

**9pm**

# **Compilation**

**September, 2021 (Second Week)**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of September (Second Week), 2021

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# General Studies Paper - 2

General Studies - 2

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**1. To tackle nutrition challenges, we must also address sanitation issues**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**To tackle nutrition challenges, we must also address sanitation issues**” published in the **Indian Express** on **6<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

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

**Relevance:** To understand the dimension of Nutrition

**Synopsis:** Understand how the interplay of food and hygiene are important for complete nutrition.

**Introduction**

Of all the problems confronting the youth, nutritional insecurity is the worst. It has the power to cripple the future of an entire generation. Numerous reports have pointed to the dismal state of nutritional status of the children in India.

**What are the findings of national/International Organisations?**

**UNICEF Report:** It indicated that nearly **12 lakh children could die** in low and middle-income countries **in the next six months** due to a decrease in routine health services and an increase in wasting. About three lakh such children would be from India.

**National Food Health survey (NFHS 5):** It indicated that ever since the onset of the pandemic, acute undernourishment in children below the age of five has worsened, with one in every three children below the age of five suffering from chronic malnourishment.

According to the latest data, 37.9% of children under five are stunted, and 20.8% are wasted — a form of malnutrition in which children are too thin for their height. This is much higher than in other developing countries where, on average, 25% of children suffer from stunting and 8.9% are wasted

**NFHS 4:** It said that approximately 9 percent of children under five years of age in India experience diarrheal disease.

**World Health Organisation (WHO):** It said that 50% of all mal- and under-nutrition can be traced to diarrhoea and intestinal worm infections, which are a direct result of poor water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). WHO has estimated that access to proper water, hygiene and sanitation can prevent the deaths of at least 8,60,000 children a year caused by undernutrition.

**Studies about linkage of malnutrition with hygiene**

WASH and nutrition must be addressed together through a lens of holistic, sustainable community engagement to enable long-term impact. This is because the linkage between nutrition and hygiene is now well established.

It was first highlighted in the **Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989**. Under this, the states were urged to ensure “adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water” to combat disease and malnutrition.

Another research in **2015 (Jean H. Humphrey from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health):** Study highlighted that poor hygiene and sanitation in developing countries leads to a sub-clinical condition called “environmental enteropathy” in children. It causes nutritional malabsorption and is the source of a variety of problems, including diarrhoea, retarded growth and stunting.

### What should be the Indian strategy to counter diarrhoea and malnutrition?

In the Indian, scenario, a **simultaneous approach to nutrition and WASH** should be adopted. It will not only aid India's fight against malnutrition but also bolster Covid resilience amongst the most vulnerable sections of society.

A **coordinated, multi-sectoral approach** amongst the health, water, sanitation, and hygiene bodies, along with **strong community engagement** can help India achieve the goal of a safe and healthy population.

#### Terms to know

- [What is the National Family Health Survey \(NFHS\)?](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)

### 2. The judicial role in improving law making: The key to revitalising India's reservation system

**Source:** This post is based on the article "The judicial role in improving law-making" published in **The Hindu** on **6<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2: Structure, organization and functioning of the judiciary.

**Relevance:** Judiciary's role in deliberative legislation.

**Synopsis:** Rushed laws sacrifice core ideals of constitutional democracy, the judiciary can play a crucial role in course-correcting the Parliament.

#### Introduction

Deterioration in the quality of debate has prompted demands for reform of legislative procedures. Speaking on the matter, while CJI suggested that intellectuals enter politics, the Judiciary itself can play a positive role in this regard.

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

### How can one measure the legislative efficiency of the Parliament?

Often, **reports cite the volume of legislation** as a measure of legislative **efficiency**. However, **the quality** of deliberation by public representatives is **equally important**. One method of doing it is by ensuring that Parliament adheres to the letter and spirit of the constitution.

### How can the Judiciary improve law-making?

**Firstly**, the Constitution contains certain detailed provisions laying out how laws are to be passed by Parliament and the State Legislative Assemblies. Unfortunately, these are often undermined.

For example, even when the result through voice votes is not clear, bills are still passed without securing the majority vote required under **Article 100**. This was evident in the controversial farm laws, which were reportedly rushed and passed by voice vote in the Rajya Sabha despite objections by Opposition members. The Judiciary can make such legislation unconstitutional and void.

**Secondly, checking improper use of Money Bill:** Similarly, bills have been certified as Money bills to bypass the Rajya Sabha using the provisions of **Article 110**.

**In the Aadhar case**, the Supreme Court recognized its power to check that such procedural provisions are complied with. However, the judiciary does not address their violations in a timely manner. This only strengthens the resolve of violators of the constitutional spirit.



**Thirdly**, to ensure **constitutional reasonableness of law**: Judiciary can make deliberation a factor in evaluating the constitutional validity of laws. Courts can call on the State to provide justifications explaining why the law is reasonable and valid.

The court can also examine whether and to what extent the legislature deliberated the reasonableness of a measure.

The Supreme Court adopted this approach in the Indian **Hotel and Restaurants Association(2013) case**. The court invalidated a law prohibiting dance performances only in hotels with less than three stars as rooted in class prejudice and, therefore, violative of equality.

### **What should Judiciary do next?**

Judiciary has demonstrated that it is **possible to reform institutions by addressing their dysfunctions**. So, Judiciary can nudge the legislature for internal reforms to safeguard democracy.

### **3. The key to revitalising India's reservation system**

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**The key to revitalising India's reservation system**" published in **The Hindu** on **6<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** To understand the need for caste census in India.

**Synopsis:** A Socio-economic caste-based census becomes a necessary precondition to initiate any meaningful reform.

#### **Introduction**

Recently, the central government's decision to introduce reservations for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) examinations has been appreciated. This ignited the debate on caste census once again and brought the debate on affirmative action into the limelight.

**Affirmative action programme:** It was envisaged during the founding moments of the republic. It has enunciated the principle of justice in a deeply unequal and oppressive Indian society.

#### **What is the problem with the current system?**

**Inequitable:** Reservation, despite seven decades, has not translated into an equitable distribution of benefits for many groups in our heterogeneous society.

**Consequently, many groups have been left out.** There is a strong demand from those who have not been able to get the benefits of reservations, from within the marginalized sections. This calls for a need to devise some policy option that may be able to supplement the existing system of reservation. To study this in detail, the **Justice Rohini commission** was constituted.

#### **What are the observations of Justice G. Rohini Commission?**

The data given by the committee on the sub-categorization of OBC provide some crucial observations.

### Key findings of the committee

Based on the last five years data the commission concluded that **97% of central OBC quota benefits go to just under 25% of its castes.**

As many as **983 OBC communities** — 37% of the total — **have zero representation** in both central government jobs and admissions to central universities.

Also, the report states that **just 10% of the OBC have accrued 24.95% of jobs** and admissions.

### How does insufficiency of data impact policymaking?

The Rohini committee data was based only on the institutions that come under the purview of the central government. The committee hardly has any legible data on the socio-economic conditions of varied social groups at more local levels of State and society.

There is a need for accurate data pertaining to the socio-economic condition of different social groups. Caste-based reservations are important to study upward mobility in society.

**Read more:** [Caste based census in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

### What needs to be done?

There is an urgent requirement for a mechanism to address this lacuna and make the system more accountable and sensitive to intra-group demands. So the following actions can be taken:

**First**, there is a need to develop a **wide variety of context-sensitive, evidence-based policy options** that can be tailored to meet specific requirements of specific groups.

**Second**, we need an institution like the **‘Equal Opportunities Commission’** of the United States or the United Kingdom which can:

1. **Make a deprivation index** correlating data from the socio-economic-based census of different communities including caste, gender, religion and rank them to make tailor-made policies.
2. Undertake an **audit on the performance of employers and educational institutions** on non-discrimination and equal opportunity, and **issue codes of good practice in different sectors.**

### What can be the way ahead?

Socio-economic caste-based census becomes a necessary precondition to initiate any meaningful reform in the affirmative action regime in India. So, that can act as a good first step.

### 4. The world is changing rapidly and teachers must meet its challenges

**Source:** This post is based on the article **“The world is changing rapidly and teachers must meet its challenges”** published in the **Indian Express** on **6th September 2021.**

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

**Relevance:** This article explains the challenges that can be addressed by the Teachers.

**Synopsis:** Teachers need to address few present-day challenges of students.

### Introduction

Teachers often feel they are not in power and yet in a position of great responsibility. So, the life of a teacher is always challenging, complex and unbelievably demanding. The world is changing so rapidly, so teachers must embrace change and make necessary adjustments.



### What about the teachers of the past?

The greatest teachers, whether the Buddha, Christ, Rama-Krishna, Aurobindo, Yogananda or Nanak, never taught in classrooms. They had **no blackboards, maps or charts**. They used **no subject outlines**, kept no records, gave no grades.

Their **methods were the same for all** who came to hear and learn. Their minds were **laboratories of compassion, empathy and reflective thinking**. They were **stoic and equanimous**.

### How do teachers need to change?

**Individualistic approach:** The prevailing **standardised education** policies and practices have to be **replaced with more individualised holistic approaches** that prepare children to live productively.

**Autonomy of students:** The teachers need to **implement processes that foster student autonomy** and leadership, encourage inventive learners with skills, maximise liberty to make meaningful decisions and develop global partnerships.

**Partnership and alliances:** In order to **avoid distances between communities and people**, teachers need to **emphasise partnerships and alliances** that facilitate the students to coexist, interact and collaborate with others. This will enable children to live together in mutual empowerment.

The teachers have to **give greater attention to the happiness and health of children**.

**Inward and outward-looking:** The teachers **must look inward and outward** to explore new ideas and different ways, clarify a shared vision with students, become aware of the realities, etc.

## 5. Inside the unfolding healthtech revolution

**Source:** This post is based on the article **“INSIDE THE UNFOLDING HEALTHTECH REVOLUTION”** published in the **Live Mint** on **7th September 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** Digitalization in health services

**Synopsis:** Growth of Digitalisation in India is catalysing the growth of innovative Healthtech startups and this gives India an opportunity to address the issues plaguing India's Public health care.

### What are the issues plaguing India's public health care?

COVID has put the focus back on India's inadequate healthcare infrastructure, which has been affected by issues of accessibility, affordability and availability.

**Inadequate spending:** At 1.26% of the gross domestic product (GDP), the government's spending on healthcare has been very low.

**Poor quality of services:** When it comes to the quality and accessibility of healthcare, India's rank is poor (145 out of 195 countries), according to the Lancet's global disease burden study.

**Issues related to health resources:** Besides low public investment, there are also issues of efficiency, absenteeism, and availability of specialists in government facilities. Further, there are both manpower and infrastructure shortages.

**Lack of accountability:** The biggest bottleneck the Government health centres face are attitudinal issues. There is an accountability crisis. There are very limited implications for poor performance and outcomes

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**Narrow outlook:** Government healthcare, focused on women and children in primary care, must also accord attention to other areas that deserve attention, such as diabetes.

**Lack of coordination:** Entire machinery is fragmented and works in silos. There are different programmes for different diseases, from HIV to TB. And there are two parallel systems, one funded by the state governments and the other centrally funded under the National Health Mission, which often do not coordinate with each other.

**Note:** Digitization means **to convert something into a digital format**, and usually refers to encoding of data and documents. Digitalization means **to convert business processes over to use digital technologies**, instead of analogue or offline systems such as paper or whiteboards.

### How growing digitalisation is helping revolutionise health sector?

**Health is being prioritized:** COVID has **accelerated the digitization** wave everywhere, including in health. And state governments as well as the Centre are finally prioritizing the health sector.

**Unified Health Interface (UHI):** Plans are underway to build a digital backbone for healthcare. The National Health Authority is building a unified health interface or UHI as part of the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM). UHI will **help connect patients and healthcare service providers**, aiding them in discovery, payments and access to health services across applications. It is also working to digitize and standardize patient health records to ensure easy access and interoperability.

**Increased use of digital platforms:** The government is increasingly using digital (platforms/services) to act as a force multiplier. This is catalyzing the growth of healthtech startups and venture capital investments in healthtech startups.

With over 5,000 healthtech startups, health industry is estimated to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 39% to touch \$5 billion by 2023.

**Case study:** [How Bidar in K'tka handled 2nd COVID wave with the help of a healthtech startup?](#)

### What is the way forward?

**First**, intent and investments, must increase sharply to help millions of poor people access better healthcare services.

**Second**, instead of one size fits all, policies and models must be customized to specific geographies to make it more effective.

**Third**, at a policy level, India needs a more flexible, practical and modular approach to train and upskill healthcare professionals. In Ethiopia, nurses can train to upgrade themselves to become surgeons. India could do the same with ASHA workers.

### 6. Data regulation is undergoing a significant revolution

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**Data regulation is undergoing a significant revolution**" published in **Livemint** on **7th September 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** Techno-legal approach to data regulation.

**Synopsis:** Technology businesses are most effectively regulated through a judicious mix of law and technology. To regulating technology, we cannot have one without the other.

## Introduction

At a high-level ministerial meeting recently, seven countries came together to **endorse a techno-legal approach to data regulation.**

The participating delegates committed to exploring how technical frameworks such as [Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture \(DEPA\)](#) could be incorporated into the EU's Data Act and Australia's Consumer Data Rights policy to enable more effective outcomes.

**Must Read:** [Positives and inadequacies of DEPA](#)

## How a revolution is going on in data regulation?

**Data sovereignty:** A number of countries have been looking to extend their existing data protection frameworks to ensure that users have more effective control over their data.

**Free flow of data:** In Australia, **Consumer Data Right**, is shaping up. It will allow consumers in Australia to require any business with which they have a commercial relationship to transfer that data to any other business of their choice.

The **European Union (EU)** has begun to put in place a series of legislative proposals that allow users more efficiently transfer data from one data business to another.

**Data Governance:** The EU's proposed **Data Act** is intended to implement measures that will create a fairer data economy by ensuring better access to and use of data.

The EU has also drafted a **Data Governance Act**, which when enacted will govern the data exchanges and platforms that will form the infrastructure through which data holders will be connected to data users.

## What do these initiatives imply?

**Efficient utilization of data:** The range of regulatory initiatives of different countries seems to suggest that it is not enough to protect data if you cannot also ensure that this data is effectively utilized either for the benefit of the person to whom it pertains or society as a whole.

**Need of tech-based regulations:** laws and regulation simply cannot keep pace with changes in technology. If the only weapon we are using to regulate technology is the law, we will be doomed.

## What is India's approach on data regulation?

**DEPA:** It is being implemented sector-wise through a set of open, interoperable protocols. This framework, better known as the **Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA)**.

**Technology-based solution:** allowing users to transfer their data from data businesses that currently hold them to those that want to use them. For example, Account Aggregator framework.

However, India still **does not have a data protection regulation** and implementing a technological solution for data transfers in the absence of a legal framework could bring problems.

## 7. A Taliban-led Afghanistan and the Chinese conundrum

**Source:** This post is based on the following articles

- **"A Taliban-led Afghanistan and the Chinese conundrum"** published in **The Hindu** on **7<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.
- **"From fighters to rulers"** published in **The Hindu** on **7<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.
- **"Pakistan has opened the Pandora's box in Kabul"** published in **The Indian Express** on **7<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – India and Neighbourhood relations.

**Relevance:** To understand the recent development in Afghanistan.

**Synopsis:** This article explains the impact of US exit from Afghanistan on Pakistan and China.

### Introduction

After postponing the announcement twice, **Taliban spokesmen have said** that they expect to have a **new government in Afghanistan this week**. The Taliban announced this after they captured the Afghan capital Kabul more than three weeks ago.

The real reason for the delay appears to be **differences within various Taliban factions** over the **government's structure, composition and cabinet portfolios**.

### How Pakistan impacted from the US exit?

Pakistan has to **deal with an enormous refugee crisis**.

Due to the poor fiscal condition of Afghanistan, the key assistance that Afghans will expect in terms of food, fuel and power will have to come from Iran and Pakistan. **Iran** has already signed a deal and is **allowing export of its oil in exchange for cash**.

Pakistan is facing **awful economic situations due to restrictive IMF conditions**. So, the Pakistan will find it exceedingly **difficult to send supplies to Afghanistan**.

Pakistan was already in FATF grey list. So, any activity of Pakistan to promote terror could **jeopardise its attempts to exit the FATF grey list**.

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

### How Chinese benefitted from the US exit?

The Chinese have the **technology to extract the rare-earth metals** and huge deposits of **copper** in Afghanistan.

China is also engaging with the Taliban, to complete the new **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** investment.

### Why does China make huge investments in South East Asia and Africa?

**First**, the **cost of production is lower** in Southeast Asia. So, the Chinese firms could gain more by shifting their production bases outside China.

**Second**, investing in these regions meant **access to bigger markets** for Chinese firms and **more uniform regional development**. For instance, the relatively underdeveloped Kunming region in Yunnan province became a commercial hub due to these investments.

**Third**, Chinese firms **could evade protectionist measures** targeted at their exports. For instance, by investing and start exporting from Africa and South East Asia to other developed nations the Chinese companies can evade protectionist measures on Chinese goods and services.

**Fourth, reduce some of China's energy requirements:** Investments in these countries enable China to access cheaper foreign energy (oil and power) and minerals. For example, Chinese firms have constructed hydropower plants and a thermal power station in Myanmar, invested in copper processing activities in Vietnam.

**Read more:** [Implications of the rise of Taliban for India – Explained, pointwise](#)



### How Afghanistan is different from South East Asian countries?

Afghanistan and Pakistan are not comparable to the economic potential of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. For instance, **Pakistan is unable to repay a China-funded energy project**, built under the BRI. **Business decisions in Pakistan** are not economically driven but are **motivated by vested interests with the army**.

The **Taliban** are known to have a **soft corner for the East Turkestan Islamic Movement** — a militant group active in the Uighur province of China.

The **Taliban ruling groups are far from united**, making it **impossible to make any reliable domestic and international policy** predictions.

Further, The **dependence on opium export makes Afghanistan vulnerable** to world mafias and corruption.

Hence, the **Chinese investments in Afghanistan and Pakistan will constantly face a risk of interruption**.

### 8. Karbi Anglong peace deal points the importance of addressing small insurgencies that scar Northeast landscape

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Karbi Anglong peace deal points the importance of addressing small insurgencies that scar Northeast landscape**” published in the “**Indian Express**” on **7th September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Internal security.

**Relevance:** To understand the Karbi-Anglong deal.

**Synopsis:** The recent Karbi Anglong agreement gives hope for peace in the northeast. But we need to look beyond peace deals for long-term peace in the region.

#### Introduction

The Government of India has signed a tripartite Karbi Anglong agreement with five insurgent groups to put an end to years of violence and bring peace and prosperity in the state of Assam.

**Read more:** [Karbi Agreement – another milestone in PM’s vision](#)

### What is the background of these insurgencies?

The Northeast has numerous insurgent groups spread across many states. The Naga insurgency has acted as an inspiration for all the separatist movements in this region. ULFA (United Liberation Front of Asom) was guided by the desire for Assamese nationalism. Similarly, many smaller groups have fought to protect their distinct ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity from being subsumed within a broader Assamese identity.

**Read more:** [Naga Peace Accord and Naga Insurgency](#)

### How do these groups work and operate?

They make wide-ranging demands, ranging from a separate nation-state to statehood within the Indian Constitution and autonomy under the state government. This has forced the center to adopt various policies to counter the insurgency.

### What is the centre’s approach?

The centre adopted a **double-barrelled approach**: First, it **offers autonomy under the Constitution**. Second, it **uses security forces to crush the militancy**.



Center beings with by accommodating insurgents who negotiate for peace. They are accommodated in state legislatures or Autonomous Councils. This approach has had varying degrees of success, in Mizoram, Tripura, the Bodo areas.

#### **How Assam's case is different?**

In Assam's hill districts of Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong, **separatist movements** have **rejected Sixth Schedule status**. This transformed into a demand for an autonomous state under Article 244(a) of the Constitution.

Thus, it can be said that the Karbi Anglong agreement promises more autonomy than currently enjoyed by the Autonomous Council under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

#### **What should be the way forward?**

The peace deal alone cannot ensure peace, as Autonomous councils are often captured by ex-militants who use fear and intimidation to assert themselves. So we must look beyond peace deals towards transitioning society into a democratic construct.

#### **Terms to know** [Article 244\(a\)](#)

### **9. Grow up, states: CMs should know central resource transfer won't go up. They must fix their own finances**

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**Grow up, states: CMs should know central resource transfer won't go up. They must fix their own finances**" published in **Times of India on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 Government Budgeting: Fiscal resources.

**Relevance:** Improving the financing of the States.

**Synopsis:** States have no option but to be fiscally aatmanirbhar.

#### **Introduction**

Recently, TN released a white paper that talked about the state fiscal condition is not good and the state is in deep debt. This document blamed the Central government and previous state government policies for the present condition.

#### **How has Fiscal federalism changed over time?**

**States** are at a disadvantage as they **face challenges in raising revenue** to match their expenditure needs. The entire scheme of centre transfer to states is premised on correcting that imbalance. Importantly, the resource transfer to states, and in the matter of autonomy of their use, has over time shifted substantially in the favor of states.

Eg In the **original constitution:** States only got a share of two central taxes i.e **Personal Income Tax and Union excise duties**. Later, this was changed through the constitution amendment in 2000 where states got a share in total taxes collected by the centre.

With the **abolition of the Planning Commission**, the state's autonomy has increased. Earlier, the Centre decides how much money to transfer to the states and for what purpose. Now States get that money as part of statutory transfers with full discretion over where they want to spend it.

#### **What is the issue between Centre and States?**

**Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS):** States see CSS as an assault on their autonomy. The state wishes to have full autonomy on finances and how it is used, as they know the local needs better.

**GST:** It is a central initiative. It is argued that the State compromised its power under it. But it is to be noted that Centre also did the same.

**Cess and Surcharge:** Center is increasingly resorting to these instead of raising the taxes. This is advantageous to the centre as this amount is not shared with the States.

**What should be the way forward for the states?**

The reality is that States will not get much financial help from the centre in future. So they have to set their finances right if they are to achieve the goal of fiscal autonomy.

## 10. Spirit of federalism lies in the constitution

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Spirit of federalism lies in the constitution**” published in **The Hindu on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**Syllabus:** GS 2 Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure.

**Relevance:** To understand the issues related to the Concurrent list.

**Synopsis** Legislation in a federal setup needs careful consideration while dealing with laws in the concurrent list.

### Introduction

Recently, various State governments raised concerns about Central unilateralism in the enactment of critical laws on subjects in the Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. This may undermine federal principles in India.

**What are the issues raised by various state ministers?**

**Kerala Chief Minister:** He stated that unilateral legislation on the subjects in the Concurrent List is **not in the essence of federalism**.

**Tamil Nadu Chief Minister:** He also raised the issue by calling on other Chief Ministers against the Union government usurping powers under the State and Concurrent Lists.

**What laws were made by the Union government without the consent of states?**

**Farm Laws:** Parliament passed the farm laws without consulting the States. The laws, essentially, relate to Entry 14 (agriculture clause) and belong to the State List. Parliament passed these laws without proper consultation by citing Entry 33 (trade and commerce clause) in the Concurrent List. This has led to massive farmer protests in India.

**Read more:** [Farmers protesting on Farm bills](#)

**Major Ports Authorities Act, 2021:** Goa objected to the law, stating that it would lead to the redundancy of the local laws, including the Goa Town and Country Planning Act, the Goa Municipalities Act, the Goa Panchayat Raj Act and various other local laws.

**Draft Indian Ports Bill, 2021:** It proposes to change the status quo by transferring the powers related to planning, developing and regulating the non-major ports to the Maritime State Development Council (MSDC), which is controlled by the Union government. **Various coastal States** like Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and others have **objected to the Bill** as it proposes to **seize the power of the State government** with respect to non-major ports.

According to the **Indian Ports Act, 1908**, which presently governs the field related to non-major ports, the power to regulate and control the minor ports remained with the State governments.

**Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020:** The field related to electricity is traceable to Entry 38 of the Concurrent List. The power to regulate the sector was vested with the State Electricity

Regulatory Commissions (SERCs). However, the proposed amendment seeks to change the regulatory regime.

**Read more:** [Draft Electricity Act \(Amendment\) Bill 2020](#)

### **About the Center's power to enact laws under the Concurrent list**

Under the **Government of India Act, 1935**, certain subjects were put in the Concurrent List by giving the Union and the State Legislatures concurrent powers regarding them. State's power to legislate on these subjects was to be shared with the Union so that there is uniformity in laws across the country.

### **What is the Supreme Court (SC) judgement?**

**State of Bombay vs F.N. Balsara case:** The SC ordered in case of conflict between centre and state, after employing the doctrine of "**pith and substance**", the laws of the State Legislature must prevail.

**S.R. Bommai vs Union of India case:** The SC told that the States are not mere appendages of the Union. The Union government should ensure that the **power of the States is not trampled with**.

### **What are the commission/committee recommendations?**

**Sarkaria Commission:** It recommended that there should be **mutual consultation**, guided by **coordination in all areas of concurrent or overlapping jurisdiction**.

It was further recommended that the **Union government**, while exercising powers under the Concurrent list, **should limit itself to the purpose of ensuring uniformity** in basic issues of national policy **and not more**.

**National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC), or the Venkatachaliah Commission:** It recommended that individual and collective consultation with the States should be undertaken through the **Inter-State Council** established under Article 263 of the Constitution.

So, the essence of cooperative federalism lies in consultation and dialogue, and not in unilateral legislation.

## **11. [Its time for national conversation on how to live with the virus](#)**

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**It's time for a national conversation on how to live with the virus**" published in the **Indian Express** on 7<sup>th</sup> **September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS -2 Health.

**Relevance:** Understand the role of vaccines.

**Synopsis:** The goal is not to eliminate the infection, but to reduce sickness and mortality.

### **Introduction**

This article highlights the impact of Covid on people's lives and what can be expected in the future. Given that virus is constantly evolving, how we shape our policies is crucial for a healthy society.

### **What are the limitations of the vaccination process?**

**Not properly immune:** Vaccination does not eliminate our chance of being infected. The current regime of vaccination offers neither "herd immunity" nor long-term protection.

**Variants with the vaccinated and non-vaccinated person:** Even after the vaccination, it was found that a person affected with delta variant has similar viral loads as persons who are not vaccinated.

**The threat of further transmission and mutation:** New study shows that delta variant can spread even in the absence of symptoms. And so, vaccination will not stop further transmission and there will be the threat of new mutations taking place.

**Waning immunity with time:** It now appears that vaccine-induced immunity wanes with time. A recent example is of Israel, which was once lauded for achieving very high levels of vaccination coverage, but is now experiencing another wave.

#### **What will be the way forward?**

**Prioritize public resources** for vaccinating only the vulnerable, such as the elderly and those with co-morbidities, and all frontline workers

**Investment:** Government should invest in infectious disease surveillance, community-based supportive care and peripheral hospital critical care.

It is time for collective and collaborative action where all the stakeholders/experts like social scientists, political leaders, representatives of civil society etc should come up together to find the right path towards fully reopening our society.

#### **12. Non Binary genders need more visibility in India's Census 2021**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Non-binary genders need more visibility in India's Census 2021**” published in the **Down to Earth** on **7<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 2** – Protection & Betterment of Vulnerable Sections.

**Relevance:** To understand the gender dimensions in Census data.

**Synopsis:** Separating sex and gender in the country's biggest socio-economic survey is necessary.

#### **Introduction**

Census data is important as it acts as a base for many other surveys in the country. This is because the census data is a better enumeration of categories of gender. But still, the Census is far from perfect.

#### **About the Census 2011**

It was the **first census to incorporate the number of 'trans' population** of the country. The survey provides sex-related data in a binary male / female format. It **tagged the rest as 'other'** and assumed them to be 'trans'. Those with transgender, intersex and other non-binary identities are **excluded from the representation**.

#### **What were the findings of this report?**

The report estimated that 4.8 million Indians were identified as transgender.

#### **Who is considered a transgender and non-binary person?**

**Transgender:** It is an umbrella term that includes transmen and transwomen. It refers to someone who does not identify with their sex assigned at birth.

**Non-Binary:** It is a diverse term of expression. For example, it may refer to transgender, intersex people, demi gender, mulitigender and others.



**What are the problems associated with transgenders/Non-Binary people?**

**Access to toilets:** They face problems in accessing public spaces like toilets according to their choice as the existing infrastructures mostly recognise ‘male’ and ‘female’.

In 2017, the Centre issued guidelines under the [Swachh Bharat Mission \(Gramin\)](#), making it mandatory for transgender people to be allowed into public toilets designated for both men and women, depending on their choice. But still, access has been denied to them or they are often bullied.

**Inadequate amount of data:** We only have data on “others”. There is a **need to have data on every subgroup** for providing solutions.

Sex is biologically determined, but gender is a social construct. **Data collection has been sex-focused and not gender-focused.**

According to a **private report India for the Big Data for Development Network, Gender-disaggregated data does not reflect the reality** of all gender minorities. So, the report mentioned that these types of data cannot be used to make development decisions, especially for the inclusion of transgender and intersex persons, who are often misrepresented or absent in this data.

**Scarcity of information:** We do not have proper information on how many intersex people live with their families, the percentage of Trans people who are homeless, their education and employment structures, types of housing they live in, migration rates and others.

**What will be the solution to these problems?**

**To follow a non-binary approach:** Government should clearly segregate data between gender and sexualities. First, the respective options for gender could be man, woman, transman, transwoman, non-binary or other. This will give much more clear information as compared to before.

**Redress the existing used terminologies:** Male and female (which stands for sex) also need to be replaced with terminologies like man, woman (which stands for gender).

**Awareness:** It was found out that during the 2011 Census, much of the population was not even aware of this third category in options to gender.

E.g. Delhi, alone had 30,000 hijras (transwomen) in 2005, according to the All India Hijra Kalyan Sabha in 2005. This contradicts the 2011 Census data which mentioned that Delhi has 4,213 Trans people.

**Add categories:** Census should also include a ‘doesn’t want to disclose’ category for those who don’t want to associate with any gender trait or doesn’t want to divulge gender information.

Gender is not a binary construct, like human emotions it has many shades. So, our census or data collection should reflect this reality.

**13. Needed: A tribunal for CAPF**

**Source:** This post is based on the article **“Needed: A tribunal for CAPF”** published in **The Hindu** on **8<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

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

**Relevance:** To understand the need for a new tribunal for CAPFs.

**Synopsis:** CAPF needs a tribunal to provide faster resolution for numerous pending cases.

**Introduction**

There have been numerous cases of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officers overstaying leave. To curb that, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) recently issued orders to **“include the**



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**provisions of Security Force Court (SFC)** as available in the Acts and Rules of other CAPFs (Central Armed Police Forces), so that such cases are finalised within minimum time.”

### **How departmental inquiries are conducted in CRPF?**

**For non-gazetted ranks:** CRPF rules lay down the **procedure for the conduct of departmental inquiries** against non-gazetted ranks. In normal circumstances, the departmental inquiries are completed within three to six months.

**For gazetted ranks:** The time taken to order the inquiries is longer as other institutions like the Union Public Service Commission, the Central Vigilance Commission, the Department of Personnel and Training, and the MHA are also tied in for their views and legal opinion.

**When personnel overstays their leave:** The delinquent officers must be directed to appear before the inquiring authority along with the presenting officer and the defence assistant of the charged official. Even if one of them fails to appear for the hearing, the conduct of inquiry must be postponed.

Since most officers are busy with operational matters, the inquiries take a backseat.

### **How departmental inquiries are different from Security Force Court(SFC)?**

**SFC:** It is a **purely judicial process** where the **guilt must be proved beyond reasonable doubt** and the **charged official is at liberty to engage a legal practitioner** to defend him.

**Departmental inquiry:** It is a **quasi-judicial proceeding** where the mere element of a preponderance of probability is enough to determine guilt. Hence, the conduct of a departmental inquiry is the better option.

### **How to solve the pendency in CAPF?**

**Appointing retired officers for inquiry:** Most departments of the government appoint retired officers for enquiry. CAPF can also appoint retired officials.

**Set up Tribunals:** With increasing cases being filed in the High Courts across the country in service matters, it is high time the government considered the setting up of tribunals for the CAPFs **on the lines of the Armed Forces Tribunal** for defence services.

## **14. Making them pay: About the regulation of Big techs**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Making them pay**” published in **The Hindu** on 8<sup>th</sup> **September 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** To know about regulating App Operators.

**Synopsis:** A law to regulate app store operators is key to check Big Tech’s monopolising nature.

### **Introduction**

Recently, South Korea made an amendment to its Telecommunications Business Act. The Act aims to **prevent app store operators**, such as Google and Apple, from **forcing app developers to use their in-store payment systems**. It will also check the unfair use of their market position.

### **Why South Korea made this amendment?**

This has happened because of the case involving Apple and Epic games. Here, Apple ousted Epic from its platform, for putting up its own payment system, which bypassed Apple’s payment systems.

### Same laws/ initiatives by other countries

**Australia:** Recently made a law to make Internet platforms, pay media companies for displaying their content. Now the government is in the process of bringing digital payment services such as Apple Pay, Google Pay and WeChat Pay under its regulatory ambit.

**European Union:** EU draft law seeks to make large platform companies as gatekeepers". The EU want the gatekeepers to comply with a set of dos and don'ts. This will give the smaller companies a fair chance to compete in the market. This draft law is also aimed at giving more choices to the customers.

**USA:** Introduced a bill to promote competition and reduce the gatekeeper power in the app economy. The bill aims to increase choice, improve quality, and reduce costs for consumers.

### In Indian context

Apple is facing an **antitrust challenge in India** from a Rajasthan-based non-profit organization called 'Together We Fight Society' on this issue. Last year, CCI (Competition Commission of India) also started investigations into similar allegations against Google.

**Read more:** [Regulating tech giants in India- Explained](#)

### What should India do?

India can also enact such a law. As such a law cannot be called as radical. Further, the Government had recently **set up Open Network for Digital Commerce** to "democratise e-commerce" and "to provide alternatives to proprietary e-commerce sites". So such laws are the need of the hour, given the challenge of protecting and encouraging the smaller players.

### Terms to know

- [Competition Commission of India](#)

## 15. Redefining the reservation policy

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**Redefining the Reservation Policy**" published in **The Hindu** on 7<sup>th</sup> **September 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** Understanding the reservation policy.

**Synopsis:** Political parties should consider making substantive changes to the way reservation is implemented.

### Introduction

Recently, Tamil Nadu adopted a bill to provide 10.5% reservation for Vanniyakula Kshatriyas within the quota of MBC (Most Backward Class) and DNC (Denotified Communities)

With the **105<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment**, center empowered the states/ UTs to prepare their own list of Socio-Economic Backward Class (SEBC).

**Read more:** [Centre to allow states to make their own OBC list](#)

From this year onwards, 27% of all India quota for admissions for medical and dental courses will be reserved for Other Backward Classes (OBC).

### Why there is a demand for Caste Based Census?

**Read here:** [Caste based census in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

**What are the constitutional provisions?**

**Article 15(4) (5), Article 16 (4):** Scheme of reservation for SEBC is permissible but meant for only those OBC which are not adequately presented.

**What are the court judgements?**

**Indira Sawhney Case (1992):** There must be extraordinary circumstances justifying the quantum to exceed the cap.

**Maratha case:** [Maratha Reservation Case Judgment and Federalism](#)

**Why sub categorization is required?**

Reservation has not translated into an equitable distribution of benefits for many groups in our heterogeneous society. This has generated the need for sub categorization.

**NCBC (National Commission for Backward Classes) in 2015:** It emphasized on the need for “Classification of OBC” than on streamlining the provisions on creamy layers to ensure free implementation of reservation policy.

**Rohini Commission:** It was constituted in 2017 for purpose of sub-categorization of communities in the Central list of OBC.

**What are the important issues that need to be addressed?**

All these call for an objective definition of Creamy Layer. For example, **Tamil Nadu’s First Backward Classes Commission recommended** that the “affluent sections” or the “creamy layer” in the backward classes should be excluded from reservation.

The annual income limit is one of the parameters that determine the creamy layer. But we observe that since September 1993, this was revised only five times against the norm of revision every three years. Moreover, the norms like GDP inflation, per capita income and a rise in the cost of living should also be considered.

We also see that **income from salary and agriculture are not considered**, but “income from other sources” is taken into account. The differentiation is unfair.

We should also work to quickly fill the posts of OBC’s. The **parliamentary committee highlighted OBC employees in 78 ministries constituted only 21.75%, against the stipulated quota of 27%.**

**What we need to do next?**

Instead of fighting over abstract issues, we should focus on concrete issues that can bring tangible results.

**Terms to know**

- [Article 16](#)

**16. Politics vs governance (On Urban Cooperative Banks)**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “Politics vs governance” published in **Business Standard** on **9th September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Governance

**Relevance:** Separation of power, Cooperative sector in India

**Synopsis:** The Madhya Pradesh High Court’s decision to stay the Reserve Bank of India’s circular may delay the shift towards better governance in Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs).

**Introduction**

The RBI had in June this year said that Members of Parliament, Assemblies, municipal corporations, municipalities, or other local bodies could not hold the corner-room post, or be a

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whole-time director on UCBs. Thus, the circular **barred elected representatives** from being appointed to the boards of urban co-operative banks (UCBs).

The persons engaged in any other business or vocation; directors of companies and partners of firms that carry on any trade, business or industry, having a substantial interest in any company or working as director, manager, managing agent, partner or proprietor of any trading, commercial or industrial concern will not be eligible to be on the board of a UCB.

### Why such circular by RBI?

**Prevent misuse:** This was done to prevent political interference in banks and the possible abuse of governance standards. It has extracted a heavy cost. For example, Punjab and Maharashtra Urban Co-operative Bank.

**To cut down the room for regulatory arbitrage:** The amendment to the Banking Regulation Act, notified was to give **more muscle to the banking regulator** for the oversight of UCBs.

### What are some associated issues?

**Friction between Centre and states:** The states have held the view that some of the RBI's moves were in conflict with the provisions of State Co-operative Societies Act.

**Concentration of power:** The powers bestowed on the RBI to deal with matters pertaining to the issuance and refund of share capital, appointment, or disqualification of directors, constitution of the board of management, appointment of CEOs, and audit obligations were excessive in nature.

## 17. India's presidency of the UNSC fortified our role in world affairs

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**India's presidency of the UNSC fortified our role in world affairs**" published in **Livemint** on **9<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** To understand India's performance as a UNSC President.

**Synopsis:** With the month-long UNSC presidency, India showcased our role in world affairs.

### Introduction

India has just concluded its presidency of the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** for August. India managed to achieve almost all of what we set out for, and also successfully handled the expected and unexpected challenges that came our way.

### Initiatives of UNSC under India's Presidency

During India's presidency, we had **14 'outcome documents', five of which were UNSC resolutions**. Three signature events were held by India on priority issues. These include maritime security, UN peacekeeping and counter-terrorism.

### About the signature events

**Maritime security event:** It was chaired by the Prime Minister himself which saw participation from several world leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin. This was also the first Security Council (SC) meeting chaired by an Indian PM.

**Event on UN peacekeeping:** During this event, a **resolution on Protecting the Protectors** was adopted, which seeks to safeguard UN Peacekeepers. It was the **first UNSC resolution piloted by India in over four decades**, and it had the co-sponsorship of all 15



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members. During this event, India also **signed an MoU with the UN Peacekeeping Institute** in Entebbe, Uganda.

**Event on counter-terrorism:** In this event, the threat posed by the Islamic State/Daesh. The UNSC members **agreed on a press statement** highlighting, inter alia, **threats posed by the IS-Khorasan and other regional groups** to **Asia** and parts of **Africa**.

### About the developments in Afghanistan

This was the important highlight of India's presidency at UNSC. The UNSC held **three meetings** on it, issued **three press statements** and **adopted one resolution** (UNSC Resolution 2593).

**Read more:** [About the UNSC Resolution 2593](#) and [Noble intentions: About the UNSC resolution on Taliban](#)

### Other initiatives of UNSC under India's Presidency

**Regarding Palestine:** India's Foreign secretary chaired a session on the Palestine Question, which has been a priority focus of the UNSC's work.

**Africa-related issues:** An unscheduled meeting on Ethiopia has occurred. Apart from that, **Resolutions on the UN assistance mission** in Somalia and **sanctions on Mali** were also adopted.

There is **no doubt that our presidency of the UNSC** has once again **reinforced** the fact that **India continues to play an important role in world affairs**.

### Terms to know:

- [United Nations Security Council \(UNSC\)](#)

### 18. [A questionable quota policy](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**A questionable quota policy**" published in **The Hindu** on **9<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** To understand the reservation policy.

**Synopsis:** Instead of providing reservations for government school students, the government should improve the quality of government schools.

### Introduction

Recently, the **Odisha** government has proposed a **15% reservation for government school students in medical and engineering colleges**. The aim is to reduce "inequity arising" from the lack of physical and economic access to coaching institutions.

### What does this proposal imply?

This looks like an admission of the government that it has **failed in providing quality education in schools**. This shows that **instead of focusing on improving the schools**, the government is adopting the policy of reservation.

**Read more:** [Maratha Reservation and the Reservation Policy in India – Explained, Pointwise](#)

### What do the statistics say?

About 62% of students attend government and government-aided schools in India. 38% goes to private institutions, some of which belong to the elite category.



Thus, it can be argued that these 38% may have access to better teachers, tuitions and classes. This, according to the government, it creates inequality.

### **How can the quality of education in government schools be improved?**

**Capacity building Programmes:** Introduce programmes for teachers to implement new pedagogic practices. There should be an emphasis on language learning.

**Fill vacant Posts:** Teachers and staff vacancies should be filled as soon as possible.

**Mindset:** Change in the mindset among people and policymakers that government schools are typically backward and inferior to private schools.

**Change in policies:** The policy of automatically promoting the students to higher classes without passing examinations should be scrapped.

**State responsibility:** The state should take responsibility for improving education in government schools.

### **What can be the way forward?**

Government should address the root cause, which is focused on school education. It should focus on improving education as part of affirmative action.

### **19. Practice of reserving cadre posts for certain services is exclusionary, must be reconsidered**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “Practice of reserving cadre posts for certain services is exclusionary, must be reconsidered” published in the **Indian Express on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Role of civil services in a democracy.

**Relevance:** To understand the drawbacks of the cadre system.

**Synopsis:** The cadre system, part of British legacy systems, needs to be reformed if we are working towards good governance.

#### **Introduction**

Recently, the Haryana government issued an order, appointing an IPS officer as principal secretary (transport) — a cadre post of the IAS. This opened up the debate of cadre posts in the Indian Administration System.

#### **What is the present Indian system?**

Certain posts, both at the Centre and in states, are reserved for certain services by declaring them as cadre posts. For example, a collector in any district has to be from the IAS. Similarly, a superintendent of police will always be from the IPS. The same procedure has been adopted for the state administrative services.

#### **What is the demerit of the present system?**

**Glass ceiling Effect:** It acts as a glass ceiling for all the members of the service. For most of the officers, the top post will remain out of reach. This acts as a de-motivator.

**Fewer choices:** Since officers from a particular service have to be posted to a particular post, the selection pool is smaller.

**Promotion based on service:** It creates anomalies as batch mates from the same examination are promoted slower or faster just because they belong to different services, not because they are less or more competent.

**Less use of talent:** It prevents the government from optimally utilizing the talent it possesses. This has also compelled the Government to fill the gap by hiring from the private sector.

**Skill limitation:** Every service has a core role for which it has been trained. For example, a customs officer is trained differently than a police or income tax officer. However, some people may grow beyond their core functional areas and pick up new skills. But the cadre system ensures that they cannot fully express the skills that they may have developed.

**Poor Human Resource Management:** It does not seem to be good human resource management (HRM) practice, as it reduces the available choices.

**What do we need to do?**

It is time to examine whether the concept of cadre posts has benefitted the nation or has been counter-productive. We can adapt the practices like:

**Training:** It may not be advisable to completely do away with the cadre system. We need **specialized and trained departmental officers** at lower and middle levels to keep the governance running.

**Cadre Neutral posts:** We can make the posts cadre-neutral. Or we can at least make multiple services with relevant experience eligible for the posts. This will lead to **widening the talent pool** available for the cadre post.

India needs to realize that such archaic, rigid and limiting governance models have outlived their utility. In the light of new and emerging HRM policies, we should also review our governance models, guided by the notion of good governance.

**20. Ideas of propriety must not be used by courts to control and silence lawyers**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Ideas of propriety must not be used by courts to control and silence lawyers**” published in the **Indian Express** on **9<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 Structure, organization and functioning of the judiciary.

**Relevance:** To understand the Ideas of propriety and its impact on the Judiciary.

**Synopsis:** The relationship between the bar and bench has gone from one of mutual respect and equality to the one between ruler and ruled.

**Introduction**

Propriety or conformity to established norms can be very dangerous. **In the past**, it led to evils like child marriage, slavery and the holocaust. Now this propriety has reached the Judiciary, with the relation between them turning from that of mutual respect to one between ruler and ruled.

**How can one know that the Ideas of propriety exist in Judiciary?**

In Judiciary, practices like **improper roster management, unfair collegium recommendations, blatant bias in favour of select counsels and conflict of interest in hearings** fall in the zone of propriety. It affects the dispensation of justice, but it does not have a formal mechanism of redressal.

They are **not challenged because** the legal profession is largely regulated by norms of propriety, and these **norms are often controlled by the bar. It prevents the bar from challenging any actions** of the bench.

So, in the present system, **obedience is rewarded**. While **independent thought is seen as a threat** to the system. This is a bad example to the next generation of lawyers.

**Why lawyers are accepting the Ideas of propriety?**

They accept due to the significant control on a lawyer. As a lawyer’s license can be denied due to “**ungentlemanly conduct**” under the **Bar Council rules**.

A lawyer can also be **denied designation as a senior advocate**, despite merit and integrity.

Even the **recognition can be withdrawn** from those lawyers that have been designated as a senior.

**How does this constitute misuse of power?**

There have been instances of the **use of criminal contempt against members of the bar**. This may vary from something as small as a tweet to actions as big as strikes. All these are clubbed with conduct that is considered scandalizing or that **lowers the authority of any court**.

This is **done without scrutinising** whether the authority of the court was being exercised within the confines of legality and whether the intent of the members of the bar was to scandalise or lower the authority of the court.

**How does the Judiciary can course-correct it?**

The Ideas of propriety **do not improve the perception of the Judiciary** amongst the people, because respect cannot be demanded; it must be commanded.

The Court's authority is built by its judgements, and this cannot be lowered by critics. So the Judiciary **should allow an open exchange of views** and **function more democratically**.

**21. A reality check for higher education dreams**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**A reality check for higher education dreams**” published in the **Indian Express on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** To understand the challenges of flexibility in the present education system.

**Synopsis:** The proposed academic bank of credits, multiple entry-exit options will require infrastructure, manpower and budget that the Indian education system simply does not possess

**Introduction**

The article highlights the changes that are required in National Education Policy (NEP) to make our present education system more effective.

**What are the observations of the National Education Policy (NEP)?**

NEP observes that the education delivery system in India is too structured, rigid and expensive. The main reasons for student's dropout are lack of relevance, inability to sustain interest and affordability.

**Read more:** [National Education Policy](#)

**How this could be removed?**

The government released the following initiatives to remove the student dropout.

**Academic Bank of Credits:** It adopts an interdisciplinary approach and provides a flexible curriculum framework.

**Read more:** [PM to roll out academic credit bank](#)

**Multiple Entry and Exit:** It facilitates students to choose their learning path to their respective degrees with multiple entry-multiple exit options.

### What are the lacunae in the system?

**Select the courses:** It would be **difficult for young students to select the best courses or combination** of courses which will be beneficial for their future. Even if the student opts for the best courses, the **control** of the degree **rests solely with UGC** (University Grants Commission).

**Flexibility:** Students have **little flexibility in choosing the subjects** of their choice as 50 percent of the curriculum is carried out within the degree-granting institute.

A similar concept of a “**Meta University**” was attempted **in 2012**. This project **failed** to take off despite a UGC regulation, due to the reluctance and ego hassles of the heads of institutions.

**Multiple Entry/Exit:** Although it is a great concept but **difficult to implement**. If a student chooses to drop a year or two into a degree programme, the **issue of his employability** remains unresolved.

**Limited Courses:** There is a **limited course** available on the portals like SWAYAM, NPTEL, V-Lab, etc, **for credit transfer and credit accumulation**. This defeats the purpose of offering quality education to everyone.

**Read more:** [Students can now get 40% of university credits from e-courses](#)

**Use of technology:** Technology and proper infrastructure is required to authenticate and store digital records in a distributed system.

As our present academic is already struggling in fulfilling demands like providing migration certificates from one university to another, giving transcripts etc. there is a need to upgrade the system.

**Budgetary allocations:** **Huge budgetary allocations** are required in terms of improving the **teacher-student ratio** from the present 1:30 to 1:5. Along with manpower, **funds are required for the IT infrastructure** for various activities like record maintenance, transfer of credits, credit assessment and others.

### What needs to be done?

To achieve the objectives of NEP, there is a need for holistic development with the help of various stakeholders like teachers, non-faculty and others. It is time we implement the **concept of Virtual University**, where universities and other institutions in India become collaborators, creating their own or sourcing content from SWAYAM, EdX other similar providers.

### Terms to know

- [University Grants Commission \(UGC\)](#)

## 22. [A new Vajpayee moment for the troubled Indian telecom sector](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**A new Vajpayee moment for the troubled Indian telecom sector**” published in **Livemint** on **9th September 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** Issues associated with telecom sector and way forward

**Synopsis:** There is a need to maintain a robust telecom sector for country-wide access to citizens and for accelerating economic growth.

### Introduction

India opened up the telecom sector to private investment in 1994. But, aggressive bidding by companies to get licences led to **financial stress, including defaults**.



Reforms introduced in 1999 by the A.B. Vajpayee government show that the policy interventions can have a **multiplier effect across the economy**.

### **What reforms were brought by Vajpayee govt in telecom sector?**

**New Telecom Policy:** The government allowed telecom companies that held licences under the earlier auction **to exit the contracts** they had signed.

**The New Telecom Policy** sought to transform in a time-bound manner the telecommunications sector to a greater competitive environment in both urban and rural areas providing equal opportunities and level-playing field for all players.

Steps taken in that direction were easing of entry restrictions and strengthening the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

**Adjusted gross revenues (AGR):** Companies were allowed to shift from paying fixed licence fees to paying the government a share of their adjusted gross revenues (AGR).

Telecom companies also agreed to withdraw the multiple cases that had led the entire telecom sector into a legal mess.

### **What is the present scenario in telecom sector?**

Present state of affairs in the telecom sector require govt's intervention.

**Interventions by SC:** The Supreme Court instructed telecom companies to share core telecom revenues with the government, and also take into account promotional offers to consumers, income from the sale of assets, bad debts and dealer commissions.

SC has asked to pay excess AGR dues to the government in ten annual installments to ease their immediate burden, raising concerns about the financial stability of Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

**Inability to charge customers:** Tariff hikes to generate extra revenues to meet AGR commitments will hurt consumer access. It means that the three-player telecom market becomes a duopoly, through either a firm's failure or acquisition.

### **What steps should govt take?**

#### **Govt must issue zero-coupon telecom bonds**

**-No immediate interest costs to telecom companies:** It would ease pressure on cash flows without tariff increases, and telecom companies will have **no immediate interest costs**.

**-Tradable instruments:** These zero-coupon telecom bonds should be **tradable instruments**, so that the government does not necessarily have to hold on to them till maturity.

**-Accompanying voucher:** The zero-coupon bonds should be **accompanied by a voucher** which gives the government an option to get a 10% equity stake in the issuing companies.

#### **Set up an independent committee:**

The government should **also set up an independent committee** of experts to calculate the excess AGR dues to be paid based on a transparent formula.

### **23. The national security discourse is changing**

**Source:** This post is based on the article **"The national security discourse is changing"** published in **The Hindu** on **10th Sep 2021**.

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



**Relevance:** impact of various factors on the national security and domestic policy of countries

**Synopsis:** National security has long been viewed through a narrow perspective of just war-fighting. In the present scenario being shaped up by multiple factors like climate change, a rising China and the COVID pandemic, national security and domestic policy are to be seen as two sides of the same coin. This new understanding is gaining ground.

### **Introduction**

Aspects surrounding global and national security discourse are undergoing transformational change. The old order is collapsing much faster than the ability of nations to create the foundations of a new one.

The idea that foreign and domestic policy are two sides of the same coin is gaining prominence. Also, there's a greater recognition of the challenges on national security originating from domestic vulnerabilities.

### **How India's policy and view on national security is evolving?**

**Dependence on overseas supply chains is a national security challenge:** COVID pandemic revealed how deeply India has been dependent on Chinese manufacturing for critical supplies. At a time when Indian armed forces were facing the People's Liberation Army across the Line of Actual Line, this exposed India to a new realization that dependence on overseas supply chains is a national security challenge. India has since moved towards building up domestic capacities in critical areas and also started looking at free trade.

**Views of the military leadership in India are also evolving.** The national security comprises not only warfare and defence but also financial security, health security, food security, energy security and environment security apart from information security. Instead of viewing national security primarily from the perspective of an armed conflict, there is a need to take a whole-of-government approach towards security.

ForumIAS

# National Policy

↑ ↓

# Domestic Policy

Both national security and domestic policy are interrelated. Strengthening one will strengthen the other.

**For example:** Investment in armed forces strengthening national security provides the following tangible and intangible benefits related to domestic economy too, like:

- Indigenisation of defence procurement
- Impetus to indigenous industries
- Aid to civil authorities or Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief (HADR) operations
- demand for hi-tech military products



### How US policy is evolving wrt its views on foreign policy and national security?

**USA:** For the US, its foreign policy is now integrated with its domestic policy. It is based around this simple question: Will it make life better, easier, safer, for working families across the USA?. Discourse around national security in the US is centered around the following factors: Building up the domestic industrial base, maintaining pre-eminence in critical technologies, making supply chains for critical goods more resilient, protecting critical infrastructure from cyberattacks, and responding with a sense of urgency to climate change.

### How Indian policymakers should strategize resource allocation post-COVID pandemic?

In the post-pandemic world with a serious strain on national resources, it will be important for policymakers

to underline areas of **close cooperation between the civilian and the military spheres.**

This idea is again based on the understanding that national security policy is invariably linked with domestic policy and vice-versa.

**For example:** Here are some tangible and intangible ways in which investment in the armed forces contributes to the national economy such as indigenisation of defence procurement, providing an impetus to indigenous industries, aid to civil authorities or Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations protecting infrastructure, demand for hi-tech military products by the armed forces spurring entire industries, and transportation and logistics capacities of the armed forces acting as force enablers for the Government in times of emergencies.

## 24. How India and Germany can work together to tackle climate change

**Source:** This post is based on the article “How India and Germany can work together to tackle climate change” published in **Indian Express** on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

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

**Relevance:** India and Germany relations, climate change

**Synopsis:** India and Germany have innovative economies and many highly-trained people. There is a need to harness this potential, especially to fight climate change.

### Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has left no country untouched. It is safe to say, we will either beat Covid-19 worldwide or not at all. The virus briefly drew attention away from another crisis — climate change and its impact.

Climate change could even stop the world from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### Why India can play greater role in the fight against climate change?

**Low per capita emission:** India is set to deliver on the national goals it set itself as part of the Paris Agreement. Compared to other G20 countries, its per capita emissions are very low.

**Development interests of large population:** India now has the opportunity to make its massive investments in infrastructure over the next 15 years climate-smart and climate-resilient.

**Leading international role to play:** Without India, the world will not be able to fight climate change and achieve SDGs.

### How India and Germany collaboration can beat climate change?

Germany recently adopted laws to achieve climate neutrality by 2045 and stopping the use of coal for electricity production by 2038.

Indo-German development cooperation focuses on three areas:

- 1). The transition to renewable energies.
- 2). Sustainable urban development
- 3). Sustainable management of natural resources.

**India-Germany cooperation:** Germany and India can collaborate for greening their own economy and also support other countries.

In 2015, India’s Prime Minister and Germany’s Federal Chancellor agreed to further strengthen the two countries’ strategic partnership.

**Knowledge sharing technology transfer and financial solutions:** Over half the Indian population will live in cities by 2050. These cooperation efforts support Indian policies in the face of limited urban resources and climate change.

**Self-reliance:** The pandemic has shown global supply chains are vulnerable. There are smart solutions in **agriculture and natural resources that are being tested in India and Germany** including agro-ecological approaches and sustainable management of forests, soils and water.

**One Health approach:** India and Germany can help tackle the challenges posed by population growth, increased mobility, shrinking habitats, industrialised farming and intensive animal husbandry.

**25. Terra pharma: A new drugs legislation must keep the pharma sector growing while safeguarding consumer interest**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “Terra pharma: A new drugs legislation must keep the pharma sector growing while safeguarding consumer interest” published in **The Times of India** on **9<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** Introduce new law for drugs, medical devices, cosmetics and e-pharmacies.

**Synopsis:** Pharma ecosystem is rapidly evolving and needs proper monitoring and regulation.

**Introduction**

The Union government has constituted a committee for framing draft legislation regarding new drugs, cosmetics and medical devices.

**Read more:** [Panel set up to draft Bill on drugs, cosmetics and medical devices](#)

**What is the performance of Indian Pharma at global level?**

Indian Pharma industry is ranked as the **second-largest in terms of workforce**. It is ranked as **third in terms of production volumes**. Furthermore, It is also ranked as **14th in terms of global value**.

The **Economic Survey 2020-21** also estimated a threefold growth for the pharma industry from its \$40 billion current market size by the end of this decade.

**What is expected in the new law?**

**Consultation:** It will have to be framed after **consulting all the leading industry voices and health experts**.

**Uniform standards:** It will seek to address one of the major flaws of the present regime is the **dual regulation by CDSCO** (Central Drugs Standard Control Organization) **and the states**. The new law will enforce uniform standards to prevent malpractices in the system.

**Uncertain Regulatory environment: E-pharmacies** are adjusting and evolving after the recent regulatory and judicial declarations. Still, the risks like forged prescriptions continue.

Even in Brick and mortar shops, the risks like the **sale of over-the-counter antibiotics and Schedule H drugs** continue. The new law has to properly regulate these instances.

India needs a mature pharma ecosystem where the entire chain from prescription to sale of drugs is monitored. The new law must streamline manufacturing rules, quality control and R&D norms to help Indian companies meet new challenges.



# General Studies Paper - 3

General Studies - 3

1. **Drug debacle: Endangered vulture population still under threat**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Drug debacle: Endangered vulture population still under threat**” published in **Down to Earth** on 4th Sep 2021.

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

**Relevance:** Vulture conservation in India

**Synopsis:** India’s vulture populations are not safe; they are still small to recover quickly and will not survive another catastrophic event.

**Introduction**

Vultures were quite common till the 1980s and are fighting to survive currently. Currently, seven species in Africa and eight species in India are threatened with extinction. India has lost 99% population of the three species, **White-backed Vulture**, **Long-billed Vulture** and **Slender-billed Vulture**. The **Red-headed** and the **Egyptian Vulture** populations have also crashed by 91% and 80% respectively.

This catastrophic decline has been attributed to the use of diclofenac, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) in veterinary practice during the 1990s.

**Must Read:** [The clean-up crew we need \(On vulture conservation\)](#)

**Why is vulture more vulnerable?**

Though the usage of diclofenac in India has reduced considerably now, it is continued to be misused in some places. Moreover, vulture population is more vulnerable because:

**Small population:** Population is still small to recover quickly.

**Slow breeding:** Also, vultures are slow breeding birds, laying only one egg a year and having a longer immaturity duration after fledging. The remnant population will only double after 10-15 years without the occurrence of any adverse events.

**Availability of other NSAIDs:** Other NSAIDs like aceclofenac, ketoprofen, nimesulide, etc., that are harmful to vultures are still available for veterinary use in India. Aceclofenac metabolizes into diclofenac and is much more toxic to vultures.

**What steps should be taken?**

**Check toxicity & use of NSAIDs:** In the revised **National Vulture Conservation Action Plan (2020-2025)**, the government plans to set up eight new captive-breeding centres (eight are functioning). But without a check on the toxicity of NSAIDs and their use (misuse of diclofenac), releasing the captive-bred populations in the wild will not be considered feasible.

With more **robust policies and enforcement of rules** that are immediate, we can safeguard the remnant vulture populations in the country.

With **better practices, collective motive to change human behaviour** and the usage of safe drugs for cattle treatment, we can save vultures from extinction.

2. **National monetization pipeline betrays narrow outlook**

**Source:** This post is based on the following articles:

- “**National Monetization Pipeline and the infrastructure deficit**” published in **The Hindu** on **6<sup>th</sup> Sep 2021**.

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- “**National monetization pipeline betrays narrow outlook**“ published in **The Indian Express** on **6<sup>th</sup> Sep 2021**.
- “**The incredible certitude of our asset monetization programme**” published in **Livemint** on **6<sup>th</sup> Sep 21**.

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

**Relevance:** On Asset monetization programme

**Synopsis:** Monetisation of assets to generate value is a step in the right direction, but the underlying problems and challenges that led to underutilization of these assets need to be ascertained too. Proper execution of NMP based on a policy which is refined gradually as per the feedback received is the way forward.

### Background

**Read here:** [National Monetisation Pipeline project – Explained](#)

### What are the problems with the NMP?

**Poor record on privatization:** The record on privatization of the Indian government has been abysmal. Every year, a massive disinvestment target is set and then missed. Alternatively, public sector companies are pushed to buy other public sector firms and that’s passed off as disinvestment.

### Examples:

**The privatization process of Air India** has been on for a few years and so has talk of privatizing public sector banks.

The **initial public offering of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)** of India, which finance minister spoke of in her budget speech of February 2020, is still a work-in-process.

In the recent case of **Indian Railways** trying to attract private players to run 150 trains, the plan failed because private operators feared continued government interference.

Hence, when privatization of assets is not being achieved easily, the idea of monetizing assets through operational leases is much more difficult to execute.

Moreover, the bulk of **litigation in the courts** consists of cases in which the government is a party.

**Underestimation of the potential of public assets:** NMP views public utility assets through the narrow lens of finance only and, thereby, underestimates their potential contribution to public welfare. It absolves the government from the responsibility to unlock the intrinsic social value of these assets.

**No built-in safeguards:** NMP is designed to attract rich financial institutions (PE firms) and industrial groups due to high valuation of assets. The result will be a deepening of the concentration of capital and existing inequalities. There will be economic and social implications. The model does not build in safeguards to manage or mitigate these implications.

**Structural problems:** The government should have identified as to why have these assets been so poorly managed. Was it because of bad leadership, inadequate talent within the PSEs, and/or systemic and structural shortcomings? The low productivity, in most cases, is because their PSE operators have faced a combination of systemic hurdles related to weak dispute resolution mechanisms; regulatory problems; lack of transparency in governance; pricing distortions and intrusive bureaucratic intervention. Until and unless these systemic problems

are addressed, the private sector will find it difficult to harness the full value of the assets and the transfer of operatorship to them will offer at best a partial solution.

**What steps must the govt take?**

**Independent regulators:** The sectors where government assets are being monetized need independent regulators.

**No excess litigation:** The government needs to stop being a happy litigant.

**Addressing structural problems:** If the systemic problems with PSEs get addressed, they could well be the better custodians of the assets. This is due to the fact that the government being the majority shareholder will have presumably mandated them to look beyond just the accumulation of financial value.

**3. Another IBC fix? (On a Code of Conduct for CoC)**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Another IBC fix?**” Published in **Business Standard** on **6th September** 2021.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Issues related to banking sector in India

**Relevance:** Corporate insolvency

**Synopsis:** Regulator’s proposal for code of conduct for the Committee of Creditors (CoC) deserves scrutiny.

**Introduction**

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), has issued a discussion paper on the corporate insolvency resolution process and invited comment on its suggestions.

**What is the issue?**

CoC is unregulated, since the members of the CoC are typically from highly regulated sectors such as banks. However, lack of regulation has led to **lack of accountability**. For instance, Recently, Appellate authorities have raised questions about “**capacity and conduct**” of the CoC, and that its responsibility when it comes to choosing the proper market-based resolution. Even, the more recent IBBI’s discussion paper has stated that, the committee of creditors (CoC) looking after the IBC process “**functions in an unregulated environment**”.

**What are the IBBI’s recommendations in its discussion paper?**

**Code of conduct for the CoC:** The IBBI paper **proposes a code of conduct for the CoC** that it claims will create accountability, through broad ethical principles. It is in line with the suggestion made by **Parliamentary Standing Committee on finance** that suggested for a code of conduct for the CoC recently.

**Effective bidding process:** The paper further points out the frequent revisions of the resolution plans have caused “delay and uncertainty” and argues that new bidding processes such as the Swiss Challenge should be used. *(Under the Swiss challenge mechanism, any third party would be permitted to submit a resolution plan for the distressed company. Then, the original applicant would have to either match the improved resolution plan or forgo the investment)*

**Why a code of conduct is needed?**

Some actions by CoCs in the past show how their accountability to their investors might clash with the overall interests of the IBC. Such actions include the acceptance of last-minute resolution plans and of one-time settlements by former promoters under Section 12A of the IBC etc



### Why a code of conduct might not be the solution?

It is far from certain whether a code of conduct would speed up the insolvency process or lead to further delays, as the CoC might be challenged at any time for failing to follow some aspect of the code.

While principle-based regulation is better in theory, in practice there might be some concern that it **would lead to regulatory creep** (*Regulatory creep arises when the rules are unclear – when there is confusion about the standards, guidance and regulation. People are left not knowing what is expected of them, what constitutes compliance with the law*)

Further, a code of conduct for CoCs that are often dominated by public sector banks **runs in conflict** with a more basic problem of accountability – **Banks themselves are only insufficiently accountable because of state control.**

### What is the way forward?

IBC has been undermined because of misuse of clauses such as Section 12A. It is a reflection of the poor governance within the banks that led to the growth of bad loans in the first place. A code of conduct might be one step towards improving the IBC, but until **bank governance** is addressed it will not fix the real problem.

#### Terms to know:

- [IBBI](#)

## 4. Public sector banks and corporate governance

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Public sector banks and corporate governance?**” published in **Business Standard** on **6th September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Issues related to banking sector in India

**Relevance:** Governance of Public Sector Banks (PSBs)

**Synopsis:** Issues that are hampering the performance of PSBs, consequences, and the way forward.

### What are the issues affecting the performance of PSBs?

**Delay in appointments of CEO's and MD's of PSSBs:** In the recent past, after the MD and CEO of Bank of Baroda stepped down, his successor took charge after 100 days. Whereas, in the case of Union Bank and Dena bank, it took 264 days, 262 respectively

Except for Bank of Baroda, none of the 11 PSBs, in the group of nationalised banks, currently has a chairman (non-executive though).

**Inadequate board of directors:** Most of the nationalised banks do not have an adequate number of directors on their boards.

Under the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, every government-owned bank should have whole-time directors (MD and CEO, and EDs). They are to be appointed by the central government after consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

They should also have one director **nominated by the central government** and another, with necessary expertise and experience in regulation or supervision of commercial banks, from the **RBI**.

Apart from this, there are directors who are experts in the field of agricultural and rural economy, banking, co-operation, economics, finance, law, small scale industry, and a chartered accountant. However, at least **60 such positions were vacant, at least for a few months.**

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Finally, representatives from shareholders as well as workmen and officers are supposed to be on such bank boards. At the moment, probably no PSB has any director from workmen or officer employees on its board.

**Non parity in tenure of PSB chiefs and Private bank:** A private bank can be run by a CEO till the person is 70 years old, whereas chief of a PSB have to step down at 60, barring the State Bank of India.

**Non parity in salary of PSB chiefs and Private bank:** PSB chief does not receive market-based salary. The annual earnings of a non-executive chairman of a PSB is capped at Rs 10 lakh, inclusive of fees for attending board meetings. This is way below the compensation of the chairman of any private bank.

**Other issues:** These include the inability to directly recruit young talent from business schools because of various court judgments, the fear of investigative agencies, the L-1 formula that requires PSBs to buy everything, from tea to technology, from the lowest bidder, not the best one.

### What are the negative consequences?

While the whole-time directors run a bank, others called **non-official directors** or NoDs (another name for independent directors) are critical in formulating strategies and ensuring governance.

In the absence of the required number of NoDs, many PSBs are **not able to meet the quorum** at the meetings of critical sub-committees of the board.

### What is the way forward?

**Implement the recommendations:** More than a decade back, in June 2010, the finance ministry had appointed a committee on HR issues of PSBs.

It had made 105 recommendations on performance management, capability building and freedom for banks to increase variable compensation and offer stock options, among other things. The government accepted 56 of these recommendations, leaving out the key ones.

To improve governance of PSB's government needs to implement the recommendations made by committee on HR in true spirit.

## 5. Millets could help India mitigate malnutrition and climate change

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**Millets could help India mitigate malnutrition and climate change**" published in **Livemint** on **6th September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Major Crops – Cropping Patterns in various parts of the country

**Relevance:** Significance of millets in India

**Synopsis:** India should incentivize the production of millets to enhance food security and score gains on climate resilience.

### Introduction

In 2021, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a **resolution declaring 2023 the International Year of Millets**. It was proposed by India to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

### How are millets significant for India?

**Environmental and social benefits:** Millets possess immense potential in the battle against climate change and poverty and provide food, nutrition, fodder and livelihood security.

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**Agri-growth:** India is the largest global producer with a 41% market share. A compound annual growth rate of 4.5% is projected for the global millet market in the coming decade.

**Restoration of ecosystems and sustainability:** Land degradation has been a major problem in India. Drought-tolerant crops with low dependence on chemical inputs would put far less pressure on ecosystems

**Biofuel and climate resilience:** Millets also offer a significant cost advantage over maize as a feedstock for bio-ethanol production.

**Addressing SDGs:** Millet farming has led to women's empowerment. The Odisha Millet Mission saw 7.2 million women emerge as 'agripreneurs'.

### What steps have been taken by the govt?

**Millet Mission:** It was launched in 2018 as part of the National Food Security Mission, which has led to the promotion of **technological interventions, improvement in seed quality and a minimum support price (MSP)** for bajra and jowar.

**Millet Network of India and the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation:** both were involved in collective formation efforts to boost the domestic growth of millets.

### What are the challenges?

**Market and economic barriers:** Unjust pricing and intermediaries have led to farmer distress. Market dynamics doesn't favour the growth of millets.

**Barriers to growth:** A rise in incomes and urbanization, together with inadequate government policies, has led to millets being used for **various purposes other than for consumption**.

### What measures can govt take?

**Incentivizing the adoption of inter-cropping and providing crop insurance:** The inter-cropping of millets with other crops is beneficial because the fibrous roots of millet plants help in improving soil quality, keep water run-off in check and aid soil conservation in erosion-prone areas, thereby restoring natural ecosystems.

**Re-introduction of cultural associations and festivals:** such as the **North-East Network** in Nagaland organized in 2020 and Mandukiya in Vishakhapatnam celebrated annually in June/July, has helped promote the growth of millets.

In 2018, **the #LetsMilletCampaign** in Bengaluru saw the experimental use of millets in dishes such as risotto and pizza by restaurateurs.

**State support:** The Odisha Millet Mission has reportedly managed to motivate about 70,000 farmers to take up millet farming as part of this programme.

## 6. Carbon neutrality powered by AI

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**Carbon neutrality powered by AI**" published in **Business Standard** on **6th September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Awareness in the fields of IT

**Relevance:** Application of AI

**Synopsis:** Countries like India, which are leading the adoption of climate change measures, will have to encourage energy companies to embrace higher levels of AI usage.

### Introduction

As the world pushes to **mitigate the impact of climate change**, it will have to rely much on emerging technologies.

The foundational shift of energy transition from fossil-based to renewables will have to be done at scale for any positive impact on the environment.

A new report by **World Economic Forum (WEF)** says that the transition to low-carbon energy can be accelerated and deepened by focused application of [artificial intelligence](#).

**How can AI help in accelerating transition to a low-carbon economy?**

**Increasing efficiency:** The supply of renewable energy is increasing in grids which have been built for fossil fuel-based power. The time for setting up renewable power generation is much less than for setting up transmission and distribution lines. As a result, existing electricity grids will have to be managed with far more efficiency to cope with rising supply and usage of renewable energy.

AI can help in management of existing electricity grids with more efficiency to **cope with rising supply and usage of renewable energy**.

**Optimization of the lifecycle of existing grid infrastructure.** Renewable energy is not a steady supply, since it depends on weather conditions. Solar works on sunny days and wind turbines when there is a strong breeze. Such intermittent supply of renewables poses **problems for managers** in maintaining stability of energy passing through the grid.

**To deal with unanticipated scenarios:** There are several problems which can hurt grids when intermittent power increases. These include **power frequency imbalances, blackouts and brownouts**, and significant capacity overbuild. With predictive analysis, AI can anticipate the amount of power that will reach the grid by combining weather conditions with supply parameters. **AI will allow grid managers to be prepared** rather than be impacted by unanticipated surges in supply.

**Manage overloading:** In future there will be vastly more physical assets connected to the power grid and the distribution grid, and power flows will become dynamic and multidirectional.

**Track usage in real-time:** In the future, there will be vastly more physical assets connected to the power grid. For example, the rise of energy storage in batteries means that some of this power can be reused when required. A household can have the option of switching between battery power, on-site solar source and the grid based on the situation. Similarly, for individuals, AI can help decide when to charge electric vehicles. AI can decide the charging time and duration based on peak or off-peak rates. Such **switching at a large scale across millions of homes will require an AI platform** to track usage in real-time.

**AI can help in efficient designing and location of solar, wind and other renewable farms:** According to German Energy Agency, 56% of power generation could be provided by solar and wind in 2050. This would need huge investments in power grid by 2050. Power system costs would be higher if intelligence automation systems are not used.

## 7. Drone's Economic Impact Will Match Internet's

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**Drone's Economic Impact Will Match Internet's**" published in **Times of India** on **7th Sep 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** Implications of recently notified drone rules 2021

**Synopsis:** The recently released new drone rules 2021 are centered around light-touch governance. The resultant progressive ecosystem will lead to opportunities in multiple sectors of the economy.



## Background

Read here: [Drone Rules 2021 – Explained](#)

Must Read: [How new drone guidelines can give wings to drone startups?](#)

### Where will drones work?

Once drones take off in full force, opportunities in the areas of **manufacturing** and **drone services** will be unlocked. Its potential as an **economic force multiplier**, however, will be unleashed on the back of a diverse value chain of industries that comes into play.

**Hardware:** In the manufacturing sector itself, there are hardware components which form the skeleton of a drone.

**Software:** Far more critical is the brain of the drone i.e. the software, which tells the drone where to go and what to do while flying from point A to B. Each of these components needs to be designed differently depending on the kind of drone application. For example, the algorithms for drones used in land mapping will be different from those of say, using drones for medicine delivery.

**Post-flight analytics:** Then comes a whole array of post-flight analytics of drone footage, for instance – advising farmers on yield improvement or developing digital property cards under the landmark SVAMITVA Scheme.

The economic benefits, therefore, can be unprecedented, given that by developing the drone industry, we also develop an entire ecosystem creating a **positive impact on multiple sectors**.

### What are the positive spin-offs?

The emerging ecosystem would also trigger a **multiplier effect in employment**, as new job opportunities shall arise across the value chain, including but not limited to drone manufacturing, sales, insurance, pilots, counter-drone systems, drone repairs and so on.

It is worth noting that the impact will be widespread, **employing people with varying levels of education**. Even a 12th grader with a remote pilot licence could earn up to Rs 30,000 per month or more depending on her skill-set!

## 8. Hidden costs of renewable power in compulsory purchases of RE for discoms

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Hidden costs of renewable power in compulsory purchases of RE for discoms**” published in Business Standard on 6th Sep 2021.

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

**Relevance:** challenges associated with a shift towards renewable energy

**Synopsis:** As India is pushing towards its renewable energy target, it also needs to look at the way the new capacity is being added and the existing power purchase mechanisms.

### Introduction

India’s renewable power programme, with tariff bids for solar power hitting new lows every few months, is coming up at the cost of thermal power. The idea is to do exactly that and replace the dirty carbon-fuelled coal power generation with green options. But the manner in which this is being achieved is raising costs for renewable power purchases.

### Why coal-generated power is still necessary?

The importance of coal-generated power lies in **providing the base load** for a country as big as India.

Base load implies the bare minimum needed to keep the power grids functional and supply reliable, which is a challenge for renewable power.

**For instance:** In India, the base load necessity for coal was reflected in the recent crisis that gripped the power sector in August-end, with power stations reporting bare minimum coal stocks. The Union government instructed power producers to immediately go in for coal imports.

This experience during the receding monsoon season puts a question mark on whether the country's increasing reliance on renewable energy can improve the power supply situation for India.

Moreover, discoms have to pay more for green power.

### Why the overall cost of buying green power is more?

Certain utility-scale renewables enjoy a "must-run" status. **Must-run status** means that power distribution companies (discoms) are obligated by regulation to pay for green power even if they do not need or use it. But this, in turn, means that a discom has to ask the thermal plant to back down. This translates to **paying for renewable power** and **also paying the fixed cost for thermal power**; so there is an enhanced cost for buying renewable power.

This reality behind the purchase of renewable power makes the overall cost of buying green power higher than the tariff at which it was agreed to be bought.

**Note: 'Must-run status'** means that utilities, state load dispatch centres (SLDCs) and distribution companies (discoms) have to prioritise the evacuation of the generated power from renewable energy.

### What are the challenges?

**States command leverage:** The states feel that they should not pay a higher price when they have agreements with thermal units tied up for 25 years. Therefore, each time the discovered tariff for solar is lower than earlier, some discoms do not honor earlier green power purchase agreements (PPAs).

**States also do not want to give up thermal Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)** signed even when they are trying to meet the country's target of 175 GW of renewable installed capacity. The reason being the cost it would entail because of contractual obligations.

The challenge at this stage of renewable power induction, therefore, is to see whether the low tariffs are truly reflective of the cost that state discoms additionally pay for thermal power they are not using.

### What is the way forward?

A universal look at generation capacity addition and power purchase mechanisms is needed rather than just a source-based approach to power sector planning.

## 9. The long and the short of the NMP

**Source:** This post is based on the article "The long and the short of the NMP" published in The Hindu on 7th Sep 2021.

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

**Relevance:** On National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP)

**Synopsis:** Pertinent questions, in the light of the recently announced NMP, have been raised in the article. Questions are related to the impact of NMP on ordinary citizens, whether NMP was the only option before the govt, and whether public sector enterprises are actually inefficient.

### Background

**Read here:** [National Monetisation Pipeline \(NMP\) project – Explained](#)

#### How will NMP impact the citizens of India?

**Double taxation:** With private companies getting the sole responsibility of running all these assets, from highways and railways to all the major utilities such as power, telecom and gas, the citizens of India would be double-taxed. First, they paid taxes to create the assets, and would now pay higher user charges. Private sector is geared towards profit maximisation, not social benefit. Therefore, as the Government prepares to transfer “performing assets” to the private companies, it has the responsibility to ensure that user are not charged very high prices. This critical dimension has not clearly been spelt out even in the NITI report.

#### Was asset monetisation the only option?

Since the proposed asset monetisation has resulted from the resource shortage faced by the Government, a pertinent question is whether there were other avenues that it could have been tapped for plugging the resource gap.

**Increase tax revenue:** One possibility was to increase the tax revenue. At 17.4% in 2019-20, India’s tax to GDP ratio was relatively low, as compared to most advanced nations. **Improvements in tax compliance and plugging loopholes** have long been emphasized as the surest way to improve tax revenue, but little has been done, on this front.

**Example:** Since 2005-06, the Government has been providing data on the profits declared and taxes paid by companies that file their returns electronically.

This data reveals that in 2005-06, **40%** of these companies had declared that they were not earning any profits, and this figure had increased to **over 51%** in 2018-19.

Further, the share of the reporting companies earning profits of ₹1 crore or less was 55% in 2005-06; this figure had declined to 43% in 2018-19.

These numbers show that India’s large companies have been exploiting the loopholes for reporting lower profits and to escape the tax net.

#### Are public enterprises inefficient?

According to NITI Aayog, the “*strategic objective of the Asset Monetisation programme is to unlock the value of investments in public sector assets by tapping private sector capital and efficiencies*”.

The NITI Aayog objective **assumes** that public sector enterprises are inefficient, which is contrary to the reality. In 2018-19, while **28%** of these enterprises were loss-making, the corresponding figure for large companies was **51%**.

So is it realistic to assume that the asset monetisation programme would deliver efficiencies?

### 10. [The e-Rupi could take us a long way towards financial inclusion](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “[The e-Rupi could take us a long way towards financial inclusion](#)” published in the **Live Mint** on 7th September 2021

**Syllabus:** GS3: Inclusive Growth and use of innovative technology to achieve it.

**Relevance:** Digital Payment systems

**Synopsis:** The payment-voucher system's (e-RUPI) features make it ideal for programmes aimed at bridging the digital divide in India.

### **How has India progressed wrt digital payment ecosystem?**

India has emerged as a leader in digital payments, with a manifold increase in such transactions in recent times. There are not many countries that allow digital transactions worth as low as one rupee.

The Universal Payments Interface (UPI), which was launched in 2016 to allow payments round the clock 365 days a year, has been very successful.

Recently, the **UAE** became the third country after **Bhutan** and **Singapore** to accept UPI payments outside India, which is an indication of the ease and efficiency of this system.

**Must Read:** [What is e-RUPI?](#)

### **What is hampering India's vision of financial inclusion?**

Despite a vibrant digital payment network, financial inclusion faces some bottlenecks in India:

**Rural-urban divide** both in terms of technology and access to banking infrastructure. For instance, a large gap still exists in terms of internet access. As per the latest data available from TRAI, there are 34.6 rural internet subscribers per 100 people in the country, as opposed to 104 in urban areas (as on end December 2020).

**Digital disparity among states:** Internet penetration also varies widely across states. Internet subscribers per 100 persons ranges from 210 in Delhi and 87.6 in Punjab to 40.8 in Uttar Pradesh and 32.9 in Bihar.

**Inadequate banking facility to rural areas:** Further, of the country's total bank branches, 33.5% are located in rural areas, 27.5% in semi-urban, 19.3% in urban and 19.7% in metropolitan zones, as on end-June 2021. There are around 190 million unbanked citizens in our country, residing mostly in rural parts.

As the existing digital payment methods require a bank account and internet/smartphone, until these gaps are filled, complete financial inclusion will remain a developmental challenge.

**Must Read:** [How e-RUPI can transform government's welfare schemes?](#)

### **What is M-pesa and how it helped to tackle the issue of financial inclusion?**

Most developing countries face similar challenges, and some of them have successfully tackled these through the innovative use of technology.

One such example is **M-Pesa in Kenya**, where 'M' stands for mobile and 'Pesa' for money. M-Pesa was introduced in Kenya as an initiative for financial inclusion geared towards its unbanked or under-banked population.

This is a virtual banking system that provides services through a SIM card with no requirement of internet access and bank accounts. It started as a means to buy airtime and make micro-loan repayments using the network of Safaricom airtime resellers.

M-Pesa later expanded to many other counties, and over time, it became a big player in the market for transferring or withdrawing money, saving or borrowing money, making merchant payments and paying bills.

Transactions worth half of Kenya's gross domestic product are carried out over M-Pesa, as reported by its central bank, and this platform claims over 49 million customers across Africa.

**Must Read:** [How e-RUPI can make welfare payments easier?](#)



### **How e-RUPI, similar to M-Pesa, can become a game changer for India?**

Similar to what M-Pesa did in Kenya, e-Rupi has the potential to significantly boost financial inclusion in India. It is a solution to the twin problem outlined earlier.

**No need of an internet connection:** The e-Rupi system allows transfers of purpose-specific prepaid vouchers that need no debit card, credit card, mobile bank application, internet connection, etc, to be used. As envisaged, all that a person would need is a mobile number.

An e-Rupi voucher will be sent to the user as an SMS (for non-smartphone users) or QR Code (for smartphone users). This will enable particular digital payments, not just from phones to digital recipients, but also from digital senders to offline payees.

This contactless payment system is expected to be easy, safe and secure, as it promises to keep the **details of beneficiaries completely confidential**. The entire process is both reliable and fast, as these vouchers are preloaded with money.

Further, e-RUPI could be developed further to serve various other ends as well. The decision of Mswipe to include e-Rupi as a mode of payment, for example, is a step towards building a financial ecosystem based on it.

**Other areas of application of e-RUPI:** Read from here: <https://blog.forumias.com/how-e-rupi-can-transform-governments-welfare-schemes/>

### **11. India's digital architecture: From infrastructure to superstructure**

**Source:** This post is based on the article "India's digital architecture: From infrastructure to superstructure" published in **Livemint** on **7th September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Inclusive Growth

**Relevance:** Financial inclusion, ease of doing business for MSMEs

**Synopsis:** To support our ecosystem for financial inclusion, we need to factor in the enablers and account aggregation.

#### **Introduction**

India's asset monetization initiative, the National Monetisation Pipeline has garnered attention but other two recent initiatives which are far more substantive did not get their fair share of it. One was the **Factoring Bill amendments** and the second is **Account Aggregator platform**.

#### **What is the significance of factoring?**

**Benefits to MSMEs:** It will enable thousands of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) to buy receivables from Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

**Removing threshold:** Conditions for NBFCs to engage in this business have been removed.

#### **What is the significance of Account Aggregator platform?**

**Aggregator platform:** Account Aggregators (AAs) are '**data access fiduciaries**' who act as the front end of its Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA).

**Empowerment of user:** Financial data is secured and can be accessed only with the **consent of the user and for purposes** the user had consented to. The data in AAs hands will be encrypted and can only be decrypted by FIUs.

**AAs are trustees of data:** With user's consent they can pass on data from financial information providers (**FIPs**) to financial information users (FIU).

**Ease of doing business:** To establish credit worthiness, AAs will collect data. Such as bank statements, insurance policies, mutual fund holdings, etc. Due to lack of information, lenders stick to collateral-based lending. With AA platform, that will change.

**Financial inclusion:** AAs can become agents of financial inclusion

### How's govt acting as an enabler of Digital revolution in India?

**Digital public goods:** It started with the PM Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) and Aadhaar. Recently, the Nasscom had brought out a report on India's digital public goods.

As per PwC, the **Unified Payments Interface** has taken the Indian payment ecosystem by storm. RBI notes that its Digital Payments Index rose 2.7 times in just three years after March 2018.

**Citizen-centric services:** In the West, **Digital goods** are in private hands and have become monopolies. Nasscom added that our digital platforms were **developed at low cost and are inter-operable**.

**The Goods and Services Tax Network** has been given in-principle approval to become a Financial Information Provider (FIP) on the AA network. The GST network is a huge repository of information that its being part of data network is a big plus for MSMEs to access finance.

### Way forward

Now, **GSTN and TReDS** should make it automatic that if a buyer accepts an invoice for claiming input tax credit, then the invoice shall be deemed accepted for TReDS purposes too. Lastly, the only thing that would be pending is an **amendment to India's MSME Act** to allow MSMEs to retain their classification until both sales turnover and investment criteria are exceeded, rather than any one of them. That will serve as a strong foundation for durable and long-lasting economic growth.

### 12. Protect Digital India: About the challenges associated with banning VPNs

**Source:** This post is based on the article "Protect Digital India" published in the **Business Standard** on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Challenges to internal security through communication networks.

**Relevance:** To understand the benefits of VPNs.

**Synopsis:** Understand the issues associated with banning VPNs.

#### Introduction

The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs** discovered that **VPNs** (Virtual Private Networks) **might conceivably allow anonymous activity online**. So, the committee recommended that the **Ministry of Home Affairs** collaborate with the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** to develop a **coordination mechanism to block VPNs**.

#### What are VPNs?

A virtual private network (VPN) provides **online privacy and anonymity** by creating a private network from a public internet connection. VPNs mask a person's internet protocol (IP) address, so the online actions are virtually untraceable.

VPN services **establish secure and encrypted connections** to provide greater privacy than even a secured Wi-Fi hotspot.

For example, ExpressVPN, NordVPN, Surfshark, etc.

#### What are the challenges associated with these recommendations?

**Against governance:** If India banned VPNs, it would join the ranks of countries such as Russia, China, Belarus, Venezuela, Turkey, and the Gulf states. All these countries are not role models in terms of governance or freedom.

**Economically disastrous:** VPNs are **essential to the proper functioning of many modern businesses**, particularly in the **high-value-added services sectors**. The VPNs enable branch

offices to be properly plugged into corporate networks and allow for employees to conduct transactions and approvals with proper data security.

Many proprietorial **trading platforms require the use of in-house VPNs** to connect and make trades.

**Negative effect on telecom efficiency:** Other countries with state capabilities that have tried banning VPNs have seen a big negative effect on overall telecom efficiency. For example, Iran's internet is slow due to its attempts to inspect internet traffic for anything that might be going through a VPN.

**Against global practice:** Attempts to block VPNs are not trivial efforts. **Even the People's Republic of China**, with a vast and well-trained bureaucracy dedicated to maintaining the Great Firewall, can only **block VPNs with low reliability**.

**Against government practice:** Over the past year, the Department of Telecommunications has successively liberalised the norms governing "other service providers". This enabled the service centres to properly integrate with international call and data networks using VPNs. This was expected to reduce costs and increase the competitiveness of the service sector.

So, the notion that criminals alone use VPNs is deeply fallacious, and the committee should reconsider its suggestions or the government can ignore the Parliamentary standing committee recommendations.

### 13. Decoding asset monetisation

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**Decoding asset monetisation**" published in **The Hindu** on **8<sup>th</sup> Sep 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** Regarding National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) project

**Synopsis:** Govt recently launched its NMP project. The article throws light on what NMP exactly is and what it is not.

#### Introduction

The National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) is a bold initiative. But we should first understand what the NMP is and what it is not. The NMP is not about the sale of government-owned assets. It is not about privatisation or disinvestment. The proposal is to offer infrastructure assets that will continue to be owned by the government under a long-term concession agreement to interested private bidders.

#### How is NMP different from the PPP model of prev govt?

The NMP is very different from the previous govt's public- private partnership (PPP) infrastructure development of the mid-2000s.

PPP infrastructure development of the mid-2000s.	NMP
It was about attracting private parties to build, operate and then transfer 'greenfield' or new infrastructure projects under <b>build-operate-transfer (BOT)</b> concession agreements.	NMP is about leasing out brownfield infrastructure assets (such as an already operating inter-State toll highway) under a <b>toll-operate-transfer (TOT)</b> concession agreement.
The <b>winning private bidder took</b> not only the <b>operating risk</b> , but also	Concessionaire does not need to take any of the construction risk.

the <b>development and construction risk</b> of the project, such as a toll road, from scratch.	
It was a <b>complex and messy process</b> . It involved the acquisition of land, securing environmental and other regulatory approvals. All this <b>led to a huge volume of disputes</b> for which there was no readily available resolution mechanism.	The process promises to be much <b>simpler and cleaner</b> than what was required in the PPP programme. In such an arrangement, <b>no acquisition of land</b> is involved.
To be successful in the BOT bids required a <b>proven ability to navigate and manage the system</b> .	For success under the bidding process of the NMP, what will be required is <b>operational experience</b> in running a particular class of infrastructure assets and a strong understanding of the potential cash flows generated over the life of the concession.

#### What steps must govt take to ensure NMP's success?

**Flexible contracts:** Given the long tenure of these concession agreements for assets, they must be designed to allow for some flexibility so that each party has the opportunity to deal with unforeseen circumstances (such as climate-related disasters) and to prevent needless litigation.

**Key performance indicators:** Contracts must also incorporate clear key performance indicators expected of the private party and clear benchmarks for assets as they are handed over by the government in the start of the concession. This is key to avoiding disputes about potential additional capital expenditures that might be required to keep the asset operational.

#### **Must Read: [National Monetisation Pipeline \(NMP\) project – Explained](#)**

**Effective implementation:** No matter how well a contract is crafted, it still needs to be implemented effectively. Experience shows that there is a tendency for government departments to inject opacity into the implementation of concession agreements so that they have more power over the concessionaire. To avoid this, it would be useful if the responsibility for administering the concession agreements did not lie directly with the line ministries and/or their agencies.

**Robust dispute resolution mechanism:** It is vital to put in place a robust dispute resolution mechanism. An institution such as '3 PPP India', first mooted in the 2014 Budget, is needed. It would also be advisable to set up an Infrastructure PPP Adjudication Tribunal along the lines of what was recommended by the Kelkar Committee (2015) to create suitably specialised dispute resolution capacity.

**The govt could start with sectors that offer the greatest cash flow predictability** and the least regulatory uncertainty before expanding the experiment. It could also ensure that resources raised from the NMP are used to fund new asset creation under the National Infrastructure Pipeline. This will ensure credibility.

#### 14. India's tryst with the promise of a hydrogen-fuel economy

**Source:** This post is based on the article "India's tryst with the promise of a hydrogen-fuel economy" published in **Live Mint** on **8<sup>th</sup> Sep 2021**.

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



**Relevance:** Regarding Green Hydrogen

**Synopsis:** India is pushing towards cleaner forms of energy. Green Hydrogen offers an opportunity.

### Background

**Read here:** [Green Hydrogen – Potential, issues and solutions](#)

#### What is the present global scenario of Hydrogen production?

The current global production of hydrogen of about 80 million metric tonnes, and is **almost wholly produced through fossil fuels**. It uses 6% of global natural gas and 2% of coal, and contributes a whopping 830 million tonnes of carbon dioxide.

Thus, this route to hydrogen is not optimal.

In the coming years, hydrogen might transcend from fringe to mainstream status. It is not for the first time that such dramatic transformations have been witnessed in India.

#### What are some examples of dramatic transformations achieved by India?

**Jan Dhan yojana:** The roll-out of Jan Dhan Yojana no-frills bank accounts reached 400 million in just a few years.

**Data usage:** In data usage, India has leapfrogged from the bottom to the top global ranking in a short time.

**LED usage:** In LED usage, India's market grew by 130 times in five years, from annual sales of 5 million LED bulbs in 2014 to 670 million in 2018.

The exponential scale effect in these examples has had a significant influence on **bringing down unit costs**. For instance, the price of an LED bulb dropped by nearly 85% in five years. India's dramatic drop in data prices is also well known. So a similar phenomenon in hydrogen is possible.

#### What are some applications of Green Hydrogen?

It is expected to play a key role in **decarbonization efforts**, and has application in a variety of industries such as transportation, including trucks, buses, cars, and rail, as feedstock for fertilizers, chemicals, and refineries, in decarbonizing buildings and decarbonizing high-heat industries such as steel-making.

#### How the world is pushing forward with Hydrogen?

The global push for hydrogen is snowballing.

**Thirty-one countries have already announced strategies.** Many in the EU have scaled up investments in electrolyzers, as also China. More than 75 countries have a net-zero carbon ambition, for which hydrogen is indispensable.

Hence, it is possible that 22% of the global energy need by 2050 could be hydrogen-based.

However, the realization of this vision for India requires several things.

#### What needs to be done by India?

**First**, an enabling policy framework.

**Second**, a nudge to increase demand.

**Third**, infrastructure development, such as pipeline networks and last-mile connectivity. This can be accelerated through proven business models like Master Limited Partnerships, which are common in the West and allow private capital to participate in the scaling-up effort.

### 15. Climate crisis in North East India: Why are rainfall patterns changing?

**Source:** This post is based on the article “Climate crisis in North East India: Why are rainfall patterns changing?” published in **Down to Earth** on **6<sup>th</sup> Sep 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** impact of climate change on rainfall pattern 🌍

**Synopsis:** Climate change is causing increased variability and unpredictability of rainfall in the North East region of India.

#### Introduction

The climate of North East India is changing: Rainfall patterns over the region in the last century have considerably changed, resulting in its overall drying up. The India Meteorological Department's September forecast stated that normal to below-normal rainfall was most likely to continue over many areas of northwest and northeast India.

#### Why is the rainfall pattern changing?

**Climate change causing drying up of land:** An aspect of warming that influences rainfall is drying of the land, which increases the frequency and intensity of dry periods and droughts. An increase in moisture and the drying up together change the rainfall patterns in unpredictable ways.

**Increased snowfall in the Eurasian region** also impacts monsoon rainfall in North East India. Excessive snowfall in Eurasia causes cooling of the atmosphere of the region, which triggers events eventually leading to a weak summer monsoon season there.

**Sea surface temperatures:** A study has also attributed a decrease in rainfall to sea surface temperatures over the subtropical Pacific Ocean, which vary in a cycle and each phase of which lasts a decade. The peak comes every 20 years and is known as the **Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO)**. As per a study, PDO is being influenced by global warming as it decreases the difference of temperatures among the layers of the ocean. The peak of PDO will change from 20 to 12 years, which may have an impact on the monsoon rainfall in North East India.

These factors may be at play in the north-eastern region of India.

Also, one cannot be sure about the exact impact of climate change on the rainfall in the region for the **lack of data and credible long-term research** on the same. This is because there is no data collection infrastructure.

#### What is the future climate scenario for the North East region?

The future climate scenarios look bleak for the region.

**Inc in temp and rainfall:** They show an increase in temperatures and in rainfall, in contrast with the evidence of a decrease in rainfall over the past century. Environment Ministry has projected that temperatures in the region will rise by 1.8-2.1 degrees Celsius by the end 2030. Annual mean rainfall can rise by 0.3-3 per cent in the same period.

In Assam, the Indian state most vulnerable to climate change, models predict an increase in temperature of 1.7-2.0 degree Celsius between 2021-2050.

#### What are the implications of a changing rainfall pattern?

A changing rainfall pattern, especially during the monsoon season, has the following impacts:

**-Affects the flow of rivers:** There is some evidence of the changing course of rivers from several districts in **Assam** such as Lakhimpur and Dhemaji, where the Subansiri, Dibang (tributaries of Brahmaputra) and Brahmaputra rivers are changing courses in unexpected

ways. In **Arunachal Pradesh**, the Papum Pare district has also been affected by the changing course of the Dikrong river.

Extreme rainfall events being caused by global warming trigger a **cascade of events** such as accelerated soil erosion along the hill slopes devoid of forest cover. This increases the surface run-off of rivers and changes their course.

The new courses taken by the rivers are often the ancient paleo-channels that it has abandoned for centuries and where people have settled to avoid flooding.

**-Extent of snow cover and**

**-Health of mountain springs**

All this, in turn, has an impact on livelihoods, especially agriculture and fishing, forest flora growth, animal and bird habitat (and behaviour), and other ecosystem aspects.

## 16. How India is positioned to achieve UN's sustainable consumption and production goal

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**How India is positioned to achieve UN's sustainable consumption and production goal**" published in **Down to Earth** on **7<sup>th</sup> Sep 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** Regarding India's efforts toward SDG12

**Synopsis:** India is working towards achieving sustainable development goal related to responsible consumption and production, but much more needs to be done. A look at India's progress and associated challenges.

### Introduction

The United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)12 deals with **resource usage**. India has prepared numerous sustainable consumption and production plans that are put in the mainstream priority.

India's progress in regard to the SDG is fair enough but not satisfactory.

### Important stats

The **average lifestyle material footprint of India** according to 2015 statistics is around 8,400 kg per capita per year, which when compared to sustainable material footprint of 8,000 kg per capita per year is quite acceptable.

**Municipal waste:** The population of China and India together constitutes 36% of the global population, but generates only 27% of the global municipal waste. Whereas, the United States constitutes only 4% of the global population that produces 12% of the waste.

### Why food wastage should be addressed?

**Impact on Greenhouse emissions:** Food wastage reduction can have a significant effect on greenhouse gas emissions, hunger, pollution and money-saving during recessions.

**Will fulfill multiple SDGs:** Curbing food loss and wastage can serve to fulfil multiple SDGs at once as well as help bridge the food gap by 2050.

### How's India's progress on SDG 12?

**The SDG 12.3** focuses on **reducing per capita global food waste by 2030**. About 50 kg of food is wasted per person per year in India, UNEP highlighted in its 2021 report. Still, India,

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among South Asian countries, has lower level of food wastage compared to its neighbouring countries.

**SDG 12.6 and 12.7** require large companies to adopt, promote and integrate sustainable practices and publish the related reports. Some companies are realising the need for greener ways of operation. Flipkart, an e-commerce company, has replaced paper cups for ceramic and glass ones.

### What are some steps being taken by the central & state govt?

One important aspect of SDG 12 is the education of people so that they are aware of sustainable development and lifestyles. This would help them make smarter and evaluated choices that are in harmony with nature.

**Environment education:** The Indian government has included environment education as a compulsory component in the formal curriculum. This is not new as the roots of such an education system date back to the 1960s.

**Sustainable tourism:** A very closely tied goal is sustainable tourism. **Kerala** has been the leading state with respect to innovative initiatives for sustainable tourism. The project of **'Responsible Tourism'** in Kumarakom takes the help of the local community by linking them to the hospitality industry and sustaining eco-friendly tourism. Similarly, **Himachal Pradesh** has introduced a **'Homestay Scheme'** to draw tourists to rural areas with natural, comfortable and budget-friendly accommodation and food. These initiatives give a raw experience to the tourists and also boost local incomes.

Among all the states and union territories in India, Jammu & Kashmir and Nagaland are top performing till date with respect to SDG 12, according to the Niti Aayog's SDG dashboard 2020-21.

### What are the challenges?

**Less efficient methods:** China, India and Pakistan use the method of 'phytoremediation', a concept that stems from bioremediation through the usage of plants. This involves tree plantation to restore environment as well as degraded soil restoration. This method is, however, less efficient.

**Lower recycling capacity:** A considerable part of the total hazardous waste that India produces is recyclable, but only 4% is recycled. Efforts are required to upgrade recycling mechanisms.

### What needs to be done?

**Reducing fossil fuel usage:** After 2017 there has been a slight upward trend in the total energy subsidy. While the increase in renewable energy subsidy is worth appreciating, there is a need for shifting more resources to this area and reducing fossil fuel usage.

India can achieve self-sufficiency in recycling in the next 10 years if **National Recycling Policy is implemented properly** and scrap care techniques are shifted in the recycling industries.

### Terms to know:

- [Material footprint](#)

## 17. Why Palm won't fix India's edible oil woes

**Source:** This post is based on the article "Why Palm won't fix India's edible oil woes" published in the **Live Mint** on **8th September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Major Crops – Cropping Patterns in various parts of the country

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**Relevance:** India's dependency in Edible oils

**Synopsis:** India should focus on improving indigenous edible oil production rather than focusing on palm oil, that has many problems.

**What are the problems associated with oil palm crop?**

**Reduces choices of farmers:** Since, Palm is a long gestation crop, it reduces the responsiveness of farmers to changing market demand. For instance, farmers can switch to other crops like groundnut if it gives high return for the current year but not palm due to its long gestation period.

**Must Read:** [The dangers of India's palm oil push](#)

**What are the reasons for the recent increase in Palm oil price?**

1. Lower production due to pandemic-induced labour shortages in Indonesia and Malaysia,
2. Significantly higher demand from China,
3. The diversion of soy oil for the production of bio-diesel in the US.
4. Share of Home-grown edible oil such as mustard and groundnut oils is limited

**Must Read:** [Some facts about Palm oil](#)

**How the government responded to increasing Prices in Pal oil?**

Responding to the crisis, the Union government launched an ₹11,000 crore national mission on oil palm in August. The mission focuses majorly on the north-eastern states and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, both of which get abundant rainfall.

**What are the issues & challenges associated with the mission?**

**Disregard for indigenous oil crops:** The policy also completely ignores oils that are already native to India, such as mustard, groundnut, sesame and coconut, which are healthier and grown mostly by resource-poor farmers in rain-fed conditions. Currently, over half of the home-grown edible oil production is contributed by mustard, groundnut and soybean.

**States need to respect "zonalisation norms":** For instance, to cater to 50,000 hectares of plantation, a company has to invest about ₹2,000 crore. Since a firm can start recouping its investments and make profits only by the tenth year, farmers will have to mandatorily supply to the company that is operating in a particular zone and vice versa.

**Small and marginal oilseed growers are excluded:** The crop is suited for rich, large land-owning farmers—and absentee landlords who can wait it out for 5 years before making profits. A strategy to achieve self-sufficiency based on palm, therefore, excludes existing small and marginal oilseed growers.

**What steps should be taken?**

India could achieve stability in edible oil prices with a mix of strategies, which includes **improved research and development (R&D)** to increase the yield and oil content in mustard and groundnut.

A possible solution is to **incentivize farmers to move away from rice, wheat and sugarcane** and instead, plant more oilseeds and pulses where India is deficient. Another oil source is rice bran, which is healthy and holds great potential.

**Farmers should be given duty protection** from cheap imports, alongside cultivation incentives and price support.

**Impose quantitative restrictions:** It will be politically difficult to raise duties on palm oil imports, as it will add to inflation. A way out is to impose quantitative restrictions and channelize imports via the public distribution system to stabilize consumer prices.

**Must Read:** [How India achieved atmanirbharta in edible oils during the early 1990s?](#)

### 18. Rolling out the EV charging network

**Source:** This post is based on the article “Rolling out the EV charging network” published in the **Business Standard** on **8<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Infrastructure: Non-conventional Energy resources

**Relevance:** Future of Green vehicles in India

**Synopsis:** Steps taken by government to increase EV charging network in India.

#### Introduction

The Indian vehicle market is poised for a historic leap into electrification. On the rollout of a charging network for electric vehicles (EVs), India faces the classic chicken and egg problem—EVs require charging infrastructure and that requires EVs.

According to the Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles, there are 1,800 charging stations in India as of March 2021 for approximately 16,200 electric cars.

To achieve the expectations by 2030, it has been projected that India will need 29,00,000 charging points at an investment of Rs 21,000 crore, in addition to in-home charging points.

#### What steps are being taken by govt to increase charging infra in India?

**Guidelines by Min of power:** The Ministry of Power has issued guidelines applicable to EV charging stations. Public charging stations shall be a delicensed activity and any individual or entity is free to set these up, obtaining electricity under open access.

**Regulated Tariff:** The tariff, determined by the state electricity regulatory commission, shall not be more than the average cost of supply plus 15%. Private charging at residences is permitted, and domestic tariff is applicable.

**FAME policy:** The Department of Heavy Industries has laid out the FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) policy. FAME provides upfront incentives on the purchase of EVs as well as for development of charging infrastructure.

**Green licence plates:** The Ministry of Road Transport has announced that EVs will be issued green licence plates.

**Development of indigenous standards:** The Department of Science and Technology and the Bureau of Indian Standards are collaborating on developing indigenous charging options and standards.

**Reduced rates on charging station equipment:** The GST Council has reduced the rates on charging station equipment from 18% to 5%.

**Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)** is involved in facilitating partnerships among state governments, public sector partners and private companies to enter this space.

**NITI Aayog** is spearheading the **Mission for Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage**, that seeks to proliferate low-cost charge-points for two-wheelers and three-wheelers across Bharat.

### What are the other alternatives to e-Vehicles?

**Hydrogen fuel cell** has been provided as another solution for adoption of green automobiles. Hydrogen-power technology is a contrary to Tesla and other automotive giants' battery-led technology. However, there are also concerns over whether splitting the tightly bonded oxygen and hydrogen atoms of water is energy inefficient.

About 50 units of electricity is required to produce a kilogram of hydrogen. Why use electricity to produce hydrogen when you already have it, is the question posed.

### What is the way forward?

**Need to sort out the issues** related to uniformity of standards and "interoperability."

**The concern over EV charging time** can be resolved by battery swapping. Battery-swapping facilities are to be set up alongside charging infrastructure.

**The three types of interoperability** i.e., plug type, charger-to-network communication, and network-to-network communication, all need to be aligned.

## 19. The employment dividend from exports

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**The employment dividend from exports**" published in **Business Standard** on **8<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** Export sector in India, Creation of jobs

**Synopsis:** The surge in some export sectors has the potential to address India's urban jobs challenge with necessary policy intervention.

### Introduction

The share of exports in India's gross domestic product has seen a **steady decline** to about 11% during the last ten years.

But for the current year, India's exports of merchandise goods are booming. In the first five months of 2021-22, exports were **67% higher**.

More importantly, exports of \$164 billion in April-August 2021 were 23% more than those in the same months of 2019. Such healthy growth rates in India's exports have not been seen for more than a decade.

Also, there is **recovery in exports of India's merchandise goods exports**. India's exports have benefited from the global price increase for petroleum products.

### What are some key takeaways from the current export growth?

**Growing footprint of China in India's exports basket:** India's exports to China have been rising at a healthy pace. In a post-pandemic world, China has pushed out the United Arab Emirates to become **India's second biggest export destination**, after the United States.

**Lukewarm exports recovery of Indian automobile industry:** Exports of motor vehicles and cars had almost collapsed. The big question is whether the export engine for the automobile industry (which accounts for a good chunk of manufacturing) would increase in the coming days.

**Recovery of a few employment-intensive sectors:** For instance, pearls and precious stones have made a comeback. Similarly, exports of gold jewelry have also recovered, though it is yet to recover its pre-pandemic share. Thousands of workers are engaged in these sectors and the pick-up in its exports should **signal the return of jobs**.

**Exports of readymade cotton garments** have also improved. They have already acquired a share of 3.7% in total exports, and it appears that if the trend continues, they could increase their share in India's larger export basket.

All the sectors benefiting from an exports surge can create jobs, particularly in urban India. Policymakers, therefore, cannot afford to lose this opportunity.

## 20. The economic reforms — looking back to look ahead

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**The economic reforms — looking back to look ahead**” published in **The Hindu** on **8<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning

**Relevance:** Analysis of 1991 reforms

**Synopsis:** Systemic policy reforms are required to unlock creativity and innovation in the economic system, raise the total factor productivity (TFP) and to achieve higher growth.

### Introduction

The crisis caused by the pandemic in the country and at global level has led to a debate about new approaches to manage the economy and the future of humanity.

It has underscored the **need for policies to enable resilience** in the economy and ensure a robust health system, together with research and development.

### What are some positive effects of the reforms?

The reforms led to the following positives:

**An increase in foreign exchange reserves**

**Sustained manufacturing contribution in GDP**

**Increased share in global exports**

**Robust information and communication technology software exports**

**Sustained economic growth in the range of 6%-8%**

### What are the current challenges to economic growth?

The economic reforms, so far, have been **more focused on the technical nature of the economy** than the system, process and people.

As a result, primary drivers of the economy, the human capital, technology readiness, labour productivity, disposable income, capital expenditure, process innovation in setting up businesses, and institutional capacity have not got enough recognition.

**Human resource capital (HRC) formation:** The HRC rank for India stands at 103; Sri Lanka is at 70, China at 34, and South Korea at 27, as brought out by the Global Human Capital Report, 2017.

**Low Per capita income:** low per capita GDP at \$2,104 has **direct links to low per capita family income**.

**Low wages linked with less disposable income of families:** Global Manufacturing Competitiveness Index in 2016 reflects that the hourly wages in India have been \$1.7; they are \$38, \$24, \$20.7 and \$3.3 for the United States, Japan, South Korea, and China, respectively. It is ultimately **affecting demand**.

**Low research and development expenditure:** It stands at 0.8% of GDP, which is resulting in lower capacity for innovation in technologies and reduced ‘technology readiness’.

**Labour productivity:** Low productivity has unfavourable consequences for competitiveness, manufacturing growth, exports and economic growth.



**Time and cost overruns:** there are difficulties in acquiring land for businesses and inefficient utilisation of economic infrastructure.

**What reforms can be implemented to drive the economy?**

**Address the underlying issues:** address structural issues — HRC, skills, research and development (R&D), land management and institutional capacity.

**Attract large investment in manufacturing and advanced service:** enhanced public sector outlay to 8% of GDP for education, skill development and public health, is another first step.

**Technology readiness:** The reports (by McKinsey and the World Economic Forum) suggest that **Industry 4.0** will be defined by new technologies such as robotics, 3-D printing, artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of things (IoT).

**Build the capacity of public institutions:** as per Nobel laureate (1993) Douglass C. North, it is necessary to build the capacity of public institutions. Policy reforms should **promote a business-centric approach** to create a friendly ecosystem and for efficient internal supply chain management.

**21. Central banks must stop pussyfooting on climate**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Central banks must stop pussyfooting on climate**” published in **Business standard** on **9th Sep 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 -Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation,

**Relevance:** Climate change and relevant monetary policy

**Synopsis:** Ignoring climate risks will complicate macroeconomic management, just as overlooking financial risks eventually led to the global financial crisis.

**Introduction**

Economic activity, is strongly integrated with emissions that contribute to climate change. Output and Greenhouse gases (GHGs) go hand in hand, and will continue to do so.

After a drop in 2020 due to the great lockdown, global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will grow this year and, again, in 2022.

According to the International Energy Agency, 2023 is projected to be the year with the “greatest levels of carbon dioxide output in human history”.

Given the tight relationship between economic activity and emissions, **central banks need to explicitly internalize the aspects of climate change** that affect the output gap “block”.

**What is the issue with current policies of central banks towards combating climate change?**

Decades after climate change became important in public discourse, **climate change-induced considerations seem to be ignored in monetary policy** of central banks.

If sustainability is a defining characteristic of potential output, then it has to incorporate climate considerations.

In other words, high inflation can no longer be the only symptom of macroeconomic instability if central banks are serious about the subject. Integrated assessment models have to be explicitly incorporated in central bank work that informs monetary policy.

**What needs to be done?**

The following five dimensions should be taken into account:

**Firstly**, effect of rising temperature and climate variability on short-term economic activity stemming from, disruptions due to extreme floods;

**Secondly**, National commitments made in Paris are akin to an additional constraint to maximising national output consistent with climate-neutral real-economy outcomes;

**Thirdly**, Feedback loop from economic growth to higher GHGs;

**Fourthly**, Implications of rising temperatures, in the absence of requisite adaptation, on long-term economic capacity as emissions thresholds are breached, with resultant consequences for labour productivity, degradation of capital stock, and, even vitiate capability of the atmosphere to repair itself; and

**Fifthly**, Expected changes in carbon-related tax and subsidy arrangements.

### What is the way forward?

While no single country may have an appreciable impact on total global emissions, climate change is a damaging permanent shock to potential output.

Ignoring climate risks will complicate macroeconomic management. Therefore, monetary policy will have to adjust, otherwise “conduct as usual” by central banks can undermine climate goals.

## 22. Where's The V-Shaped Recovery?

**Source:** This post is based on the article “Where's The V-Shaped Recovery?” published in **Times of India** on **9th Sep 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** Economic recovery

**Synopsis:** Govt should recognize the evidence of distress and job loss in India. V-shaped recovery is still far away.

### Introduction

According to the government, India's economy is bright and strong since headline GDP grew 20% in the recent quarter after falling 24% in the same quarter last year.

However, it is important to evaluate the true health of a nation's economy through its peoples' incomes and livelihoods, rather than shallow indicators like stock market indices or startup unicorns.

### Why it's said that there is no economic recovery?

**Record number seeking employment under MGNREGA:** Around 64 million are families employed under MGNREGA. It is more than ten times the total number of people employed by all the companies listed on India's stock exchanges combined. We should remember that citizens utilize MGNREGA only when the situation is extremely dire and there are no other alternative sources of income. Currently, **18 million families** are dependent on MGNREGA, roughly the same number in August last year. Clearly, there is no economic recovery, 'V' or otherwise, for these millions of families.

So, while stock markets are booming to all-time highs, a record number of Indians are seeking employment from MGNREGA for a bare minimum income.

**Manufacturing, construction and services in bad shape:** Manufacturing, services and construction are the real economic activities that generate good quality jobs and incomes for the vast majority of people. However, these are not in good state. Latest CSO data shows that **manufacturing activity in June 2021 is at the same level as four years ago in 2017**, construction activity is at the level of five years ago in 2016, and trade/transport services activity is at the level of six years ago in 2015 (at constant prices).

**Lack of consumption:** When people do not have sufficient incomes, it affects their consumption too. This is evidenced in the fact that private consumption in the June 2021 quarter is at the same level as in 2017.

**Fixed Capital formation is lagging:** When private consumption is weak, businesses refrain from undertaking new projects and investment falls. This is seen in fixed capital formation being stuck at 2017 levels.

**Finally**, it is argued that **easy money from the United States is finding its way to other countries, pushing up asset prices and financial market valuations**. Neither does this help improve livelihoods for the vast majority of people, nor will this last long. It is thus futile to showcase foreign flows or stock market indicators as a sign of the robustness of India's economy.

### What is the way forward?

Even before Covid hit, India's textile and leather goods production, the sectors that create the greatest number of jobs, was lower than back in 2014-15. Covid has only made it acutely worse.

**Promote labor intensive sectors:** Government needs to support such labour-intensive sectors to increase employment.

**Export growth:** The lone bright spot in the economy is **exports growth**, which if sustained can create jobs.

### 23. Wildfire burn scars can intensify and even trigger thunderstorms, here's how?

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**Wildfire burn scars can intensify and even trigger thunderstorms**" published in Down to Earth on **9th September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Disaster management – wildfires

**Relevance:** Article highlights issues associated with wildfires.

**Synopsis:** As per a research study, wildlife burn scars due to wildfires can increase thunderstorms. It increases the risk both of flooding and of lightning in the region.

#### Introduction

Wildfires burn millions of acres of land every year. It leaves behind **Wildfire burn scars** on the land with little vegetation and a darker soil surface, which **cannot absorb the water**. It makes the land **more susceptible to flooding and erosion**. Even small rainfall is sufficient to trigger flooding and debris flow.

Furthermore, burn scars can also **increase thunderstorms** and the risk of lightning that could spark more fires in the surrounding region.

#### What are factors that contribute to thunderstorms in burn scars?

**3 factors** contribute to thunderstorms in the burn scars: 1) lack of vegetation, 2) reduced soil moisture, 3) lower surface albedo (the amount of light or radiation the surface is able to reflect back).

**Note:** charcoal has an albedo of about 0.04 and fresh snow is nearly the maximum of 1.

#### How the factors result in increasing thunderstorms?

When soil is burned, it becomes darker. The **darker surface absorbs more energy** from the sun. It results in higher temperature in burn scars compared to surrounding regions.

**Temperature difference** result in low air pressure in the burn scars and high pressure in the surrounding regions, causing convection (rising hot air and humid air from surrounding areas

rush to fill the space). It further results in formation of cumulonimbus clouds and even thunderstorms.

**Example:** In **Australia**, in 2003, a **flash flood** occurred. Scientist found that albedo in the burn area had fallen from 0.2 to 0.08. Scientists further found that if the land hadn't been burned, just over a tenth of an inch of rain would have fallen.

Studies also found that the potential of burn scars to trigger rain decreases with the regrowth of vegetation.

#### 24. How India's food systems must respond to the climate crisis

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**How India's food systems must respond to the climate crisis**", published in **Indian Express** on **9th September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 3 – Crops and Cropping Patterns, sustainable agriculture**

**Relevance:** Article highlights the importance of food system.

**Synopsis:** India's food system requires reforms, to make more sustainable and inclusive.

##### Introduction

UN Secretary-General will soon convene **the Food Systems Summit** with an aim to transform the global food systems. The objective will be to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

There are five action tracks to achieve the objectives: –

1. Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
2. Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
3. Boost nature-positive production
4. Advance equitable livelihoods
5. Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

##### What are food systems?

According to the **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)**, "*food systems encompass the entire range of actors involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded*".

##### What are the issues in food system in India?

After green revolution, India became a country self-sufficient in food, from the food deficit country. However, it resulted in the problems like water-logging, soil erosion, groundwater depletion and the unsustainability of agriculture.

India's present policies have not changed much, focused primarily on 3 crops (rice, wheat and sugarcane). These crops are using 75 to 80 per cent of irrigated water.

Diversification of cropping patterns towards millets, pulses, oilseeds, horticulture is required for sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture.

At present India's food system need improvements to make it inclusive and sustainable for higher farm incomes and nutrition security.

##### What are the suggestions to make food system inclusive?

**Small Farmers:** Small farmers require support like technological and institutional innovations. **Farmer producer organizations (FPOs)** can help small farmers to get better



prices for inputs and outputs. Further technological innovation like ITC's E-Choupal is an example of technology benefiting small farmers.

**Women:** Women's cooperatives and groups like [Kudumbashree in Kerala](#) would be helpful. One of the successful examples of a value chain that helped small holders, women and consumers is Amul (Anand Milk Union Ltd) created by Verghese Kurien. Such innovations are needed in other activities of food systems.

**Social protection:** Inclusive food systems need strong social protection programs. India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, public distribution system (PDS), nutrition programs like ICDS, mid-day meal programs should be further strengthened. Non-staples like pulses and oils, and bio fortified cereals for better nutrition needs to be included in PDS.

**What are the suggestions to make food system sustainable?**

**Climate resilient cropping:** As present, food sector emits around 30 percent of the world's greenhouse gases. This questions the sustainability of the food system at a time, when world is trying to contain the impact of climate change.

Climate-resilient cropping patterns have to be promoted. Instead of giving input subsidies, cash transfers can be given for farmers for sustainable agriculture.

**Non-agriculture solutions:** Income from agriculture is not sufficient for smallholders and informal workers. Thus, Strengthening rural MSMEs and food processing can reduce pressure on agriculture.

## 25. Making green hydrogen viable demands financial, tech support to lower costs

**Source:** This post is based on the article "Making green hydrogen viable demands financial, tech support to lower costs" published in **Business Standard** on 10<sup>th</sup> Sep 2021.

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

**Relevance:** the Article talks about Green hydrogen, associated facts, and delineates the steps needed for making the production of Green Hydrogen economically viable.

**Synopsis:** Bringing down the cost of producing Green Hydrogen in India will require a mix of financial and technological interventions.

### Background

- Read here: [Green Hydrogen – Explained, pointwise](#)

### What is the major issue with Green Hydrogen adoption?

**Cost:** According to The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), the cost of green hydrogen production is \$5-6 a kg, approximately thrice the cost of predominant technology that uses fossil fuels and is called "grey hydrogen".

**Note:** According to a compilation by the Scientific Information Resource Division at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, most of the world's hydrogen production is grey.

### What is the present global scenario wrt Hydrogen production?

**Scale:** According to the International Renewable Energy Agency's World Energy Transitions Outlook report, **less than 1%** of annual global hydrogen production is green

**Efforts:** Investments are under way to ramp up green hydrogen manufacturing. In December 2020, seven companies — ACWA Power, CWP Renewables, Envision, Iberdrola, Ørsted, Snam and Yara — announced a **global coalition** to accelerate the production of green hydrogen 50-fold in the next six years.

These companies have targeted the deployment of 25 GW through 2026 of renewables-based hydrogen production.

**At what price point will adoption of Green Hydrogen be feasible for industry?**

An analysis by the **Hydrogen Council**, a Belgium-headquartered initiative to promote hydrogen adoption, found that it will be feasible for steel and fertiliser production, power generation and long-range shipping to adopt green hydrogen if it is available at **\$2 per kg price**.

**What steps is India taking to push for Green Hydrogen?**

India is taking its first few steps.

IndianOil recently announced that it is setting up the country's first green hydrogen plant at its **Mathura refinery**.

IndianOil's R&D centre has been working since the early 2000s to **explore the use of hydrogen as a fuel** by mixing it with compressed natural gas (CNG) to make H-CNG.

In November 2020, govt announced the **launch of the National Hydrogen Energy Mission**.

In terms of government support for green hydrogen, a **cabinet note proposing to make it mandatory for fertiliser plants and oil refineries** is in the works.

The govt also **aims to extend the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme** for manufacturing electrolysers to produce green hydrogen.

**What are future projections for India wrt Green Hydrogen?**

According to industry body India Hydrogen Alliance (IH2A), the annual demand for hydrogen in the country is around six million tonnes (MT), mostly from fertiliser plants and refineries.

It needs to go up to 28 MT by 2050 and 40 MT by 2060 if the net-zero carbon target is to be achieved. However, by 2050, nearly 80 per cent of India's hydrogen is projected to be green — produced by renewable electricity and electrolysis.

**What steps India must take?**

**Reducing expenditure on Electrolysers:** Indigenous development of critical materials and local innovation for components can help reduce electrolyser capital expenditure to below \$300 per kilowatt.

**Attractive financial incentives** like the PLI scheme for electrolysers.

**National H2-themed Energy Transition Fund:** India should create a national H2-themed Energy Transition Fund, with co-funding partnerships with sovereign partners, multi-lateral agencies, clean energy funds and industry, with the aim to raise \$1 billion by 2030 for deployment towards national hydrogen projects of a certain scale.

**Terms to know**

- [Hydrogen Council](#)

**26. [The irrelevance of Indian GDP estimates to most of our citizens](#)**

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**The irrelevance of Indian GDP estimates to most of our citizens**" published in **Livemint** on **10<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to Growth, Development and Employment

**Relevance:** Obsession with GDP growth, which is seen as the sine qua non for all policy interventions.

**Synopsis:** Economic recovery is unlikely to prove sustainable when most basic indicators of human development show a worsening of our situation.

## Introduction

Estimates of gross domestic product (GDP) for the first quarter of fiscal year 2021-22 were released on 31 August. This year's first-quarter estimate shows a 20%-plus GDP growth.

However, the real issue is the relevance of GDP estimates as the sole or most important indicator of a recovery for an economy.

### **Why GDP growth cannot be used as a sole indicator of an economic recovery?**

**It doesn't capture informal sector data:** India's informal sector is not only a significant part of the overall economy, but is crucial for generating broad demand, given the significantly large proportion of our population that depends on it. However, GDP estimates hardly capture livelihood and income losses in the informal sector.

**Stock market does not capture ground situation:** Our real economy has been hampered by policy-induced shocks as well as a health calamity, our stock markets do not reflect a true picture of the economic ground reality.

**Data from other sources confirms worsening of economic situation:** Diverse data from official, unofficial and private sources confirms a worsening of the economic situation for most households.

**Disruption in many sectors is not accounted in GDP:** The pandemic and slowdown have not only impacted homes and individuals in terms of livelihood, but also on various aspects of human development.

Since the 2020 lockdown, disruptions in **education**, with significant numbers of students dropping out or unable to get educated, is unlikely to be reflected in GDP statistics.

So is the case with **malnutrition and other health parameters**. These are unlikely to see a recovery in the near future, but will cause irreparable long-term damage, unless they receive attention.

This **failure to reflect the economic conditions of our population's majority** is partly a result of the way data on GDP is calculated, but also due to infirmities of the database itself.

### **What do the other sources of data indicate about India's current economic situation?**

Various official, unofficial and private sources of data confirm a worsening of the economic situation for most households. For instance:

**Rise in distress employment:** [Periodic Labour Force Survey \(PLFS\)](#), released in July 2021 showed a worsening of the employment scenario, with a rise in distress employment. After more than five decades, there has been an actual increase in the proportion of workers employed in agriculture.

#### **Decline Wage rates:**

**In Agricultural occupations:** Data on casual wages in rural areas from the labour bureau (available until June 2021) shows that real wages in agricultural occupations **declined 0.8%** in the past two years.

**In Non-Agricultural occupations:** The decline is much worse for non-agricultural occupations, with non-agricultural wages **declining by 6.7%** compared to last June. Clearly, 20%-plus GDP growth is irrelevant to most casual wage workers in rural India.

**Among better paid and protected workers:** The PLFS 2019-20 data shows average regular real wages declining by 1.8% in rural zones, but increasing marginally by 0.4% in urban areas, compared to 2017-18.

**Declining farmers income:** Already suffering from low output prices, the majority of farmers have seen incomes decline as input costs rose (such as on diesel and fertilizers).

**Must Read:** [Where's the V-shaped recovery?](#)

## 27. Terror didn't win: 9/11 changed democratic countries in some unlovely ways. But democracies stayed on track

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Terror didn't win: 9/11 changed democratic countries in some unlovely ways. But democracies stayed on track**” published in *The Times of India* on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

**Syllabus:** GS 3: Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.

**Relevance:** To understand the Impacts of the terror attacks on democracies.

**Synopsis:** This article highlights how global democracies change after the 9/11 attack.

### Introduction

**A study from the Washington-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies** estimated that the number of active terrorist groups was 67 in 2018, the most since 1980.

**A new study from the Costs of War project at Brown University** calculates that the US spent \$8 trillion during its two-decade-long war on terror that also took 9,00,000 lives.

### Does terrorism threaten democracy?

It created a lot of trouble in the last 20 years and has the capacity to disturb democracies. Still, it was not able to outcast democracy.

**Existence of democracy:** Despite the Taliban's return to Afghanistan, multiple terror groups in Africa, and the persistence of the Islamic State outfit, democracies hasn't been thrown off track.

**No Quality of Life in terrorism controlled areas:** No terrorist movement nor any state that sponsors terrorism has been able to provide the better life they promised than democracies.

**Lack of Governance in terrorism controlled areas:** Although ISIS did briefly control territory in parts of Iraq and Syria, establishing its caliphate. But it was short-lived, and violent movements were there. In these conditions, it is difficult to build viable states or provide good governance.

### What are the impacts of terror attacks?

To counter the attacks, some democracies have diluted some of their core principles.

**Western Countries:** Post-9/11, they **reinterpreted their privacy laws, boosted surveillance and armed their security agencies** with powers overriding legal checks.

**India:** Used the same method India is providing justification for some of its most Draconian laws, For example, [Unlawful Activities \(Prevention\) Act \(UAPA\)](#)

**Globally:** widespread Islamophobia and refugee fatigue in some countries provided space for right-wing populism.

**China:** The war on terror coincided with the rise of China after 2001. After 9/11 USA was busy with its war on terror while China strengthened its hold over the global economy. And as the USA withdraws, we witness China is ready to adopt a transactional approach to groups like the Taliban.



### What should be done next?

It is clear that adopting terrorism as a state policy has disastrous consequences. This is evident in the case of Pakistan. Overall, 9/11 did change liberal democracies. But terrorists didn't throw any democracy off track.

### 28. What Chandrayaan-2 has sent

**Source:** This post is based on the article "What Chandrayaan-2 has sent" published in **Indian Express** on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology

**Relevance:** Significance of Chandrayaan-2

**Synopsis:** The **failure of Chandrayaan-2** to make a soft-landing on the lunar surface had led to much disappointment. However, **Orbiter part of the mission** has gathered a wealth of new information.

#### Introduction

Due to crash landing, ISRO missed the opportunity to **demonstrate soft-landing in outer space** and gather **more local information**. The lander Vikram and rover Pragyaan could have helped prepare a more composite picture of the Moon.

However, recently, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) released the information gathered by the scientific payloads till now.

#### What information has been gathered by the orbiter?

**Presence of H<sub>2</sub>O molecules:** Instrument used on **Chandrayaan-1** was **not sensitive enough** to detect whether the signals came from the hydroxyl radical (OH) or the water molecule (H<sub>2</sub>O).

The Imaging Infra-Red Spectrometer (IIRS) on board Chandrayaan-2 has been able to distinguish between hydroxyl and water molecules.

**Places with water molecule:** Chandrayaan-2 has now found signatures of water at all latitudes.

**Potential water ice:** The **Dual Frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar** has reported detection of potential water ice at the poles as it has been able to distinguish properties of surface roughness from that of water ice.

**Minor elements:** The Large Area Soft X-Ray Spectrometer (CLASS) measures the Moon's X-ray spectrum. This instrument has **detected the minor elements chromium** and **manganese** for the first time through remote sensing. Sodium was detected without any ambiguity for the first time.

It will help in understanding **magmatic evolution** and deeper insights into the nebular conditions.

**Revelations by CLASS:** it has mapped nearly 95% of the lunar surface in X-rays for the first time. Scientists at ISRO believe that based on the CLASS findings, a direct link of exospheric sodium to the surface can be established.

**Revelations regarding SUN:** Solar X-ray Monitor (XSM) through the radiation coming in from the Sun has collected information about solar flares.

This has great implications on the understanding of the mechanism behind heating of the solar corona, which has been an open problem for many decades.

### **Why is Chandryaan-2 orbiter significant?**

**It paves the path for future Moon missions:** mineralogical and volatile mapping of the lunar surface and maps of elements will be key for future scope of work. It is expected to help scientists for human missions also.

**International collaborations:** Some key future Moon missions that hope to make use of such data include the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)-ISRO collaboration [Lunar Polar Exploration \(LUPEX\)](#) mission scheduled for launch in 2023/2024, NASA's [Artemis missions](#).

### **29. Climate crisis in North East India: What is behind water scarcity in the region**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “Climate crisis in North East India: What is behind water scarcity in the region” published in **Down to Earth** on **10th September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3- Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

**Relevance:** To understand the climate crisis and water scarcity in North East India.

**Synopsis:** Changing rainfall pattern including incidents of high and variable rainfall in NE states is causing problems like floods, land degradation and acidification.

#### **Introduction**

The climate of North East India is changing, which includes changing rainfall patterns over the region, resulting in overall drying up of the region. A major reason behind it is the drying up of around 200 mountain springs which are direct primary sources of water for mountainous villages in the region.

The region is ultimately facing climate induced water crisis. Action plans on climate change by the northeastern states have identified the change in rainfall patterns as one of the major causes of vulnerability to climate change.

#### **Why are springs important to NE states?**

**Contribution to rivers:** The springs contribute a large share to the base flow of the large Himalayan rivers such as the Brahmaputra — more than glaciers, ice and snow.

**Meeting water needs:** Moreover, the mountainous regions of the northeastern states are mostly dependent on these springs to meet their water needs.

#### **Why Assam is more vulnerable to climate change as compared to other NE states?**

**Groundwater levels:** In Assam, the groundwater levels are closely related to the flow of water in the Brahmaputra, which means that the difference between the river flow levels and the ground water levels is less. Hence, a little rainfall in the catchments will affect the flow of the rivers and along with that the ground water levels will also be impacted.

**Soils:** Brahmaputra has mostly sandy soil and their water retention capacity is low, which creates a scare of water scarcity.

**Irrigation:** As per a study, Assam has the least area under irrigation, least forest area available per 1,000 rural households and the second lowest per capita income among the Indian Himalayan states. It is the most vulnerable to climate change. Mizoram is the next one.

#### **Why have springs dried up?**

The drying of springs in North East India may be because of human-induced geological and land use changes, along with the impact of climate change, especially rainfall.

The exact cause needs to be ascertained.

**What are some negative consequences of changing rainfall pattern in NE states?**

**Land degradation:** Another consequence of the untimely and excessive rains is that large parts of northeastern states have become degraded, which has a direct consequence for the region's main occupation — agriculture.

**Causes behind land degradation:**

i) One of the major causes of this degradation could be **increased frequency of high rainfall events** in the region.

ii) Another common cause of land degradation in these states is **acidification**. In the top eight states in the country where acidification is the most rampant, seven are in the northeast. Land in the North East is naturally acidic because it receives heavy rainfall every year. Climate change-induced high frequency of heavy rainfall events will further exacerbate the acidification, which will decrease the quality of soil.

**Acidity** is measured in terms of the concentration of hydrogen ions (pH) in the soil, as they are essential for the formation of all acids. Acidification of soil or land takes place when the pH balance of the soil shifts towards acidic nature due to an excessive presence of hydrogen ions.

**Soil acidity** increases when metallic minerals such as calcium, magnesium, potassium and sodium are lost from the soil and only hydrogen ions remain. These minerals get removed from soils due to heavy rainfall and flooding. They also get removed with crop residue or harvest hay.

**Reducing acidification of the soil**

We can use lime and organic manure in the soil and can adopt nutrient management practices and smart crop selection.

**30. Trading Orangutans for palm oil**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Trading Orangutans for palm oil**” published in **Business Standard** on **10th Sep 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Major Crops – Cropping Patterns in various parts of the country,

**Relevance:** Implementing Oil palm mission is not optimal for India

**Synopsis:** Instead of implementing Oil Palm mission, the government can look to set up sanctuary for endangered animal species.

**Introduction**

One of the problematic items in economic and environmental terms in the Indian food basket is edible oil. India imports 60 per cent of its cooking oils, and more than half those imports are of palm oil, sourced from Malaysia and Indonesia.

**Must Read:** [Palm oil and environmental and social challenges in India](#)

The import bill for edible oil comes to around Rs 80,000 crore. In the interest of atmanirbharata and cutting down forex outflows, the government has set up a [Rs 11,000-crore mission](#) to incentivize palm oil production.

**Previous articles on Palm oil**

[Why attempts to boost oil palm farming may work?](#)

[Explore unconventional sources of edible oil](#)

[The dangers of India's palm oil push](#)

[No realistic plan of reducing import dependence in edible oils is possible without recognising the role of oil palm](#)

Why palm won't fix India's edible oil woes

Issues associated with oil palm promotion – Explained, pointwise

**What are some advantages & applications of oil palm?**

It is an evergreen plant with a very high-yield.

The oil doesn't spoil at room temperature. It doesn't have a strong smell, and it's colourless. Hence, it's versatile and used in pizzas, chocolate and doughnuts apart from being a staple of many Asian cuisines.

It's also used as a base in deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste and lipstick and as a biofuel. Replacing it with alternatives would take much more land.

**What is a possible alternative instead of implementing the oil palm mission?**

**Set up orangutan, pygmy elephant and Java rhino sanctuaries in the target areas** instead. Those habitats are suitable. The Andamans are practically part of Indonesia in geographical terms, with similar climates and forestation. So are those parts of the Northeast where palm oil can be cultivated.

Importing the animals, and generating suitable vegetation for their consumption, may take a little time. But there would be positive payoffs.

One is **high-end tourism**. Orangutan safaris could generate forex. Global investor community will see India in a positive light for implementing such a scheme.

It may sound crazy and ambitious but an orangutan mission may be a better option than a palm oil mission.

**31. Climate change impacts food and nutritional security — Earth needs regenerative farming**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Climate change impacts food and nutritional security — Earth needs regenerative farming**” published in **TOI** on **11th Sep 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** Dealing with impact of climate change on food and nutritional security

**Synopsis:** Climate change is a major threat to food production globally and vital steps need to be taken to mitigate it.

**Does climate change impact food production and nutrition?**

Yes. It has very significant impacts on these. Findings of the 2019 IPCC panel on climate change's special report on land showed how climate change was already impacting multiple dimensions of the food system.

**i).** Climate change impacts the **biophysical conditions** in which crops grow. Some crops are less heat resistant — as the atmosphere grows warmer, these become less productive. We're already seeing declines in the productivity of staples like wheat.

**ii).** There are also **significant nutritional impacts** — as more carbon dioxide gathers in the atmosphere, crops have less nutrition, less vitamins and minerals in them.

**iii).** **Food distribution** is impacted — increasing wildfires and floods, as we've seen in multiple countries recently, disrupt the distribution systems transporting food from farmers to consumers. This results in **higher food prices**. There are thus multiple impacts on food security.



**Which countries are most vulnerable to such impacts?**

Any country that has a significant agricultural sector is likely to experience these.

Major agricultural producers like India and the US are vulnerable.

Farmers suffer considerable losses in these countries. But remarkably, farmers practising **regenerative agriculture**, are less affected.

**What is the way forward?**

**Balanced and sustainable soil & water management practices:** The prevailing mode in the globalized food system has been based on productivity or ways to grow the most crop and sell it to a huge market. Agricultural trade must be balanced with more sustainable practices for managing soil and water.

i). One good way is to **use different varieties of crops** that are more resilient, including wild species and traditional cultivars, many being extremely hardy against droughts, floods, etc.

ii). We need to **move away from some very highly engineered crops** that dominate our monocultural globalized food system and adopt more regional, soil conserving, resilient crops.

iii). **Traditional agri practices:** Around the world, many communities practice sustainable farming based on indigenous knowledge of local conditions. Such farms follow intercropping or growing different crops together or agroforestry, growing green crops with tree crops — these practices might not have the global food system’s high productivity, but they are very sustainable in the long term.

iv). **Stopping food waste:** A quarter of food produced globally is wasted either at the farm gate, when farmers can’t market crops in time, or at the consumer end when people buy too much, and it goes bad. If we could save that 25%, we’d be able to significantly boost global food access.

**Terms to know**

- [Regenerative agriculture](#)

**32. [No offshore wind project has commenced in India: Are we on track for 30 GW by 2030?](#)**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**No offshore wind project has commenced in India: Are we on track for 30 GW by 2030?**” published in **Down to Earth** on **11th September 2021**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc

**Relevance:** Regarding use of offshore wind energy in India

**Synopsis:** To harness the capacity of India’s offshore wind potential, we need to identify the areas where we can develop offshore wind project and accelerate the project.

**Introduction**

India has planned to provide 24×7 electricity to every home. As per the forecast of International Energy Agency, the country’s energy demand will increase by 6-7% annually over the next decade. Hence, it is imperative to decarbonise the energy sector.

This transition to clean energy can be facilitated by offshore wind energy.

As per India’s nationally determined contributions, India plans to generate 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030 — including five GW of offshore wind energy by 2022 and plans to scale it further to 30 GW by 2030.

**What is India's offshore wind energy potential?**

As per World Bank report, India's Exclusive Economic Zone has 195 gigawatt (GW) of technological offshore wind potential (112 GW fixed and 83 GW floating). There is 36 GW and 35 GW offshore wind potential off the Gujarat and Tamil Nadu coast, respectively.

**What is the status of offshore wind projects in India?**

**Gujarat** invited an expression of interest (EOI) for India's first offshore wind project of 1 GW in 2018, which attracted nearly 35 major companies. It **did not move forward**. In 2019, India's Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) applied for €800 million in viability gap funding to help support the construction of India's first 1 GW offshore wind project in Gujarat. To date, India has not begun any offshore wind projects.

**Must Read:** [Offshore wind energy in India – Explained](#)

**How to accelerate offshore wind project development?**

**Pass the final tender** for the one GW project at Pipavav in the Gulf of Khambhat, Gujarat, which is in the pipeline.

**Conduct an offshore wind measurement campaign** for a minimum of 10 GW of accurate on-site measurements.

**Install five LiDARs (Light Detection and Ranging) by 2021** to gather precise bankable data that will be critical to developing offshore wind projects of up to 7.4 GW indicative installable capacity.

As India already has cheaper onshore wind and solar power, the MNRE is seeking **feasible cost interventions from stakeholders for offshore wind**.

**What are the key steps/measures to enhance offshore wind capacity?**

Offshore wind market potential in India is enormous, but it requires an increased government-industry coordination and techno-economic studies to be realized in this decade. Some key steps that can be taken are:

- i). Customize the technology and business models** for the offshore wind sites off Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.
- ii). Frame a visionary policy** towards long term cost reduction and energy.
- iii). Use LiDAR data** to identify bankable offshore wind zones collected through offshore wind measurement campaign.
- iv). Demonstrate offshore wind capacity factors**, technology optimization and initial costs.
- v). Promote engagement among decision makers** at the federal, state and local levels.
- vi). Promote collective understanding** of offshore wind's socioeconomic benefit.

**33. A very consequential Supreme Court ruling: When govt values land unjustly, landowners cannot seek full remedy in lower courts**

**Source:** This post is based on the article **"A very consequential Supreme Court ruling: When govt values land unjustly, landowners cannot seek full remedy in lower courts"** published in the **Times of India** on **11<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

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

**Relevance:** To understand the land acquisition process.

**Synopsis:** Road construction is important. But so are the right of landowners who lose the land as part of the Government's land acquisition.

### **Introduction**

Government has the power to compulsorily acquire a person's property for the construction of a government project. For that, they have to compensate the person fairly. Fair compensation is the constitutional right of the person.

But, in the recent **Project Director, NHAI vs M Hakeem case**, the SC ruled that the government **can acquire land for highways without a fair mechanism for compensation.**

### **Why the government arbitration is considered one-sided?**

**National Highways Act, 1956 (amended 1997):** Under it, government servants fix the compensation while acquiring the land. If the landowner is dissatisfied with the compensation, he can seek reconsideration. But that reconsideration is also done by another government servant, who will act as an arbitrator. But that **arbitrator is not appointed with the consent of the landowner.**

This is a remedy in **section 34 of the Arbitration Act.** But this provides only limited appeal in a court of law. Thus, this process seems to go **against the concept of natural justice.**

### **What can courts do?**

Under **Section 34 of the Arbitration Act**, the **courts cannot modify the award** or increase the compensation itself. It can **either set aside the award or leave it to be re-decided** by the arbitrator. While the landowner had limited rights, **SC refused to concede to lower courts** (below it) **the right to enhance NHA awards.**

### **What is the High Court stand?**

The high court had taken a different view of the problem. The HC found the arbitrator to be biased towards the government. So, the HC **called for a liberal interpretation** of section 34 and **enhanced the compensation** itself.

### **What is the Supreme Court stand?**

SC has denied lower courts the right to modify and enhance NHA awards. So, the landowners can only challenge the NHA in a writ petition in HCs or SC under the Constitution. Though SC pointed that the system is designed to favour the government, but **left it to the parliament to legislate** on the matter.

However, this amounts to grave injustice as it left the matter to parliament and also disapproved the HC decision to enhance the award.

### **What does this imply?**

The whole scenario is in a worrying state for the landowners. They are limited by the law, not favoured by SC and lower courts have also been curtailed by SC.

## **34. How the world — and India — changed in the 20 years after 9/11**

**Source:** This post is based on the following articles

- **“How the world — and India — changed in the 20 years after 9/11”** published in **Indian Express** on **10<sup>th</sup> September 2021.**
- **“Two decades after 9/11, the nation state remains robust”** published in **Indian Express** on **10<sup>th</sup> September 2021.**

**Syllabus:** GS 3. Role of External State & Non-State Actors in Creating Challenges to Internal Security.

**Relevance:** To understand the impact of 9/11 on India and the world.

**Synopsis:** After the 9/11 attacks, geopolitics changed dramatically. Even democratic nation-states underwent a change to respond to non-state actors.

### **Introduction**

It was September 11, 2001, when planes struck the twin towers of the USA. The attack on the superpower by non-state actors highlighted the new threats that states were forced to deal with in the coming days. But this highlighted the emerging powers of non-state actors.

### **The power of non-state actors**

The non-state actors like terrorist groups found a haven in unstable regimes like in Afghanistan. **Economic globalization allowed them to build their economic and trade nexus. Technology** provided them with the **means to communicate and coordinate**. All these allowed the terrorists to carry out complex operations like attacking the twin towers, right at the heart of the great superpower. They also sought to **change the power equations in the Middle East**.

### **What is the terrorist agenda in the Middle East?**

The terror groups wanted to create a caliphate in the Middle East. They were met with strong resistance from Middle Eastern countries. This reduced their power. Moreover, Arab states view countries like Turkey, Iran as greater threats than these terror groups.

Though the Middle East was able to control the groups, we see that the USA had to leave Afghanistan.

### **How did the democratic nation-states respond to terror threats?**

Nation-states have **only emerged stronger**. They tightened the norms to control the digital world to secure the communication channels. The **air travel norms were strengthened** and these have ensured that there has not been any incident like 9/11 after that. Moreover, **states increased regulation and control over arms** like nuclear weapons to ensure they don't land in the hands of terrorists.

### **How did India Respond?**

India has been facing the problem of **Pakistan-sponsored terrorism since 1989**. Unfortunately, the **USA and UK sided with Pakistan** during this time.

However, this **changed after India's 2<sup>nd</sup> nuclear test and the 9/11 attack** in the USA. Though the USA continued to rely on Pakistan, it considered Pakistan as an unreliable partner. This was **further proved when Osama bin Laden was found hiding in Pakistan**.

Indian response to terror attacks had been that of **"strategic restraint"**. It was limited to diplomatic actions. This was evident in attacks on the Indian Parliament (December 2001) and the Kaluchak massacre (May 2002). However, now we witness that India has **adopted a policy of imposing costs on Pakistan by striking across the border**, e.g. Balakot airstrikes.

This capacity of India has been **built over its strong economy and strong global linkages**. Despite the economic disaster of 1991, India emerged stronger after LPG reforms.

India was however late as China started its reforms in 1978 and that gave China the edge in economic and global power. However, as China export-driven model is coming under



strain, **India has bright chances of challenging and even overtaking China in the economic sphere.**

### **35. Green-unready: On funding high-impact climate solutions**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “Green unready” published in **Business Standard** on **10th September 2021.**

**Syllabus:** GS 3 -Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

**Relevance:** Address climate change and methods which can reduce emission.

**Synopsis:** Fighting climate crisis needs high impact solutions led by entrepreneurs and start-ups. Hence, funding assumes critical importance.

#### **Introduction**

Addressing climate change requires a focus on reducing emissions and increasing carbon sinks. To reduce emissions, innovative solutions that are climate-ready and can be adopted at scale are the need of the hour.

**Entrepreneurship** can accelerate the lab-to-market transition of innovations and create scalable solutions for deployment.

But what is required is an integrated innovation curation, venture development, and capital access.

#### **What is the major problem faced in commercialization of high-impact innovations?**

**Lack of funding:** Innovators and entrepreneurs, particularly those harnessing science and technology to create high-impact solutions, have historically been underfunded. This leads to innovations stuck inside R&D labs, journal articles and patent offices, discouraging entrepreneurial risk-taking. Risk capital is most needed in commercializing high-impact innovations, but is least available at this stage. (*Risk capital refers to funds used for high-risk, high-reward investments*).

#### **Why there is a lack of risk capital?**

The following reasons keep most investors away from such early-stage investments,

- i).** Absence of impact-market thesis
- ii).** Poor innovation curation and sub-optimal venture development efforts by the ecosystem enablers
- iii).** Unrealistic expectations
- iv).** A widespread misunderstanding of risk-return trade-offs further worsen this gap between the capital providers and product start-ups.
- v).** High product development risk
- vi).** Longer gestation period
- vii).** Inability to foresee an exit horizon
- viii).** Poor assessment and pricing of risk

This leaves the state and philanthropy as the only source of capital to this sector.

#### **What is required to push the transition of ideas from labs to markets?**

High-impact climate solutions need a range of well-rounded, multi-stage financial and non-financial support from the ecosystem. Five principal elements that need to come together to support innovators and entrepreneurs are:

- i).** R&D and innovation pipeline,
- ii).** Venture incubation infrastructure,

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- iii).** Focussed acceleration platforms,
- iv).** Multi-stage and blended capital pools, and
- v).** Multi-stakeholder partnerships for market access.

To achieve the above goals, a well integrated solution is needed. Having to make do with whatever funding is available, entrepreneurs often end up making wrong choices when it comes to funding sources, instruments and deployment, sometimes negatively influencing their strategic priorities. A more comprehensive, cohesive, patient and hybrid climate fund is needed

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