a sub-optimal scale.

**Higher Inflation:** Furthermore, India faced **higher inflation** at home than abroad and a fixed exchange rate. This made majority of Indian products uncompetitive compared to foreign countries. Thus, strict import licensing was implemented.

**Employment:** The heavy industry created few jobs for the unskilled. Simultaneously, the demand for light-industry products and services could not increase at a fast pace due to low

household incomes. Thus, the transition of workers from below-subsistence agriculture into industry and services was also very slow.

It led to a very slow reduction in poverty in that time period.

### Why the transition has been very slow?

The transition from the socialist era of industrialisation, after 1991 liberalization, was also very slow. It was because the socialist era produced many intellectuals, who carried the legacy on and did not let the old models die off completely. These intellectuals further produced industrialists and politicians as their followers.

### 33. What India's informal sector needs right now?

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

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

**Relevance:** Formalization of work force, problems faced by informal sector workers

**Synopsis:** Ignoring problems in the informal sector can be costly as it can lead to job and wage losses, higher inflation and even risk the livelihood of migrant workers.

Context

Informal sector workers suffered far more from the national lockdown in 2020 than their formal sector counterparts, due to the inadequate safety net.

Informal sector scenario in India

- India's large informal sector, **employs around 80% of the labour force and produces about 50% of GDP.**
- Of the 384 million employed in the informal sector, half work in **agriculture**, living mostly in **rural India**, and the other half are in non-agricultural sectors. Of those, about half live in rural India and the remaining in urban areas.

Impact of COVID

- **Formal sector:** They make up 20% of the workforce. The salaries of individuals working at large listed firms in the formal sector have held up relatively better, though they are lower than the pre-pandemic trend. Over the longer term, the prospects for this group will depend on the progress of policy reforms and economic growth, which are the leading drivers of real wages.
- **Informal agricultural sector:** This sector employs 40% of the workforce. Rural wages have held up well over the pandemic, led by good monsoons, an exemption to the food trade from the various lockdowns, and more recently, higher agricultural exports. Higher government spending in various social welfare schemes has also helped. As this group emerges from the second Covid-19 wave, they may want to consume goods that make them feel more secure, such as two-wheelers and home repair services. Longer-term consumption will depend on agricultural reforms.
- **Informal non-agricultural sector:** The prospects for the 40% in the informal non-agricultural sector is the most worrying. These workers are most vulnerable, as they have suffered the maximum impact of the economic disruption that the pandemic has unleashed.
  - **One half of this group lives in rural India.** They have not done as well as their farming counterparts. Most of them involved in construction, trade and



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manufacturing have seen **wage growth fall**. The sharp rise in demand for rural unemployment benefits is an indicator of the disruption faced.

- The other half lives in urban India and is employed across the trade, hotels, transport, manufacturing and construction sectors. This group has been at the receiving end of formalization. Several surveys over this time also show **a rise in urban unemployment and self-employment**, with this category seeing the highest earnings loss.

What does this mean for economic growth?

Formalization can be a double-edged sword. While traditionally associated with efficiency gains, it also comes at the cost of putting small informal firms out of business, and the disruption in the informal sector. Hence, the **formalization that leads to deep distress** in the informal sector, **may not be sustainable**.

By contrast, formalization that **happens on the back of policy changes** that help small and informal firms grow over time into medium or larger formal sector firms is **more sustainable**.

Suggestions

1. What is, needed now is **protection for informal sector workers** via social welfare schemes, such as rural MGNREGA scheme. This will ensure that the disruption they are facing doesn't lead to a permanent fall in demand.
2. India doesn't have an equivalent **urban social welfare scheme**. Hence, there is a need for setting up a more permanent direct urban social welfare structure.
3. In the meantime, **steps to promote reforms that are needed to help small businesses** grow are critical. For example, lowering the regulatory burden associated with growing firms.

### 34. Our Procrustean policy on airfares is pointless

**Source:** [Livemint](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Effects of Liberalization on the Economy

**Relevance:** Issues related with Aviation industry

**Synopsis:** Heavy regulation on Aviation sector impact its efficiency and are much too arbitrary.

Background

- The aviation business has always been one of India's most heavily regulated. The covid pandemic, has left it even more so.
- After lockdown relaxations, regular flights resumed in late-May 2020 with a number of rules on flying capacity, fares and certifications.
- Many pre-1991 restrictive tools such as quantitative restrictions and price controls were imposed by the centre.
- For instance, carriers could operate only a third of their flight capacity; and price caps had to be imposed to balance the demand.
- Last week, the Centre revised rules again. Airlines can now fly at 72.5% of their strength and sell seats within price bands hiked in one go by 11-13%, about twice our annual rate of inflation.
- The ministry raised the minimum charge for a seat on a flight up to 40 minutes to ₹2,900 and the top rate to ₹8,800.

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- Barring the odd exception, the private carriers have not complained, perhaps content with this central plan.

But it is time to resist such intervention. Aviation can be an ideal free market.

Need for regulation

- The use of common facilities like airports and public resources like airspace makes regulation necessary. We are left with too few carriers for competitive prices to prevail.

Still, these conditions do not justify price distortions that cause inefficiency.

Moderate regulation

- Airlines are in the business of perishables, as unsold seats can't be sold once a flight takes off. We have a mix of emergency flyers and bargain hunters. For optimal flight realization, must-fly passengers should pay premium fares to subsidize others while saleable seats must not perish, even if they go ultra-cheap.

As every carrier has its own calculations, a one-size-fits-all scale can't be fair to all players. Fairness calls for pricing freedom.

### 35. Govt announces incentive for mills exporting sugar, diverting it to ethanol

**Source:** [PIB](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints

#### Introduction

The Government of India is taking proactive measures to boost the export of surplus sugar & diversion of sugar to ethanol. The move is to ensure timely payment of cane dues of sugarcane farmers and to boost the agricultural economy.

#### Measures taken by Government for Sugar Industry:

1. **India is the world's second-largest sugar-producing country.** It had to offer export subsidies in the past two years to reduce surplus stocks and help cash-starved sugar mills clear cane payment to growers.
2. **However, the global sugar prices** have increased substantially in the past one month, and there is a huge demand for Indian raw sugar.
3. **Accordingly, the Government has asked** domestic sugar mills to export sugar and sign forward contracts with the importers to take advantage of high international prices of sugar.
  - A forward contract is **a customized contract between two parties to buy or sell an asset at a specified price on a future date.**
4. **Moreover,** the Government has announced that sugar mills that export sugar and divert sugar to ethanol will also be given **incentives in the form of an additional monthly domestic quota** for sale in the domestic market.
  - **Currently,** the government fixes a monthly quota for the sale of sugar in the domestic market. On an average, about 21 lakh tonne quota is fixed for a monthly sale for mills.

#### Benefits of Export of Sugar:

1. **Export of sugar** would not only help in improving the liquidity of sugar mills but also enable them to make timely payments of cane dues of farmers.

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2. **It would also stabilize the price of sugar** in the domestic market, which will, in turn, improve the revenue realization of sugar mills and would address the problem of surplus sugar.

### **Benefits of Diversion of Sugar to Ethanol:**

1. Dependence on imported fossil fuel will decrease
2. It will reduce air pollution
3. It will also boost the agricultural economy.

### **36. Despite PM Modi's assurance, land degradation, desertification increasing**

**Source:** [Down to Earth](#)

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

**Relevance:** Causes behind increase in land degradation and desertification

**Synopsis:** Problem of land degradation and desertification is increasing in India. A brief look at the findings of ISRO's report on the issue and causes behind it.

Context

Recently, **ISRO** released the **Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India**, which highlighted that India is not on track to achieve its national commitment of land degradation neutrality.

What is land degradation?

Land degradation within dry land regions (arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid regions) is termed as 'desertification'.

Findings of the report:

- 29.7% of India's total geographical area underwent **land degradation** during 2018-19
- Besides land degradation, **desertification** has also increased. India witnessed an increase in the level of desertification in 28 of 31 states and Union territories between 2011-13 and 2018-19.
- Most of the degradation and desertification is contributed by **Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Ladakh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh** and **Telangana**
- However, land degradation and desertification was declining in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana in 2018-2019.

**Must Read:** [Desertification and land degradation Atlas of India](#)

**Target:**

As a signatory to the [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification](#) in Paris signed on June 17, 1994, while speaking at the UN High-Level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought, Modi had added that India is working to restore 26 mha of degraded land by 2030

Causes behind land degradation and desertification

- **Loss of soil cover**– Loss of soil cover, mainly due to rainfall and surface runoff, was one of the biggest reasons for desertification. According to the atlas, it was responsible for 11% of the desertification in the country
- **Water erosion**– it was responsible for 10.98% of desertification in the country in 2011-13

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- **Vegetation degradation**– it found to be responsible for around 9% of desertification in the country
- **Wind erosion**– it found to be responsible for around 5% of the desertification in India

### 37. Catch the rain, fix water crisis: How Odisha leads by example

**Source:** Down to Earth

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

**Relevance:** Fighting water crisis in India, Odisha model of rain water harvesting

**Synopsis:** Urbanization poses a threat to our natural environment, it is leading to water scarcity, disasters, loss of biodiversity and more. However, sustainable urbanization can offer a solution for the emerging urban problems as reflected by Odisha model.

Context

Most Indian states in the last one decade have observed irregularity in rainfall pattern leading to water crisis and drought-like situation in some places while heavy rainfall led to floods in others.

What is Rain water harvesting?

Rain water harvesting comprises collecting run-off from a structure or other impervious surface to store it for use. It is used to conserve rainwater that runs off from rooftops, parks, roads and open grounds by collecting, storing, conveying and purifying it.

Need for rainwater harvesting

The rapid growth of urban areas has **adversely affected natural recharge of groundwater** aquifers. With this, surface water runoff has increased, thereby limiting its infiltration into the ground and causing water scarcity.

Rainwater harvesting can offer a great solution in such situations. Observing the irregularity in rainfall and increase flood frequency, many states have already adopted such steps to install rainwater harvesting system in their cities to **reduce surface water runoff**.

Odisha model

- The state of Odisha has developed 12,000 rainwater harvesting structures (RWHS) to facilitate water conservation and groundwater recharge. This has been done in 2,035 wards of 114 urban local bodies under the state-wide campaign “**Catch the Rain: Where it Falls and When it Falls**”.
- This was completed under **Mukhyamantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan (MUKTA)**, an urban wage employment scheme for migrant workers.

Unique features of the model

- **Cost-effective:** The rainwater harvesting system developed by Odisha is cost-effective, involves no complex technologies and require less maintenance. It can be completed in 7-10 days.
- **Simple recharge mechanism:** The recharge mechanism under the system is also simple and easy to maintain.
- **Geo-tagging of sites:** To strengthen the transparency and accountability, it is mandatory for the sites to be geotagged.



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- **MUKTA Scheme:** It is completed under MUKTA scheme, which is an urban wage employment scheme for migrant workers, thus also provides livelihood opportunities to urban poor

### Conclusion

Rainwater harvesting is a way forward for the emerging water crisis. The anthropogenic activities have played a major role in furthering climate crisis, leading to overconsumption of underground water and depletion of groundwater table. Thus, there is need to promote models of rain water harvesting similar to Odisha

**Also read:** [PM launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan: “Catch the rain” campaign](#)

### 38. To break the poverty cycle: GoI should allow companies to offer earn-while-you-learn education to poor young Indians

**Source:** [TOI](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3- Inclusive growth

**Relevance:** To understand the issue of poverty in migrants.

**Synopsis:** Given the nature of the jobs of migrants and the need to educate them, there is a need to create an alternate education system for them.

### Challenges of education for migrants

- Education is seen by many as a ticket out of poverty.
- Today, in the market, including manual labour, one cannot rise above a certain level without education.
- So, this creates a huge barrier for migrants who often move from one place to another.

**Read more:** [Migrant workers and their Social protection in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

### How can we address this?

- An alternate education system suited for migrants without disturbing the mainstream system has to be framed.
- The government must allow places like hospitals, construction firms and manufacturing industries to provide education. This is also vital for child nutrition, as labourers send their children to school for food.
- Industries can provide job-specific training in an informal way. This will benefit industries as they get skilled labour.
  - For example: if every hospital with more than 200 beds is allowed to train Auxiliary Nursing Midwives (ANM) and General Nursery and Midwifery (GNM)
  - ANM students can work certain hours and attend online classes few hours daily. This will benefit the labourers and the health industry both.

### Way Forward:

- It is understood that our government cannot pay for a college education. But it can **create a parallel college education system** for the poor and authorize industries to offer blended courses through the online route.