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7 PM COMPILATION

1st to 15th December, 2021

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Brain drain from India – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

According to the recent information from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), More than six lakh Indians renounced citizenship in the past five years. This year alone, till September 30; 1,11,287 Indians gave up their citizenship. This shows the amount of Brain drain from India.

In the past two decades, there has been a steady and continuous upward drift in the outflow of Indians, barring a brief jolt around the 2008 financial crisis and in 2020-21 due to Covid-19 related travel bans.

With the recent announcement of Parag Agrawal to be Twitter's CEO; Twitter has entered a long list of Tech companies which are headed by Indians who migrated to the US. The list includes Google, Microsoft, Adobe, IBM, Palo Alto Networks among others. This reflects the talent pool of India which is working abroad.

About the status of brain drain from India

The principal destinations for Indian emigrant include the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) affiliated countries, the US, Canada, Australia, the UK and Italy have been some of .

According to a **Global Wealth Migration Review report**, in 2019, India came second only to China when it came to **high net worth individuals (HNIs)** leaving the country. As many as 7,000 HNIs left India in 2019.

The next year (2020) alone, nearly 5,000 millionaires or 2% of the total number of high net-worth individuals in India left the country.

According to a Morgan Stanley report, "35,000 Indian Entrepreneurs of High Net Worth LEFT India between 2014-2020, as NRI/Immigrants. India ranked No 1 in EXODUS IN THE WORLD."

Well-off parents too are sending their children abroad, especially to the USA, Canada and the European Countries. For example, according to recent data collected from high-profile private schools in New Delhi, post-2015 around 70% of their students have moved out of India.

As per OECD data, around 69,000 Indian-trained doctors and 56,000 Indian-trained nurses worked in the UK, US, Canada, and Australia in 2017.

> ***Note***: *In the period 2016-20, 10,645 foreigners applied for Indian citizenship, of which more than 7,782 were from Pakistan and 452 were stateless.*

What are the reasons for brain drain from India?

Push factors for brain drain

Lack of Higher education opportunities: It is one of the major reasons for permanent immigration. Considering the skyrocketing cut-offs for top Indian universities, many students explore higher education abroad. They have an advantage over students from other countries in terms of skills and knowledge.

Both **poverty and prosperity** can lead to emigration. For example, the new international airport planned in Uttar Pradesh will lead to a near-demographic certainty – quicker mass emigration from that region – just as international airports in Kochi, Kannur, Kozhikode and Thiruvanathapuram connected Kerala closer to the Gulf.

Low spending in research: India's Gross domestic expenditure on research has stayed at 0.7% of the GDP for years. India has one of the lowest GERD/GDP ratios among the BRICS nations. So, the talented youth migrate to other countries to prove their talent and continue their research.

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Low Wages: Developed countries offer better wages compared to India. For example, nurses in India receive low wages in private sector outfits. Also, they have only fewer opportunities in the public sector (Low employment due to lower number of hospitals in the public sector). So, they generally migrate to developed countries that offer better wages.

Non-recognition of talents: Despite the citizen's academic or potential achievement, they don't get the same name and fame as film actors and cricketers in India. So, the talented individuals move to better places that recognise and respect their talents.

Pull Factors for brain drain

Better standard of living and life quality: Many developed and GCC countries offer a higher salary, tax benefits, higher standard of living, etc. These act as a pull factor for Indian health care professionals.

Policies of developed countries: Developed countries adopted **migrant-friendly policies** to retain the talented youngsters from India. For instance, France has offered citizenship to frontline immigrant healthcare workers during the pandemic.

Apart from that, the **ageing demography of developed nations** is also a reason.

All this made India a net exporter of Brain.

Why Emigration from India is essential?

1. Emigration from India will provide remittances and skills to Indians, 2. Further, it will contribute immensely to India's IT ecosystem, 3. It will strengthen Indian interests in abroad. For instance, Since 2010, over 10 million Indians have emigrated and the size of the Indian diaspora is now over 30 million. They act as a soft power multiplier for the country, 4. The migration of Indians acts as a network through which both ideas and investment arrive into India.

Read more: What are the implications of Emigration of India's brightest youth?

What measures have been taken by the Government to tackle the brain drain from India?

The Government has launched many programmes to reduce brain drain from India These include,

Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) Programme: The programme aims to attract talented youth to the study of science at an early stage and build the required critical human resource pool for strengthening and expanding the Science & Technology system and R&D base.

The Ramanujan Fellowship: It is meant for brilliant Indian scientists from outside India to take up scientific research positions in India.

The Ramalingaswamy Fellowship: It provides a platform to scientists who are willing to return and work in India.

Vaishvik Bharatiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) summit: Under this, Numerous overseas Indian-origin academicians and Indians participated to form ideas on innovative solutions to several challenges.

Triad of **Scheme for Transformational and Advanced Research in Sciences** (STARS), **Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration** (SPARC) and **Impactful Policy Research in Social Science** (IMPRESS): Common objective is to boost India specific research in social and pure sciences.

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Read more: Brain drain in the health sector – Explained, Pointwise

What must be done to limit brain drain from India?

India must tap the reservoir of talent abroad rather than trying to actively constrain the emigration.

Adequate investment in Cutting edge technologies and research: Government should frame a policy with the aim of increasing total GERD (Gross domestic expenditure on R&D) to 2% of India's GDP. The government has to create more cutting-edge research facilities to bring talented people back to India.

For example, About 20 NRI doctors from the US and Europe relocated to Kolkata to set up the West bank Hospital as it has high-tech equipment and facilities.

Focus on education and employment: India has too few institutions of excellence and of professional studies. No country has gone up the wealth ladder without widespread availability of both good public education and regular, skilled employment. So focus must be on creating institutions of excellence in education and skilling.

Global partnerships in innovation: Global innovation partnerships need to be strengthened by enhancing public-private partnership mechanisms and increased public funds should be earmarked for joint industrial R&D projects.

Idea-to-market challenge: Government needs to create a **special fund** to help Indian innovations to advance their start-ups during difficult times and become successful, instead of moving abroad for employment opportunities.

Read more: What India's student exodus means

It is high time that instead of attracting foreign nationals to work here, India focuses on retaining its brightest minds, who are assisting other countries in achieving technological and economical breakthroughs. So, building a world-class public education infrastructure and coupling it with structural reforms is the only way forward.

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Parliamentary debates: Significance, issues and the way forward – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Parliamentary debates are the cornerstone of a truly vibrant democracy. It's through such tools that a democracy ensures Parliamentary scrutiny of Executive's decisions. Without debate and discussion, a democracy is reduced to a body without soul.

Since independence, Indian Parliament has witnessed thorough, wise and constructive debates over various laws and issues.

But over the years, disruptions rather than debate have become the norm.

A few months back, Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana had expressed his unhappiness at the increased lack of debates in the Indian parliament, and in the State Assemblies.

The lack of debate is particularly evident when most of the 20 Bills cleared in the last Monsoon session (Jul-Aug 2021) of the Parliament were passed only with a voice vote and without any debate.

Let's try and understand this issue in detail.

What is the significance of Parliamentary debates?

– Improving the quality of decisions: Parliamentary debates indirectly contribute to the quality of democratic decisions. Debates involve deliberations over diverse perspectives which enable selection of most widely accepted views. The very existence of debates can be seen as a system for monitoring elected officials.

– Raising issues of public interest: It allows MPs to voice the concerns and interests of their constituents, and they can also speak about issues brought to their attention by the public.

– Reduces the burden on Courts: Parliamentary debates help the courts to comprehend the intent and object of the laws in a better way. The burden of the courts while interpreting or implementing the laws is less. They have a clear picture of the purpose behind the making of a particular law and what the legislature thought while making the law.

– Accountability: The Opposition performs its duties of holding the government accountable via Parliamentary debates and discussions. These debates help to implement the accountability process, forcing ministers to speak, to listen to criticisms and to answer them.

What are the rules and frameworks regarding debates?

Parliament's extensive framework presents many opportunities for robust debate, discussion, and dissent.

– During the **Question Hour**, key data on the operations of the government is up for public scrutiny.

– Adjournment Motions allow members to propose urgent topics of national interest which, if admitted by the Speaker, are discussed and debated in lieu of any other agenda of the House.

– The **process of passing a Bill,** is also a powerful tool for MPs to represent diverse interests.

Rules:

– Since 1952, the rules required MPs not to interrupt speeches of others, maintain silence, and not obstruct proceedings during debates.

– Newer forms of protest led to the updating of these rules in 1989. Now members should not shout slogans, display placards, tear away documents in protest, play cassettes, or tape recorders in the House. In practice, all these rules are disobeyed frequently.

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What has been the trend with respect to the Parliamentary debates?

Presently, both Houses sit for an average of **67 days annually**.

– Compare this to the First, Second, and Third Lok Sabha (1952- 1967), when they sat for an average of **120 days annually.**

– As per a PRS report, the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19) lost 16% of its scheduled time to disruptions, better than the 15th Lok Sabha (37%), but worse than the 14th Lok Sabha (13%).

The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution recommended that **Lok Sabha should have at least 120 sittings in a year**. **Rajya Sabha should have 100 sittings.**

What are the issues/challenges hindering the debates?

– Parliamentary disruption: Disruption in Parliamentary debates has become a frequent phenomenon these days. The amount of time lost due to disruptions in Parliament has also steadily risen from 5% of working time in the truncated 11th Lok Sabha (1996-97) to 39% in the 15th LS (2009-14).

– Disorderly conduct by MPs: Members of Parliament often indulge in disorderly conduct, disrupting the proceedings due to various reasons like, **1)** dissatisfaction because of inadequate time for airing their grievances, **2)** an unresponsive attitude of the government and the retaliatory posture of the treasury benches, **3)** political parties not adhering to parliamentary norms and disciplining their members, **4)** The absence of prompt action against disrupting MPs under the legislature's rules.

Recently, 12 Opposition members of the Rajya Sabha were suspended for the entire winter session for their protest on August 11, the last day of the previous monsoon session.

– Politics by parties: Whenever a controversial issue comes up, the government backs away on debating it, leading to Opposition MPs violating the conduct rules and disrupting the proceedings of Parliament. Since they have the support of their parties in breaking the rules, the threat of suspension from the House does not deter them.

What are the implications of lack of debates in the Parliament?

Lack of Parliamentary debates has the following implications:

– There is **lack of proper clarity in the laws**. Legislations with a lot of gaps and a lot of ambiguities are passed. The purpose of the laws is not clear to the courts, creating a lot of litigation, inconvenience, and loss to the government as well as to the public.

– Shorter Parliamentary sessions due to frequent adjournments and leniency in the scrutiny of the Bills **diminishes Parliament's efficiency.** Without debates, Members of Parliament will not be able to demand answers to critical questions or discuss vital issues with supplementary queries.

– Disenchantment of the people: Lack of debate and deliberation on important bills and laws means people have started to get disenchanted with the Parliamentary process as a whole. They are also disappointed in the MPs for their non-performance.

– The absence of the debates **leaves the Government unchecked,** wherein it can pass any legislation as per its desire and without discussion.

– Impact on the Constitutional Right: The right to ask questions flows from **Article 75** of Indian Constitution. It says that the Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the House of the People and people of the country in general. So a lack of debate in the Parliament infringes upon this right.

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What is the way forward?

There have been many suggestions:

– A concept of no work, no pay could be adopted for members. But this would affect only members who depend on their salary.

– Embrace the Shadow Cabinet model, like in the UK. It is for the political parties to ensure responsible behaviour of their members, whether in the opposition or the ruling party.

– The opposition parties should have the opportunity to debate and highlight the significant issues. Currently, government business takes priority, and private members discuss their topics post-lunch on a Friday. The country can **introduce the concept of opposition days, as done in the U.K and Canada.**

– Parliament Disruption Index: In 2019, Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman suggested evolving a 'Parliamentary Disruption Index' as a measure to monitor disruptions to reduce "incidents of indiscipline".

– A **code of conduct for members** to minimise disruptions, especially relating to suspension for entering and protesting in the well of the House.

Frequent disruptions reflect the nature of Indian democracy as being dysfunctional. Thus, there is a need to **strengthen the working of the Indian parliament.**

Conclusion

Parliamentary debates should not be viewed as a distraction or waste of time. They are a barometer of public mood and must be respected as such, by both the ruling side and the Opposition. The essence of democracy is letting others express their opinions, however unacceptable we may find them.

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Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Recently, Lok Sabha has passed the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021. The ART Regulation Bill aims to regulate and supervise assisted reproductive technology clinics and banks, prevent misuse of the technology and promote the ethical practice of the services.

What is Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)?

Assisted Reproductive Technology(ART) includes medical procedures used primarily to address infertility. It includes fertility treatments that handle both a woman's egg and a man's sperm. Examples of ART services include gamete (sperm or oocyte) donation, in-vitro-fertilisation (fertilising an egg in the lab) and gestational surrogacy (the child is not biologically related to the surrogate mother).

Salient features of the ART (Regulation) Bill, 2021

Definition of ART: Under the Bill, ART will include all techniques that attempt to obtain a pregnancy by handling the sperm or the oocyte (immature egg cell) outside the human body, and transferring the gamete or the embryo into the reproductive system of a woman.

Setting up of ART Banks: The Bill defines an ART bank as an organisation set up to supply sperm or semen, oocytes, or oocyte donors to ART clinics or their patients.

Regulation of ART Clinics: The Bill provides for the establishment of the National Registry of Clinics and Banks, which will act as a central database for details of all the clinics and banks in the country. The Registry will grant registration to ART clinics which will be valid for five years and can be renewed for a further five years. Registration may be cancelled or suspended if the entity contravenes the provisions of the Bill.

National and State Boards: The Bill also provides for the establishment of National and State Boards for Surrogacy for the regulation of ART services. The National Board shall advise the Central Government on policy matters relating to assisted reproductive technology.

Rules for ART service providers: ART procedures can only be carried out with the written informed consent of both the person seeking ART services as well as the gamete donor.

Rights of a Child Born through ART: The Bill provides that the child born through assisted reproductive technology shall be deemed to be a biological child of the commissioning couple and the said child shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges available to a natural child only from the commissioning couple under any law for the time being in force.

Pre-implant testing: The Bill mandates that pre-implantation genetic testing shall be used to screen the embryo for known, pre-existing, heritable, or genetic diseases. The National Board will lay down conditions on pre-implantation testing.

Offences: Offences under the bill include clinics offering sex selection, abandoning or exploiting children born through ART, the selling, buying, or importing of human embryos and exploiting the couple or donors concerned in any form. Proposed jail terms for violations range from five to 12 years, and fines from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 25 lakh.

What are the regulations on the use and sourcing of gametes and embryos?

1. A woman cannot be treated with gametes or embryos derived from more than one man or woman during one treatment cycle, 2. A clinic cannot mix semen from two individuals for the procedures, 3. The embryos shall not be split and used for twinning to increase the number, 5. The gamete or embryo of a donor shall be stored for a period of not more than 10 years.

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Apart from that, there will be regulations for the harvest of oocytes or embryos. For instance, an oocyte donor shall be an ever-married woman and have at least one live child with a minimum age of three years. Further, she can donate oocytes only once in her lifetime, and not more than seven oocytes are to be retrieved from her.

What is the need for the ART Regulation Bill?

Growth of ART: A market projection (by Fortune Business Insights) said the size of the ART market is expected to reach $45 billion by 2026. Among Asian countries, India's ART market is pegged at third position.

Undoubtedly, this also led to a plethora of legal, social and ethical issues. The bill is important to protect the affected women and children from exploitation. Further, about 80% of ART clinics in India are not registered. So, to control unethical practices, regulation of ART is essential.

Recommendation of the select committee of the Parliament: The select committee that examined the **Surrogacy Regulation Bill** has said that it would be prudent to bring the ART Bill before the Surrogacy Bill to establish a regulatory mechanism for ART clinics.

Note: Surrogacy is an infertility treatment where a third person is involved and that third person, a woman, will be the surrogate mother. In ART, it is not always necessary that a third person is involved.
Read more: **Challenges associated with the Surrogacy Regulation Bill**

What are the advantages of the ART Regulation Bill?

Standardising the ART practices: India does not have standard protocols of ART clinics yet. The passage of the bill will ensure the standard practice of ART across India.

Prevent the exploitation of patients: The bill has provisions to protect the rights of the donors, the commissioning couple and the children born out of ART. So, it will be impossible for outlaws to operate within the system and exploit patients to make huge profits.

Safeguard reproductive rights: Without registration and a proper database of medical institutions and clinics providing ART services, it is impossible to regulate services like surrogacy and **Medical Termination of Pregnancy**. So, the ART regulation Bill will aid other related legislations and facilitate reproductive rights.

What are the challenges associated with the ART Regulation Bill?

The ART Bill has the following challenges,

–**Not Inclusive**: Bill doesn't include lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people (LGBTQ) or single men (the Bill includes single women) for exercising the right of ART,

–**Not Supporting the poor**: As ART procedures are expensive, the bill does not have any provision for availing ART technologies for poor and marginalised sections.

So, the bill violates **Article 14** (equality before law and equal protection of law) of the Constitution.

–**Multiple bodies**: Both ART and Surrogacy Bills aim to set up multiple bodies, that might result in duplication or lack of regulation.

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What should the government do?

Make the bill inclusive: The Bill has to include LGBTQIA+ and single men into the ambit. Further, the ART service providers have to form inbuilt ethics committees and mandated counselling services within their facility.

Regulate costs: The cost of the procedure should be effectively monitored so that even the poor can avail of its services. Further, the government can initiate ART facilities in select government hospitals to help poor and marginalised sections.

Consider the Surrogacy bill and ART bill together: Surrogacy Bill that is intrinsically connected with the ART Bill was pending in the Rajya Sabha. It would be appropriate if both Bills be considered together before they are passed. So the government has to consider them together.

In conclusion, all the constitutional, ethical, medico-legal and regulatory concerns must be thoroughly addressed before passing the ART Regulation Bill.

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Dam Safety Bill, 2019 – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Recently, the Rajya Sabha has passed the landmark Dam Safety Bill (2019) paving the way for the enactment of the Dam Safety Act in the country. The Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha in August 2019.

The bill looks at Dam Safety holistically and provides for not only structural aspects but also operational and maintenance efficacy through the prescription of strict Operation and Maintenance (O & M) protocols.

What is the need for the Dam Safety Bill?

Status of dams in India: At present, India is the 3rd largest dam-owning nation in the world, after China and USA. There are around 5,700 large dams in the country, of which about 80% are already over 25 years old. Nearly 227 dams that are over 100 years old are still functional.

Read more: [The rising concern of India's ageing dams](#)

Although India's track record of dam safety is at par with that of the developed nations, there have been instances of unwarranted dam failures and of poor maintenance issues. This is evident from the high incidence of dam-related mishaps taking a heavy toll on life, property, and infrastructure. There have been well **over 40 grave dam failures on record**, the latest being the Rishiganga dam in Uttarakhand in February this year, which caused landslides and large-scale devastation.

No legal and institutional safeguards: The Central Water Commission, through the National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS), Central Dam Safety Organization (CDSO) and State Dam Safety Organizations (SDSO) has been making constant endeavours to protect the dams. But they do not have any statutory powers and their suggestions are only advisory in nature.

Long-felt need: Dams have played a key role in fostering rapid and sustained agricultural growth and development in India. So, there has been a long-felt need for a uniform law and administrative structure for ensuring dam safety.

Dams and their infra is old: India, ranked third in the world, next to the US and China, in terms of the number of large dams, badly needed such a law as many of them have surpassed their rated age. Close to 300 of the 5,745 large dams are **over 100 years old** and more than 1,000 others have crossed 50 years, the threshold after which they require special care. Most of the older dams, being non-concrete structures made of mud and other locally available material, are susceptible to breaches and breaks, especially due to excessive rainfall, earthquakes, and other natural disasters. Increase in the frequency of extreme weather events as a consequence of climate change has worsened the threat to these dams.

Aim of the Dam Safety Bill

To provide for adequate surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of all the large dams in the country to prevent dam failure related disasters.

To provide for an institutional mechanism at both Central and State levels to address structural and non-structural measures required for ensuring the safe functioning of dams.

The measure essentially aims at giving the Centre a role in ensuring the physical wellbeing of large dams.

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Salient provisions of the Dam Safety Bill

It seeks to assist the states in adopting uniform dam safety procedures involving regular surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of all dams **more than 15 metres in height**.

National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS): It will be constituted to help evolve uniform dam safety policies, protocols, and procedures. The committee will be chaired by the Chairperson, **Central Water Commission**.

National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA): It will be a regulatory body for ensuring the nationwide implementation of dam safety policies and standards.

State Committees on Dams: At the State level, the Bill prescribes for the constitution of State Committees on Dam Safety (SCDS) and State Dam Safety Organizations (SDSO). These bodies will be responsible for the surveillance, inspection and monitoring of the operation and maintenance of dams within their jurisdiction.

Dam Safety Units: The Bill provides for the constitution of **dam safety units** to inspect the structures before and after the monsoon; after earthquakes, floods, and other calamities; and on the appearance of any signs of distress. These units would also be responsible for carrying out risk assessment studies and preparing emergency action plans in consultation with technical experts.

Hazard classification: The Bill provides for regular inspection and hazard classification of dams. It also provides for drawing up emergency action plans and comprehensive dam safety reviews by an independent panel of experts. There is provision for an emergency flood warning system to address the safety concerns of downstream inhabitants.

The obligation of Dam Owners: Dam owners are required to provide resources for timely repair and maintenance of the dam structure along with related machinery.

Penal Provisions: The Bill has penal provisions involving offences and penalties, for ensuring compliance with the provisions.

Read more: About provisions of dams safety bill, 2019

What are the advantages of the Dam Safety Bill?

Uniform dam procedures: The Bill will help all the States and Union Territories of India to adopt uniform dam safety procedures. These procedures will not only protect the dams but also human life, livestock and property.

Prevent dam failures: Currently, 447 dams are under construction in India. India has had 42 dam failures in the past. So, a badly maintained, unsafe dam can be a hazard to human life, flora and fauna, public and private assets and the environment. The bill aims to prevent these failures.

Read more: China's plans for new dams on Brahmaputra River- Explained, Pointwise

What are the challenges associated with the Dam Safety Bill?

1. **Water is a state subject**: Many states view the Dam safety bill as encroaching upon the States domain to manage their dams, and violating the principles of federalism enshrined in the Constitution.

2. **Huge workload**: National Dam Safety Authority will have to look after more than 5,000 dams across all over India. So it will face a huge workload.

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3. **Reduced representation**: National committee on dam safety which exist more than 30 years has a representation of 18 states. On the other hand, the Bill says that seven states by rotation will be represented.

4. Though the bill focussed on operational safety, the bill is heavily focused on structural safety and not on operational safety, 5. The bill provides inadequate compensation to the people affected by dams, 6. Though the bill provides for a regulator, that regulator is not independent.

Read more: [**Link between Dam and Natural disasters – Explained Pointwise**](#)

What should the government do?

Dam safety is dependent on many external factors. So, the government has to **consult environmentalists and take the environmental angle** for the Dam Safety Bill.

The government should consider the **selection of a dam on the basis of age**, as this is the major issue.

The government has to **strengthen the functioning and coordination of state irrigation departments and the Central Water Commission**.

Considering climate change, the government has to think about the issue of water carefully and proactively. So, **local factors, such as climate and catchment areas**, need to be taken into consideration. Further, there is a need to **integrate urban-rural planning with dam safety**.

A Standing Committee recommended a **penal provision for dam failures** on authorities. The government has to incorporate this into law. Along with that, the government has to **increase the capacity building of locals and associated institutions**.

The construction of a dam is not a disaster, but the mismanagement and poor planning of the dam is a disaster that affects all of us in a severe manner. So, the government must consider the issue of dam safety holistically and avoid building large dams for political gains in fragile regions.

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Web 3.0: The future of internet? – Explained, pointwise

Web 3.0 has emerged as a new tech buzzword. The term incorporates a bunch of next-gen ideas, all pointing towards elimination of the dominance of the big tech companies over the internet.

Some see Web 3.0 as the future of the internet, while some caution against being overtly optimistic about what it can potentially deliver.

Let's take a deep dive into the topic.

What is Web 3.0?
Web 3.0 is the next version of the internet, where services will **run on blockchain**. It is a **decentralised internet** that runs on a public blockchain, which is also used for cryptocurrency transactions.

WHAT'S WEB 3.0?

■ Hailed as the third version of the internet

■ Simplistically, it can be described as Internet on blockchain

■ MAIN IDEA: Have decentralised ownership

■ Requires a complete overhaul in regulatory thinking

■ Global rise of cryptocurrencies, non-fungible tokens (NFT) forming the base for rise of Web3

It will be permissionless and democratic. **For instance:** Twitter will not be able to censor posts and Facebook will not be able to maintain a database of billions of users that can be potentially used to influence elections.

In a Web 3.0 universe, people will control their own data and will be able to move around from social media to email to shopping using a single personalized account, creating a public record on the blockchain of all of that activity.

All **data will be interconnected** in a decentralized way, unlike the current generation of the internet (Web 2.0), where data is mostly stored in centralized repositories.

– Three key features of Web 3.0 are: **Ubiquity, Semantic Web, Artificial Intelligence** and **3D Graphics.**

– **Examples of Web 3.0**: The most recent example of Web 3.0 are the NFTs or non-fungible tokens.

Evolution of the World Wide Web
Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, intended that the internet would be a collaborative medium, a place where all meet and read and write.

But the current situation is entirely opposite, with big tech companies acting as gatekeepers to all that's on the World Wide Web (W3).

Here's how the W3 evolved to this point:

– **Web 1.0 [1990 – 2000]**: It is regarded as the first generation of the World Wide Web. Also known as the **Syntactic web** or **Read only web.** Mostly, Web 1.0 was limited to searching the info and reading what's already there. There was very little in the way of user interaction or

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content contribution. It was pretty disorganized and overwhelming, and soon it came to be dominated by AOL, Compuserve, early Yahoo and other portals. These online service providers were the gateway to Web 1.0.

– Web 2.0 [from mid-2000s]: This phase was characterised by enhanced user experience and made the W3 interactive. Also known as **Social Web** or **read-write web**. It enabled users to participate in content creation on social networks, blogs, sharing sites and more. Search engines (Google) and social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter) driven by user-generated content disrupted the media, advertising and retail industries. Web 2.0's business model relies on user participation to create fresh content and the resultant data being sold to third parties for marketing purposes.

– Web 3.0 [yet to arrive]: It is the next stage of the web evolution. It would make the internet more intelligent, or process information with near-human-like intelligence through the power of AI systems.

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THREE STAGES OF INTERNET CONSUMPTION

	Web1	Web2	Web3
Time period*	1990-2005	2005-till date	2021 -
Where data is stored	Server's file system	On-premise/Cloud	Blockchain, distributed across multiple networks
Examples	Static web pages	User generated content like Social media, and web applications like e-commerce etc...	NFTs, cryptocurrency transaction
Who owns data	Companies running the webpages	Companies that host application, cloud service providers	No one owns the data
Transacting	No transaction possible	Payment gateways for currency transactions	Transaction happens using crypto tokens

Source: *A16Z blog on Web3, Geeks for Geeks, media reports

moneycontrol

Source: moneycontrol

Why we need Web 3.0?

Loss of privacy: Presently, a huge amount of data is generated when consumers search, shop or upload videos and pictures. All this data is stored in the servers of the companies that the people interact with. This means that intermediaries become custodians of user data and profit from it via advertising. For such companies, the more time consumers spend creating content, the more data the company can collect, helping it to improve its AI algorithm and its advertising engine, a key revenue model for the company.

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This gives rise to issues of privacy, wherein user data is shared for profit without their consent.
Data ownership: Presently, only centralized repositories are the ones that own user data and profit from it. In Web 3.0, users can own and be properly compensated for their time and data.
Plagiarism: Plagiarism is widespread online. It's very easy to copy original content and build a following around it on social media. Those who copy content get compensated way more than the original content creator. Plagiarism makes it harder for creators to get adequately compensated. Web3 might help address that issue. The transparent nature of blockchain makes it easy for anyone to track the originator of content.

What are the key differences between Web 2.0 and Web 3.0?

Any information that users share on Web 2.0 is stored with a **cloud service provider** used by an online service, whether it is food delivery or e-commerce, whereas in Web3, all services are built on top of a **blockchain**.
Cloud is controlled by giants such as Amazon, Google and Microsoft, and is centralised. In the case of blockchain, data is distributed across networks and no single entity owns the information.

Are Metaverse and Web 3.0 interrelated?

No. Both are not correlated. The **metaverse** is about creating digital avatars and interacting with others in virtual spaces, be it offices or arcades. It does not have to be on a blockchain.
The whole point of Web 3.0 is decentralisation.

What are the implications of Web 3.0?

Choice over personal data: In Web 3.0, instead of data residing in the centralised databases of big companies, it is going to reside on the blockchain technology which is not controlled by one organisation. And with that, a person's data becomes their choice, and which advertiser they want to give it to.
Impact on big tech companies: Web 3.0 adoption will force the big tech companies to rethink their core business models and become more community-owned and driven. The big tech firms are already experimenting with different aspects of this new technology.
New regulatory environment: Regulation of Web 3.0 requires a new regulatory thinking. Authoritarian govts might seek to capture the new technology while eliminating private competition. **For instance**, **China** began researching digital money in 2014. It plans to force its exclusive use at the cost of privacy, freedom, and political dissent.
While some countries may seek to force Web 3.0 innovations into compliance with familiar legal structures. **For instance**: India is also looking at regulating cryptocurrencies under SEBI.

Where is India in Web 3.0?

The idea is fairly new to India and will take time to develop.
– Indian TikTok rival Chingari recently shifted from a Web 2.0 model of incentives for content creators to a Web 3.0 model. The start-up raised over $19 million in October 2021, that will help it build its token called '$GARI' on the Solana blockchain.
– A range of Indian start-ups like **Biconomy, Polygon, EPNS, Persistence,** and **Vauld** are working to put together the technological building blocks to make Web 3.0's mass adoption a reality. **Polygon**, crossed a market capitalisation of $10 billion recently.
By one estimate, Web 3.0 can help India contribute an **additional $1.1 trillion of economic growth** to its GDP over the next 11 years.

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What is the way forward for India?

Web 3.0 will not be perfect. Risks such as capture of communities by specific groups, inadequate grievance redressal, misuse for illegal activities, and entry of fraudulent actors may emerge. It is, therefore, **necessary for the governments to act.**

This means that **Govt must acknowledge the potential of web 3.0** in empowering startups, small digital businesses, and consumers, and creating an enabling environment to help realize such potential.

It also means **reaching out, listening, and genuinely engaging with stakeholders** to understand the potential, risks and challenges of web 3.0.

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) can lay down overarching principles for governing 3.0, with a focus on self and co-regulation. Knee-jerk reactions such as outright bans should be avoided, and nuanced risk-based regulations will be essential.

Through such principle-based governance, the Govt can transform India into a hub for development of web 3.0 ecosystem and grab the first mover advantage.

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Recent developments in India-Russia Relations – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Recently, 21st India – Russia Annual summit took place. The Joint Statement titled 'India-Russia: Partnership for Peace, Progress and Prosperity' noted, "The completion of 5 decades of the 1971 Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation and 2 decades of Declaration on Strategic Partnership is proof for long-standing and time-tested India-Russia relations."

Further, the first meeting of the 2+2 Dialogue of Foreign and Defence Ministers and the meeting of the Inter-Governmental Commission on Military & Military-Technical Cooperation also took place. These underline the development of India-Russia Relations.

Note: The tradition of the annual India-Russia summit was launched in 2000 during the Premiership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Until now, India has held a 2+2 format of meetings with member nations of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) — the US, Japan and Australia.

About the discussions of 21st India – Russia Annual summit

The leaders underscored the need for greater economic cooperation and emphasized on new drivers of growth for the long term, predictable and sustained economic cooperation.

The leader's highlighted the role of connectivity through the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** and the proposed **Chennai – Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor**.

Regarding Afghanistan: The leaders discussed regional and global developments, including the post-pandemic global economic recovery, and the situation in Afghanistan. They agreed that both countries share common perspectives and concerns on Afghanistan and appreciated the bilateral roadmap charted out at the NSA level for consultation and cooperation on Afghanistan.

Regarding international cooperation: The summit noted that India and Russia share common positions on many international issues and agreed to further strengthen cooperation at multilateral fora, including at the **UN Security Council**.

Regarding defence: Both agreed on joint manufacturing in India of spare parts, components, aggregates and other products for the maintenance of Russian-origin arms and defence equipment under the Make-in-India program through the transfer of technology and setting up of joint ventures for meeting the needs of the Indian Armed Forces as well as subsequent export to mutually friendly third countries.

Both the Indian PM and Russian President expressed satisfaction at the sustained progress in the 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership' on India-Russia Relations, despite the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic.

Outcomes of recent India Russia Summit

Both sides concluded 28 agreements, including 9 government-to-government agreements. They spanned in areas of defence, space, finance, power, culture, scientific research, education and health among others.

The prominent ones are (1). Renewed the military-technical cooperation agreement for another 10 years till 2031, (2). India and Russia signed the deal for the manufacture of Ak-203 assault rifles manufacture of nearly 6 lakh AK-203 rifles under a joint venture in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh. Further, Russia dropped the royalty to be charged in the deal, 3. Fossil fuel imports from Russia, including coking coal for India's steel industry, investments by Vostok Oil have been renewed and broadened.

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Further, Russia has begun the deliveries of the **S-400 long range air defence systems**, the shipments will arrive in the next 10 days.

But a bilateral logistics support deal Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS), as well as a Navy to Navy cooperation agreement, was put off.

Note: *The 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit in 2022 will occur in Russia.*

Areas of cooperation in India-Russia Relations

On defence: Russia is the key and principal supplier of arms and armaments to the Indian armed forces, accounting for over 60% of weapons. It comprises the whole gamut covering the Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Navy. India recently inducted the S-400 Triumf missile systems. **BrahMos missile**, Sukhoi Su-30 fighter aircraft, T-90 tanks, and the Talwar and the Krivak class stealth frigates are some prominent ones.

Bilateral trade: The two countries trade in diverse sectors from defence and energy to IT, pharmaceuticals, agro-industries, mineral and metallurgy, fertilizers, and infrastructure projects. India-Russia trade was valued at the U.S.$10.11 billion in 2019–20, but that is not a true reflection of the potential.

Civil nuclear energy relations: India and Russia jointly developed Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP). Both signed agreements on the construction of **12 nuclear power plants** in India during the coming decades.

Space relations: 2015 marked the **40th Anniversary** of the launch of India's first satellite "Aryabhatt" on a Russian launch vehicle 'Soyuz.' Russia also signed an agreement to **train Indian astronauts** for India's first manned space mission(**Gaganyaan Project**).

What are the challenges in India-Russia relationships?

The rapid expansion of India-US relations: This is one of the most cited reasons for strain in India-Russia relations. The development of India US defence cooperation has been rapid since 2008. For instance, India signed all the Foundational agreements with the US such as **LEMOA**, **COMCASA**, **BECA**.

The closer proximity of Russia towards China: China-Russian ties are growing due to their shared interest in opposing the US. The intense geostrategic rivalry between China and the US in the region has brought Russia and China closer. This is evident as Russia joined the **Chinese One Belt One Road** initiative.

On the other hand, India is facing border tensions and geopolitical rivalry across the Asia region with China.

Russia's increased engagement with Pakistan. Russia has been involved in a few projects in Pakistan, and has increased its military cooperation with Pakistan.

How to shape the India-Russia relationship further?

India and Russia need to **work together in a trilateral manner** (involving a third partner) or **using other flexible frameworks**, particularly in Southeast Asia and Central Asia. Their growing collaboration can be a force of stability and will bring more diversity to the region while strengthening multilateralism. The involvement of India and Russia in the **Rooppur nuclear plant project** in **Bangladesh** is one such example.

Focus on Eurasia: India and Russia have to explore their opportunities in the Eurasian region. India can study the possibility of expanding Russia's idea of an "**extensive Eurasian partnership"** involving the EAEU (**Eurasian Economic Union**) and China, India, Pakistan, and Iran.

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Need to look at peoples' power: Both nations need to focus on youth exchanges and deeper links in various fields including sport, culture, spiritual and religious studies. For instance, Buddhism can be an area where both countries can expand their interaction.

CAATSA waiver: US Congress has created a "**CAATSA waiver**" for close partners. The US president can determine whether to exercise that waiver or not. India should push the US to provide such waivers to India.

India has to **utilise the scientific and technological base** in Russia to address the problems it faces. Further, India must take advantage of Russia's capacity in helping India to become self-sufficient in Defence.

In conclusion, India should pursue an independent foreign policy to balance its special global strategic partnership with the US and special and privileged strategic partnership with Russia.

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Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Recently, the army operation resulted in the tragic death of 14 civilians in Nagaland, due to mistaken identity as insurgents. According to a report from Kohima, the government agreed to compensate the victims, but the incident led to the protest against the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) once again in the region.

Read more: Nagaland killings should prompt a broad rethink

Nagaland Chief Minister also criticised the Union Government for extending the "**disturbed area**" tag for Nagaland every year.

Note: *In June 2021, the Ministry of Home Affairs had declared the entire State of Nagaland as a "disturbed area" for six more months under the AFSPA.*

About the AFSPA

AFSPA was **first promulgated in 1942, by Linlithgow, in response to the Quit India movement in 1942**. Its aim was "to confer special powers upon certain officers of the armed forces.

After Independence, the Act was retained by the ordinance enacted in 1958, to control increasing violence in the North-eastern States, which the State governments found difficult to control. In simple terms, AFSPA gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in "disturbed areas".

What is a "disturbed area" under AFSPA?

According to Section 3 of the AFSPA, an area can be declared disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language, or regional groups or castes or communities.

The Central Government or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.

Powers given to armed forces under AFSPA

The armed forces have the following powers in the disturbed area,

-Authority to prohibit a gathering of five or more persons in an area,

-Can use force or even open fire after giving due warning if armed forces feel a person is in contravention of the law.

-Can arrest a person without a warrant, enter or search premises without a warrant, and ban the possession of firearms.

Read more: All about AFSPA

What is the need for AFSPA?

Better counterinsurgency in border areas: Northeast India is an area of immense geostrategic importance, which shares boundaries with five countries, including Myanmar and China. It is important that the insurgency situation is brought under control. So, the Act gives security forces sweeping powers of arrest and to continue counterinsurgency operations without getting any hesitation.

Further, Security forces are not charged for their actions because to protect the morale and integrity of the army.

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So, the Army is of the opinion that the Act helps to control insurgency operations and protect the borders.

What are the criticisms against AFSPA?

India is the **only country in the world** where there is no war, and yet an **emergency martial law was in force**. According to **Michel Foucault**, AFSPA is a 'technology of killing' as per the form of 'bio power'. The Act provides the security personnel with **absolute powers without accountability**. This leads to various issues.

In 2013, the Supreme Court appointed **Hegde Commission**. The commission found that all seven deaths in the six cases it investigated were **extrajudicial executions**. The commission also said that the AFSPA was widely **abused by security forces** in Manipur. This commission report applies to other areas where the AFSPA is in force.

Human rights violations: In over 20 years, the Centre has denied prosecution sanctions under AFSPA in all cases recommended by the J&K government against army men.

Till today, no security personnel involved in serious criminal offences in the Northeast has been charged or put behind bars. This is a violation of Human Rights under the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**.

> ***Note***: *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of indigenous people.*

What should be done?

Respect the recommendation of various committees

Justice BP Jeevan Reddy committee: In 2004, the Central government appointed a five-member committee headed by Justice BP Jeevan Reddy to review the provisions of the AFSPA in the northeastern states.

The committee recommended a). Repeal of AFSPA and inserting the appropriate provisions in the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967**. b). UAPA should clearly specify the powers of the armed forces and paramilitary forces, c). Grievance cells should be set up in each district where the armed forces are deployed.

The 5th report of the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission** on public order has also recommended the repeal of the AFSPA.

The reports of the **Justice Verma Committee (2013)** and the **Justice Hegde Commission (2013)** supported the need to address the abuses committed under the AFSPA and end the effective impunity enjoyed by security forces.

So, the government should **either repeal the Act or ensure accountability** of the Armed forces.

Other necessary reforms

Human Rights violations of the Army are the biggest threat to its credibility. So, the Army should put details of all court-martials held with respect to human rights violations under AFSPA in the public domain.

Further, the Government should try to resolve the long-running insurgency in North-Eastern states through dialogue with insurgent groups.

In conclusion, the task of the armed forces is to protect the boundaries of a nation from external aggression, and not to kill unarmed citizens nor operate in civilian areas. So, the removal of the Act will demonstrate **we are equal citizens of an equal country**, hence the government should think of repealing the AFSPA.

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Interlinking of Rivers Project in India – Explained, Pointwise

Introduction

The funding and implementation of the Ken-Betwa river inter-linking project, a part of **national river linking project (NRLP),** has been approved by the Union Cabinet at a cost of ₹44,605 crore.

The Ken-Betwa project has the status of a **national project**, as the Centre will contribute 90% of the cost. It is also the **first major centrally-driven** river interlinking project in the country.
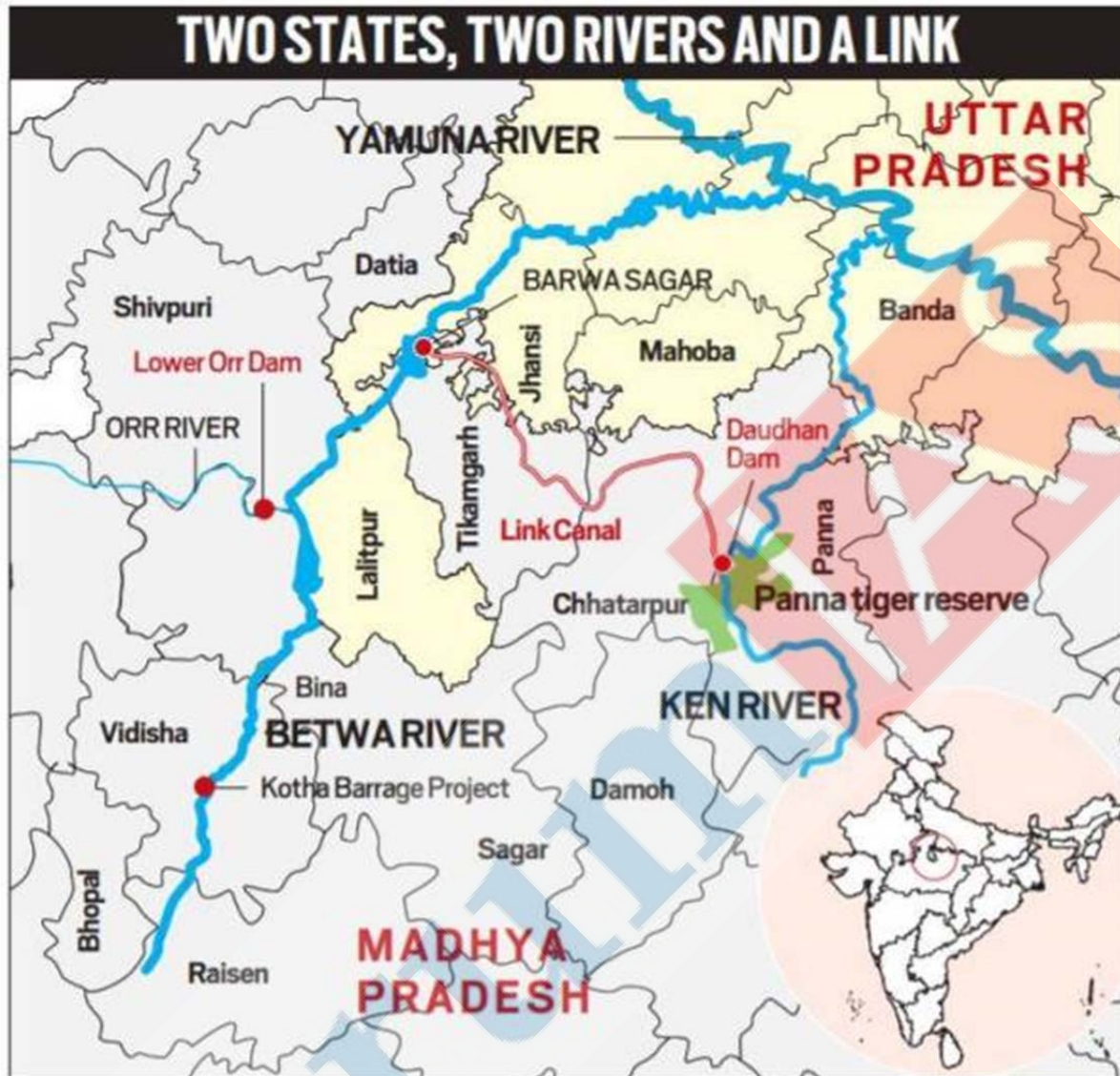
The project will pave the way for more interlinking of river projects in India.

With the process of creating the National Interlinking of Rivers Authority (NIRA) set in motion by the Centre, the topic of river interlinking merits a detailed discussion.

First, let us know more about the Ken-Betwa project.

About Ken-Betwa river interlinking project

The project involves transferring of water from the Ken river to the Betwa river through the construction of Daudhan dam and a 221-km canal linking the two rivers. Both these rivers are **tributaries of river Yamuna.**

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Source: Indian Express

A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) called **Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority (KBLPA)** will be set up to implement the project. The project has a deadline of eight years.
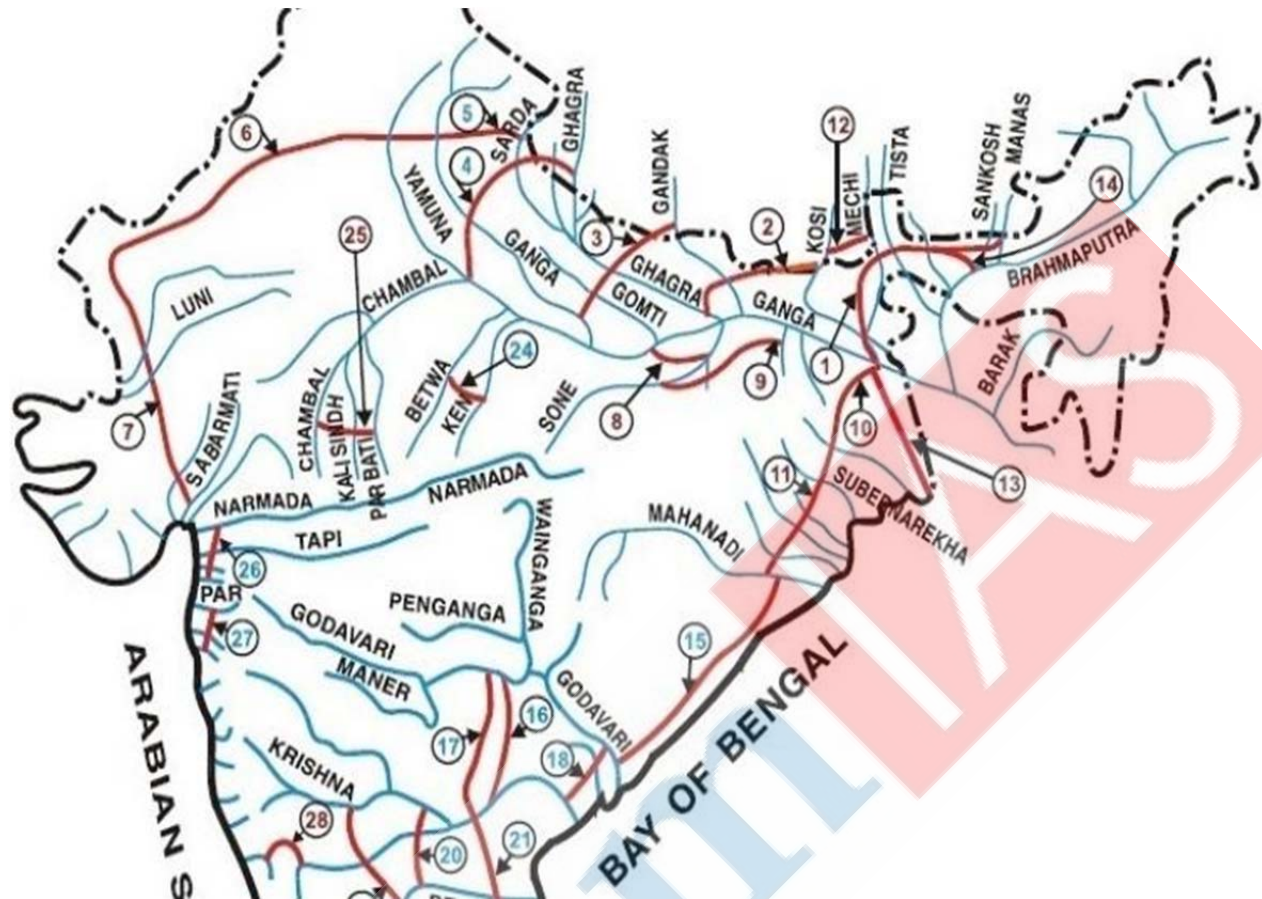
This project also comprehensively provides for **environment management and safeguards.** For this purpose, a comprehensive landscape management plan is under finalization by Wildlife Institute of India.

– For more on Ken-Betwa project: Read **here**

What is the National River Linking Project (NRLP)?

NRLP, formerly known as the **National Perspective Plan**, proposes to connect **14 Himalayan** and **16 peninsular rivers** with 30 canals and 3,000 reservoirs to form a gigantic **South Asian Water Grid**.

The initial plan to interlink India's rivers came in 1858 from a British irrigation engineer, *Sir Arthur Thomas Cotton.*

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Source: NIH

NRLP includes two components:

– Himalayan component: This component aims to construct storage reservoirs on the Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers, as well as their tributaries in India and Nepal. It will connect, **1)** the Ganga and Brahmaputra basins to the Mahanadi basin, and **2)** the Eastern tributaries of the Ganga with the Sabarmati and Chambal river systems.

– Peninsular component: It includes 16 links that propose to connect the rivers of South India. It envisages linking, **1)** the Mahanadi and Godavari to feed the Krishna, Pennar, Cauvery, and Vaigai rivers, **2)** the Ken river to the Betwa, Parbati, Kalisindh, and Chambal rivers, **3)** West-flowing rivers to the south of Tapi to the north of Bombay, and **4)** Linking some west-flowing rivers to east-flowing rivers.

The NRLP is managed by **National Water Development Agency (NWDA)** under the Ministry of Jal Shakti. NWDA was set up in 1982, to conduct surveys and see how feasible proposals for interlinking river projects are.

Recently, it has been reported that the Centre is deliberating on **creation of a [National River Interlinking Authority (NIRA)]**. It will have powers to set up SPV for individual link projects.

What is the rationale behind interlinking of rivers?

As per the govt, the project is needed to meet increasing water requirement in the country.

Core idea: Overall, the NRLP envisions the **transfer of water** from **water 'surplus' basins** *(perennial Himalayan rivers)* where there is flooding to **water 'deficit' basins** *(rain-fed peninsular rivers)* where there is drought/scarcity, through inter-basin water transfer projects.

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Are there previous examples of river-linking in India?

In the past, several river linking projects have been taken up. For instance,

– Under the **Periyar Project**, transfer of water from Periyar basin to Vaigai basin was envisaged. It was commissioned in 1895.

– Similarly, other projects such as Parambikulam Aliyar, Kurnool Cudappah Canal, Telugu Ganga Project, and Ravi-Beas-Sutlej were undertaken.

– Godavari River has also been formally interlinked with the Krishna River at Ibrahimpatnam (near Vijayawada) in Andhra Pradesh in September 2015.

What are the advantages of Interlinking of Rivers?

i). Hydrological Imbalance of India: India has a large-scale hydrological imbalance with an effective rainfall period of 28 to 29 days. Some regions receive very high rainfall while some face droughts. Interlinking would transfer the water from flood-prone regions to draught-prone regions.

ii). Improve the inland navigation: Interlinking of rivers will create a network of navigation channels. Water transport is cheaper, less-polluting compare to the road and railways. Further, the interlinking of rivers can ease the pressure on railways and roads also.

iii). The benefit of irrigation: The interlinking of rivers has the potential to irrigate 35 million hectares of land in the water-scarce western peninsula. This will help India to create employment, boost crop outputs, farm incomes. Above all, the interlinking of rivers will make India a step closer to **achieving food security**.

iv). Generation of power: The interlinked rivers have the potential to generate a total power of 34 GW. This will help India to reduce coal-based power plant usage. Furthermore, It will also help to achieve India's targets under **Glasgow Climate Pact** and under the Paris agreement.

v). Other benefits:

– **Water supply:** The project envisages a supply of clean drinking water amounting to 90 billion CBM(Cubic Meter). It can resolve the issue of drinking water scarcity in India.

– Similarly, interlinking of water also provides **water for industrial use** amount to 64.8 billion CBM.

– Apart from that, interlinking can help the survival of **fisheries**, **protect wildlife in the summer months** due to water scarcity. It can also reduce forest fires occurring in India due to climatic conditions.

– India can also **explore an additional line of defence** in the form of waterline defence.

What are the issues/challenges in Interlinking of Rivers?

The interlinking of rivers project has a variety of challenges. They are,

i). Impact of the Climate change: Reports points out that Climate change will cause **a meltdown of 1/3rd of the Hindu Kush Region's glaciers by 2100.** So, the Himalayan rivers might not have 'surplus water' for a long time. Also, considering this, investing billions of money in the interlinking of rivers might yield benefits only for a short time.

ii). Human cost: This includes the challenge of loss of livelihood and displacement of people especially, the poor and tribal people located near the forests. So, the government not only needs to face challenges in **displacing people** but also in the **rehabilitation of people**.

iii). Huge financial cost: NRLP is a highly capital-intensive project. In 2001, the total cost for linking the Himalayan and peninsular rivers was estimated at Rs 5,60,000 crore, excluding the

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costs of relief and rehabilitation, and other expenses. This cost is likely to be substantially higher now, and the cost-benefit ratio might no longer be favourable.

iv). Impact on ecology and biodiversity: The ecology of every river being unique, letting the waters of rivers mix may affect biodiversity. Also, when most of the rivers in the country are polluted, this may cause mixing of a less polluted river with a more polluted one.

v). International Challenges: Countries like Bhutan, Nepal, and Bangladesh will be impacted due to the NRLP. Bangladesh esp fears of water diversion from the Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers to India's southern states, threatening the livelihoods as well as its environment.

vi). Political Challenges: Water is a state subject in India. So the implementation of the NRLP primarily depends on Inter-State co-operation. Several states including Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, and Sikkim have already opposed the NRLP.

vii). Other Challenges: The government is proposing a **canal irrigation** method for transmitting water from one area to the other. The maintenance of canals is also a great challenge, it includes preventing sedimentation, clearing logging of waters etc.

Further, the government has to acquire large-scale lands for the smooth implementation of the project which is not easy.

What is the way forward?

– Efficient utilisation of existing resources: **Integrated water resource management** is the key for India. Moreover, curbing demand by efficient utilisation of existing water resources should be prioritised before making big-ticket investments in river interlinking under NRLP.

– Groundwater management is the key: The focus of India's water resources should be about nurturing its Groundwater system. It would include identifying and protecting groundwater recharge mechanisms, enhancing recharge where feasible, installing artificial recharge and also regulating groundwater use at aquifer level.

– Virtual water: India should also push for the **concept of virtual water**. For example: Suppose when a country imports one tonne of wheat instead of producing it domestically, it is saving about 1,300 cubic meters of the local water. The local water can be saved and used for other purposes.

– National Waterways Project (NWP): As per some experts, the govt should consider the National Waterways Project (NWP) instead of the NRLP. Under NWP, water from a flooded river will flow to the other. It acts like a water grid, similar to a power grid. It **just needs 1/3rd the land** required for interlinking of rivers, is **open to navigation throughout the year** and involves **zero pumping**. Furthermore, it **can irrigate almost double the land** and has a **76% more power generation capacity (60 GW)** compared to the interlinking of rivers project.

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Rising inequality in India – Explained, Pointwise

Introduction

Rising inequality of wealth and income across countries has been pointed out by the latest edition of the World Inequality Report. As far as income is concerned, the richest 10% of the global population currently takes 52% of global income, whereas the poorest half of the population earns 8.5% of it. The picture is worse when it comes to wealth inequalities.

The report also flags a drop in global income during 2020, with about half the dip in rich countries, and half in low-income and emerging countries. It attributes this primarily to the impact of "South and Southeast Asia, and more precisely" India.

Furthermore, **India is one of the worst performers** as far as inequality is concerned, as per the report.

This is further supported by the fact that **there was a 35% increase in the net worth of the billionaires in India** during the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, when India's growth was negative 10%.

What are the key findings of the Inequality report?

World

– Even as countries have become richer over the last 40 years, their **governments have become significantly poorer,** a trend magnified due to the pandemic.

– The rise in private wealth has also been unequal within countries and at world levels. The wealth of the richest individuals on earth has grown at 6 to 9% per year since 1995, whereas average wealth has grown at 3.2% per year. This increase was exacerbated during the COVID pandemic.
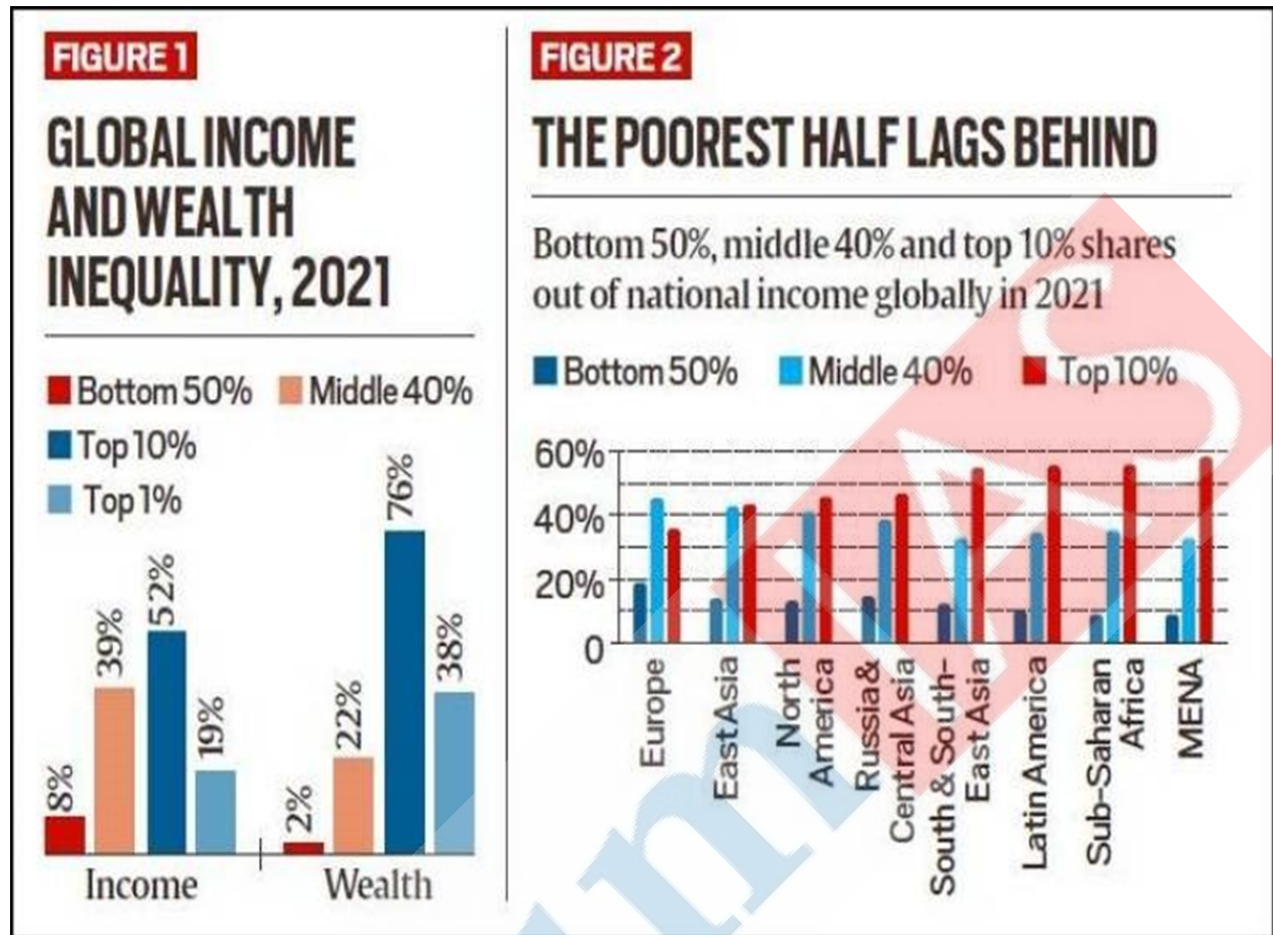
– The **Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are the most unequal regions in the world**, whereas Europe has the lowest inequality levels.

Global inequalities seem to be about as great today as they were at the peak of Western imperialism in the early 20th century. Moreover, inequalities within countries are now greater than those between countries.

– Global income and wealth inequalities are **tightly connected to ecological inequalities** and to inequalities in contributions to climate change. The top 10% of emitters is responsible for close to 50% of all emissions, while the bottom 50% contributes 12%.

– Large emerging economies such as China and India experienced faster increases than wealthy countries after they transitioned away from communism *(in China and Russia)* or from a highly regulated economic system *(in India)*. In India, private wealth increased from **290%** in 1980 to **560%** in 2020.

For more: Read **here**

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Source: Indian Express

India

– India stands out as **a poor and very unequal country**, with an affluent elite.

– While the top 1% hold 22% of total national income, the bottom 50% share has gone down to 13%.

– The report also points to **extreme gender and carbon inequality**. For instance, at 18% the female labour income share in India is one of the lowest in the world and significantly lower than the average in Asia (21%, excluding China).

A person in the bottom 50% of India's population is responsible for, on average, five times fewer emissions than the average person in the bottom 50% in the European Union.

– **India's middle class is relatively poor,** with an average wealth of just 29.5% of the total national income.

– **The quality of inequality data released by the government has seriously deteriorated,** making it particularly difficult to assess recent inequality changes.

What are the different forms of inequality prevalent in India?

– **Income and wealth inequality**, as mentioned above in the findings of the World Inequality Report.

– **Digital inequality:** According to **National Sample Survey (2017),** only 6% of rural households and 25% of urban households have a computer. Only 17% in rural areas and 42% in urban areas have access to internet.

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– Social inequality: It is the differential access to wealth, power, and prestige. Social inequality may exist on gender, race, age, ethnicity, religion, and kinship. This form of inequality is widely prevalent in India. **For instance**: India's upper caste households earned nearly 47% more than the national average annual household income. The top 10% within these castes owned 60% of the wealth within the group in 2012, as per the World Inequality Database.

What are the reasons behind high inequality in India?

– The **slow economic and GDP growth**, which can help to reduce poverty and counter inequality, have been faltering for a while. GDP growth has been rather slow since the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 and has completely lost its momentum since the start of 2017. For a relatively poor country such as India, the most durable and dependable way to reduce inequality is to increase the size of GDP.

– Lack of digital access: Poor households are not able to afford devices to ensure digital access for their children. According to the **Azim Premji Foundation, ASER and Oxfam** report, between 27% and 60% could not access online classes, due to lack of devices, shared devices, inability to buy "data packs", etc. For more: Read **here**

– Increased penetration of technology and industrialization: Some experts argue that as technology is skill biased, so those who are able to use technology experience an increase in productivity and wages compared to their less-skilled counterparts. The increase in productivity leads to the spread of technology, which, in turn, creates a higher demand for skilled workers. This self-reinforcing cycle increases wealth and income inequality.

– Large numbers of the labour force work in sectors with low productivity. Consider agriculture. It provides 53 per cent jobs, while contributing only 17% to the GDP

– COVID pandemic has also **increased the economic inequality** further. For more info, **read here**

What are the implications of inequality?

Inequality gives rise to a number of consequences:

– Research by Professor Pickett and Wilkinson found that **inequality causes a wide range of health and social problems**, from reduced life expectancy and higher infant mortality to poor educational attainment, lower social mobility and increased levels of violence and mental illness.

– High levels of income inequality are associated with **economic instability and crises**, whereas more equal societies tend to have longer periods of sustained growth

– Income inequality strongly **influences people's health and wellbeing**. It further leads to a **societal breakdown** in trust, solidarity and social cohesion, reducing people's willingness to act for the common good. For instance: **social conflict** among the social groups in India, like Patidar unrest and Jaat Andolan.

– Increase in wage inequality **decreases productivity**.

– Due to the prevailing inequality in digital access, the digital solutions offered for providing basic services such as health and education face failure.

– Greater inequality can lead to **more rapid environmental degradation** because low incomes lead to low investment in physical capital and education

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What is the way forward?

– Levying a **modest progressive wealth tax** on multimillionaires. This can generate a sufficient amount of global income. **For instance**: A global effective wealth tax rate of 1.2% for wealth over $1 million, could generate revenues of 2.1% of global income.

– Raising the proposed global minimum tax rate on multinationals from the 15% to 25%. The present tax rate of 15% would lead to a race among countries to reduce their corporation tax rates to that level. This will lead to a **€1.4-billion tax gain** a year for India.

– A good starting point for India would be for the government to **improve the quality of data** on inequality within the country.

– In order to reduce inequality in India, Govt needs to take various measures. You can read about them **here.**

– Government also has to utilize the time to **prioritize skill development**: A skill-led economy is the need of the hour to completely utilize India's demographic dividend towards equality. Read more **here.**

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[Yojana December Summary] Capacity Building of PSUs – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Capacity Building of PSUs ('Public Sector Undertaking') is an area that is gaining importance, particularly due to rapid advancements in technology and 'other' operational methodologies.

The net profit of CPSUs was 93,294 crore rupees in 2019-2020. They also make a substantial contribution to the growth of the Indian Economy and critical infrastructure. So the capacity building of PSUs will have immense economical and social benefits.

About CPSUs

There are 256 operational **Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs)** in the country, employing around 10 lakh people. Out of these CPSUs, 96 have been conferred the Ratna status (10 – Maharatna companies, 14 – Navaratnas, and 72 -Miniratnas).

Read more: [Yojana October Summary] Digital Local Governance – Explained, pointwise

Why capacity building of PSUs is required?

Training and Capacity Building of PSUs is an area where a large amount of resources in terms of financial outlays, manpower, material, socio-economic growth and other infrastructure is used.

PSUs are expected to perform on a competitive basis with prudent management, quality decision-making while ensuring accountability, efficiency, and transparency, so they require world-class training inputs.

What steps the government has taken towards the capacity building of PSUs?

National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB): Recently, the Cabinet has approved the Mission Karmayogi – NPCSCB by setting up an Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) portal. The programme is implemented by the **Department of Personnel and Training**.

The programme aims to develop an integrated training infrastructure across services. Its core guiding principle is to "create an ecosystem of shared training infrastructure including that of learning materials, institutions and personnel.

The premier training institutes such as the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, SVP National Police Academy, Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, etc, have co-opted to synergies their resources for this mission.

Read more: Mission Karmayogi

iGOT Karmayogi: The Karmayogi mission will be delivered by Integrated Government Online Training-iGOT Karmayogi Platform. It will act as a launchpad for NPCSCB to enable a comprehensive reform of the capacity building apparatus at the individual, institutional and process levels.

Individual programmes: The premier training institutes of most of the bigger PSUs are equipped with the latest training infrastructure as well as human resources to cater to their needs. Each of them has certain flagship programmes and certain 'core competency' or specialised areas.

For example, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited's (ONGC) core competency lies in Drilling Technology, Geo- Data Processing, Reservoir Studies, Oil Field Equipment, etc.

Some PSUs design customised courses for executives of other PSUs and even for foreign nationals.

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Read more: Major Administrative Reforms by the govt

What are the benefits of capacity building of PSUs?

Capacity building will **foster PSUs with a culture of efficiency, competitiveness, integrity, and probity** that will **curb administrative malpractices**.

Read more: [Yojana August Summary] Probity in Governance – Explained, pointwise

Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) are agents of socio-economic growth and change, creators of formal and informal economic opportunities, providing social benefits through CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities. So, capacity building of PSUs will help them **to accelerate socio-economic growth**.

Capacity building will help in **developing a sense of responsivity** towards nation-building.

Read more: [Yojana August Summary] Reforms in the Civil Services – Explained, pointwise

What are the challenges faced in the capacity building of PSUs?

There is **no institutionalised mechanism** as of now for collaboration and resource sharing. So there is an issue of duplication and mismanagement of resources of PSUs.

Training modules are not holistic ones: At present, the majority of capacity building programs of PSUs focus training on core competence. They neglect training in other areas such as training in Ethics and Moral Values, vigilance, leadership, etc.

What reforms are necessary for the capacity building of PSUs?

Collaborate between training facilities of various PSUs: This will create cross-synergisation and a vibrant pool of common resources for PSUs. Further, this would also be in line with the NPCSCB.

Identify common training areas: So that executives of one PSU could benefit from training/other inputs from another PSU's training institute. For the best optimisation of resources, this could be extended to training institutes across various sectors.

Further, Orientation visits/training of employees of the user PSUs to the Manufacturing PSUs could be arranged. For example, employees of user PSUs can visit Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited(BHEL) to familiarise the manufacturing process, size, scope, and other details of the equipment.

Institutionalise Resource sharing and create Thematic Clusters: Institutes offering similar core competencies in the same specialised field could be brought together to share R&D, experts/faculty, infrastructure and Training techniques. They can also impart domain-specific training. Different institutes could be identified to enhance a 'specific' competency.

Create Centres of Excellence: Two or more training institutes when collaborated could be designated as 'Centres of Excellence' (CoEs). Further, core competencies of all the training facilities of the PSUs could be mapped first and then modalities can be developed for strengthening it.

Create Geographical Clusters: A separate geographical cluster can be identified in a single location, consisting of several training institutes from separate fields.

Create holistic uniform modules and standardise the training: Common programmes could be designed for personnel of different PSUs. Such training modules should consist not only in core competence but also in Management, Preventive Vigilance, Leadership, Ethics and Moral Values, understanding India's socio and economic milieu etc.

Read more: [Yojana August Summary] Indian Bureaucracy – Explained, pointwise

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Overall capacity building of PSUs will optimise resource utilisation and have threefold benefits of avoiding duplication of process, standardising training, and creating specialisation.

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Recent developments in India-Bangladesh relations-Explained, pointwise

Introduction

On 16th Dec, India and Bangladesh will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the surrender of the Pakistan Army to the Indian Army at Dhaka in 1971. In the past 50 years, India-Bangladesh relations have seen several ups and downs.

India played a great role in the emergence of an independent Bangladesh. Further, India was one of the first states to recognize Bangladesh (Bhutan was the first state) as a separate nation. Last week, the Bangladesh PM mentioned that the relationship between India and Bangladesh is anchored in history, culture, language, and shared values of secularism, democracy, and countless other commonalities. The signing of the historic Land Boundary Agreement in 2015 made India-Bangladesh relations even stronger. Yet, there are certain frictions in bilateral relationships.

About the recent improvements in India-Bangladesh relations

–**Trade relations**: India exports about US$ 10 billion worth of goods to Bangladesh, which is about 15% of the total imports of Bangladesh. India imports a little over US$ 1 billion worth of goods from Bangladesh.

–**Energy cooperation**: Bangladesh is importing 1160 MW of power from India. Recently, Bangladesh agreed to provide a 10 GBPS internet connection to India's North Eastern States.

-Both countries have **signed several bilateral instruments** in various sectors including hydrocarbons, agriculture, trade and development projects,

–**Multi-dimensional cooperation** between the two countries ranges from traditional sectors of tourism, health, and education to frontier technologies of nuclear science, space, and information technology.

–**Cooperation in Railways**: Inaugurated the restored railway link between Chilahati (Bangladesh) and Haldibari (India). Further, India gave 10 broad guage diesel locomotives as part of grant assistance to Bangladesh Railways.

–**Cooperation in Roadways**: Both countries decided to commence bus service from/to Dhaka from/to Gangtok and Darjeeling via Siliguri.

Sonamura-Daudkandi Protocol Route was also operationalized and a trial run of transhipment of Indian goods from Kolkata to Agartala was successfully conducted.

–**LOC for development of infrastructure**: India has extended 3 Lines of Credits to Bangladesh in the last 8 years amounting to US$ 8 billion for the development of infrastructure in various sectors including roads, railways, shipping, and ports.

–**Assistance for Infrastructure**: India is also providing grant assistance to Bangladesh for various infrastructure projects. These include construction of Akhaura-Agartala rail link, dredging of inland waterways in Bangladesh, and construction of **India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline**.

Recently, the **Maitri Setu bridge** was constructed. It connects Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh.

–**Pandemic assistance**: India has been helping Bangladesh in coping with the Covid-19 pandemic by donating surgical masks, RC-PTR test kits, surgical latex gloves, vaccines etc.

Read more: Improper Comments on Bangladesh will impact India Bangladesh ties

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What are the challenges hampering India-Bangladesh relations?

Teesta Water sharing agreement: Teesta has been mired in conflict since 1947. After the setting up of the India-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission in 1972, an ad hoc arrangement on sharing of Teesta waters was made in 1983, with India receiving 39% of the water and Bangladesh 36% of it. The remaining 25% remain unallocated. Further negotiations between India and Bangladesh on the sharing of the river waters have made limited progress.

> ***Note***: *The Teesta river originates in Sikkim and flows through West Bengal and Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, the river merges with the Jamuna(the Brahmaputra in India).*
>
>
>
> *The 2011 interim deal aims to share the Teesta river water between India and Bangladesh about 42.5 per cent and 37.5 percent respectively. But, the state of West Bengal object to this and demands and never signed the deal(Water is a state subject in India).*

Border management and illegal migration: The killings of Bangladeshi civilians by Indian security forces have negatively affected bilateral ties b/w India and Bangladesh. Despite high-level talks between the two countries, the issue remains unresolved. The year 2020 saw the highest number of border shootings by the Border Security Force.

Implementation of NRC: Bangladesh has raised concerns over the National Register of Citizens (NRC). Bangladesh is worried that it may have to deal with the adverse effects of this decision, such as a potential influx of immigrants from India.

Trade Deficit: Despite the increase in Indian exports to Bangladesh, the desired target for products exported from Bangladesh has not yet been achieved.

Severe restrictions imposed by Bangladesh on foreign exchange outgo. This has resulted in a low annual FDI by Indian companies in Bangladesh, which were in the range of $115-120 million during 2017-19. These are insignificant compared to India's annual outward FDI of $18-20 billion.

Bangladesh enjoys **duty-free access** to multiple Bangladeshi products in India. Some textile manufacturers in India are complaining about competition from the duty-free import of garments from Bangladesh,

There is a need to limit China's growing influence through investments in various projects in Bangladesh.

Apart from that, Bangladesh is also opposing India's proposed Tapaimukh Dam on the Barak River in Manipur and the **Interlinking of the rivers project** by India.

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Read more: Pending Issues in India Bangladesh relations

How to improve India-Bangladesh relations?

The **early resolution of Teesta** is the better way to boost India-Bangladesh relations. The government has to form a tripartite committee containing members from India, Bangladesh, and the State of West Bengal to determine the amount of water sharing. At present, West Bengal does not take part in **Joint River Commission meetings**.

India and Bangladesh need to continue working on the three **Cs (cooperation, collaboration, and consolidation)** to materialise the recent gains.

India should step up its efforts to further strengthen economic cooperation and help **create a favourable climate for cross-border investments**.

Both governments should **involve joint forces to reduce border issues**. Such as illegal trading, trafficking, cattle smuggling, etc. This will yield better results in curbing crime and increase better civil-military relations.

Like the Bangladesh PM mentioned, Both countries now need to **concentrate on people-to-people contact, trade, business, and connectivity** between them.

Read more: Brief Analysis of India- Bangladesh Bilateral Relations

In conclusion, India's prime interest in developing North-East India, providing better connectivity to South-East Asian Countries and exploring the Indo-Pacific region depends on much stronger India-Bangladesh relations. Hence, India needs to strengthen regional groups like SAARC, BIMSTEC etc. This will give **full impetus to India's Neighbourhood First policy** and elevate India-Bangladesh relations to another level.

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[Yojana December Summary] GI Tagging of Rural Products – Explained, pointwise

Introduction
India's multicultural ethos, authenticity, and ethnic diversity are potential turbochargers for the country's economy. One channel through which these attributes can be brought out is Geographical Indications or GI tags.
Geographical Indications (GIs) backed up by solid business management can bring a competitive advantage, more added value to a product, increase export opportunities, and strengthen India's image at a global level.

What is GI Tag?
At present, the international framework on the Geographical Indications (GIs) derives its strength from Article 22 of the **Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement**. It defines GIs as 'indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristics of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin'.
Geographical Indications are covered as an element of **Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs)** under Articles 1(2) and 10 of the **Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property**.

Read more: Growing locally: On significance of GI tags

Status of GI tagged products at the global level
Globally, an estimated 55,800 protected GIs were in existence in 2019, with maximum GIs in force in Germany (14,289) followed by China (7,834), and Hungary (6,494). On the other hand, USA and India had just 529 and 361, respectively.
GIs in force relating to wines and spirits accounted for 56.6% of the 2019 global total, followed by agricultural products and foodstuff (34.2%). Handicrafts accounted for only 3.5% of the total.
All the GIs in force in China and India are protected through national legislation, whereas the bulk of GIs in force in Australia (90.7%), Israel (99.9%), and Ukraine (99.2%) are protected through international agreements.
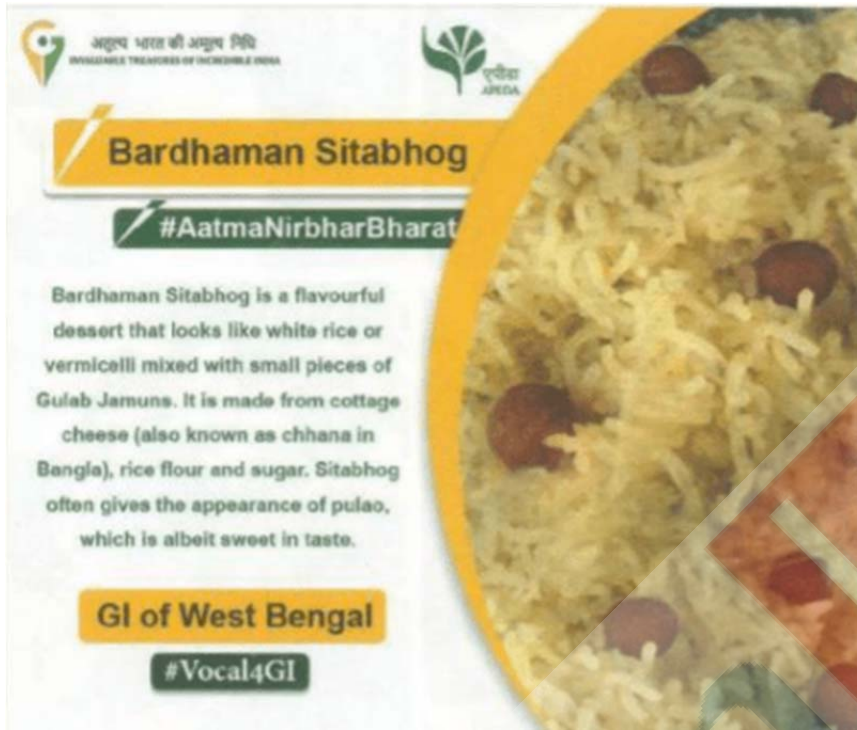
What is the need for the GI Act?
Earlier, an American company was given a patent for Basmati rice. India had to resort to an expensive procedure of challenging the patent in the US court of law.
This made India realise the need to protect its indigenous, unique, and reputed products through GI. This necessitated India to enact the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 in 2003 to give protection for GI through unique legislation. To facilitate this process, the Geographical Indications Registry of India was set up in Chennai.

Read more: Naga Cucumber from Nagaland gets GI tag

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About the GI Tagged products in India

Source: Yojana

Darjeeling tea was the first Indian product that was awarded the GI tag in 2004 for its naturally occurring quality, flavour, and market potential. In fact, three variants of **Darjeeling tea-black, green, and white** have got GI tag.

Till now, 370 products have been registered as GIs by the GI Registry of India. The list comprises handicraft (214), agricultural (112), foodstuff (16), foreign foodstuff, and manufactured (14), Indian manufactured (12), and natural goods (2).
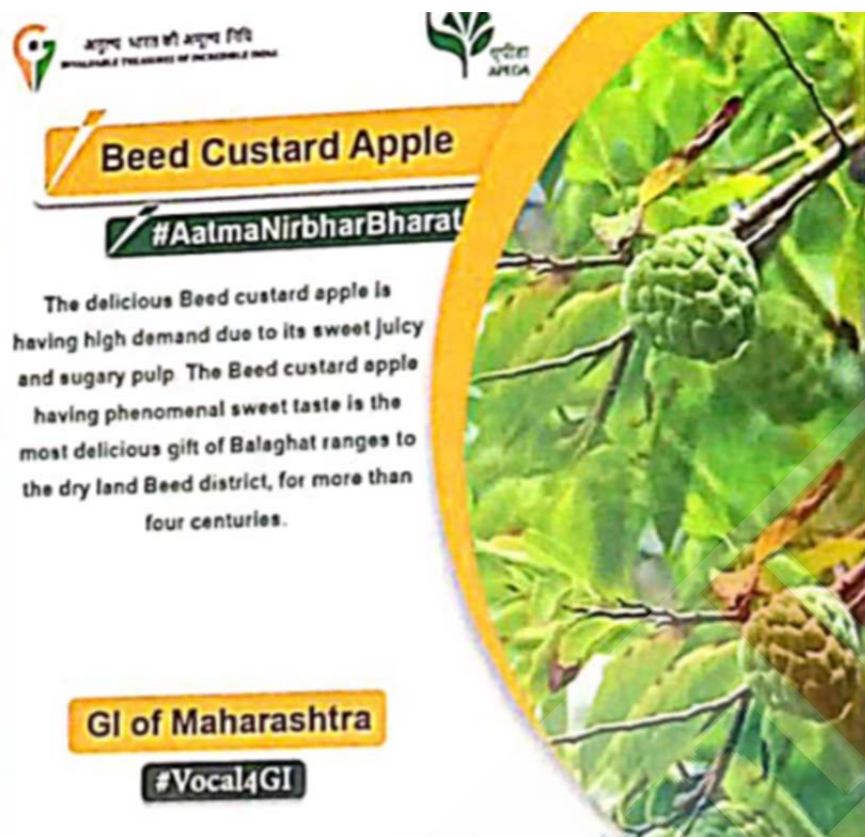
Among the states, Karnataka has the highest number of GI tags with 47 products, followed by Tamil Nadu (39).

Read more: Assam's rice wine Judima gets GI tag

What are the government steps taken to improve GI tagged products in India?

GrapeNet: It is a first of its kind initiative in India by the Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce, the Government of India. It is an internet-based Residue traceability software system, for monitoring fresh grapes exported from India to the European Union.

Besides grapes, traceability initiatives have also been completed for HortiNet, Peanut.Net, Basmati.Net, Meat.Net, etc., by APEDA.

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Source: Yojana

TraceNet: It works under the APEDA. The platform collects, stores, and reports forward and backward traces, as well as maintains authentic information and related data by the operators/producer groups and certification bodies within the organic supply chain in India.

New Logo and New tagline: To popularise India's GI-tagged products and works of artisans in international markets, the government has announced a new logo for the GI products, a new tagline 'Invaluable Treasure of Incredible India' has been selected.

GI Stores: India's very first Geographical Indications (GI) Store of Cashew Export Promotion Council of India (CEPCI) was launched in 2019, at the departure terminal of Goa. With that success, the government is planning to open GI stores in other airports as well.

Government e-Marketplace (GeM) Startup Runway: It is an initiative of GeM to provide access to the public procurement market and sell innovative products and services to government buyers.

Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2021-2026: It recognised GI-tagged Agri commodities as one of the growth drivers in the draft export policy, which will help to gain a competitive advantage in buyer-driven global markets.

The new FTP also includes promoting '**District Export Hubs**' in each district and **setting up district export promotion panels** and preparing **district export action plan** to target small businesses and farmers.

India adopted **Toys (Quality Control) Second Amendment Order, 2020**. This exempts goods manufactured and sold by artisans and those registered as Geographical Indication (GI) from Quality Control Orders.

The government also started India's first exclusive and largest online store of GI-tagged products.

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Read more: GI tag for Thanjavur Netti and Arumbavur Wood carving

What are the challenges associated with GI Tagged products in India?
Lack of commercial performance: There is an **absence of a dedicated institutional structure** and **a mechanism that deals with the affairs of GI products** in India.
There is a **gap in connecting Rural-based GI-tagged products to major urban markets**, as well as export destinations.
The **difference between GI and non-GI products is not fully known** amongst local farmers, consumers, and other relevant stakeholders.
Value chains not developed: Except for Basmati rice, Nashik grapes, and Darjeeling tea, the value chains for most of the other GI-tagged commodities are either not developed or at a very nascent stage.

Read more: "ProrIISe Software" to automate legal process for Intellectual Property

What needs to be done to promote GI products?
The government needs to **prepare a strategy to raise awareness** about various GI products and the difference between GI Tagged and non-GI tagged products,
The Central Government needs to **frame some long-term policy** to provide Indian GI products with an assured domestic as well as international market.
Develop more GI tagged products: The government identify product-place clusters and evaluate them commercially to develop them in their entirety.
Further, implementing authorities of the One District One Product (ODOD) scheme should give due importance to crops having GI tags or having requisite characteristics for consideration as GI products.
Create enough infrastructure: The government needs to make efforts for creating required infrastructures such as customs clearance facilities, laboratory testing facilities, pack-houses, and pre-cooling facilities, which would harness and boost the exports potential of GI products.
The government may set up an incubation centre for helping users/farmers/entrepreneurs for obtaining GI and traceability solutions for their products.

Read more: GI Geographical Indications tag for Basmati Rice to Pakistan : a cause of concern for India?

Apart from these steps, India needs to start negotiations with other countries to make their markets available for Indian GI tagged products at the global level, especially agricultural products.

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India-Germany relations post-merkel era – Explained, pointwise

Introduction
Recently, Olaf Scholz has been sworn in as chancellor of Germany, ending the 16-year tenure of Angela Merkel. For the past 40 years, just three individuals have occupied the chancellery. So, the new ruling coalition in Germany offers scope for enhancing India-Germany relations. Germany is a significant contributor to manufacturing FDI within India. So the new chancellor's actions in trade, green finance, and supply chains will have a direct impact on investment and growth in India.

About India-Germany relations
Bilateral Trade: Germany is India's largest trade partner within Europe. Indian exports to Germany focus on the textile sector, followed by chemical products, electrical engineering products, metal and leather goods and foodstuffs. Similarly, German goods, especially capital goods (machinery, metal goods, electrical engineering products, chemical products, motor vehicles and vehicle parts) are in great demand in India. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the bilateral trade in India and Germany was ~21 billion Euros in 2019.

Investments: For decades, Germany has been among the ten principal foreign direct investors in India. Investments have focused on the transport, electrical and metal sectors, service sectors. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, FDI from Germany between 2000-2019 was ~USD 12 billion. More than 1700 German companies are active in India, providing around 400,000 direct and indirect jobs. Out of these, about 1000 are 100% subsidiaries and balance are liaison offices, joint ventures and agencies. Indian investments in Germany have remarkably increased over the last few years. Indian corporate entities have invested over EUR 6.5 billion in Germany, especially in sectors of IT, automotive, pharma and biotech. There are more than 200 Indian companies operating in Germany.

Parliamentary Exchanges: There is an **Indo-German Parliamentary Friendship Group**, in the German Bundestag since 1971. Visit by Parliamentarians from both sides take place regularly.

Sister States arrangement: Some States and Cities of India and Germany have entered into twinning arrangements. For example, **Mumbai and Stuttgart** are sister cities since 1968. **Karnataka and Bavaria**, **Maharashtra and Baden-Wurttemberg** have Sister State arrangements.

Read more: India may surpass Germany to become the fourth-largest economy in 2026:Report

Defence Cooperation: **India-Germany Defence Cooperation Agreement** (2006) provides a framework for bilateral defence cooperation. Further, India and Germany have shown their firm commitment to fighting against terrorism. For instance, Germany supports India led movement for the adoption of **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism**.

Science & Technology: Indo-German Science & Technology cooperation started with the signing of the **Intergovernmental S&T Cooperation Agreement** in 1971 and 1974. There are more than 150 joint S&T research projects and 70 direct partnerships between Universities of both countries.

Culture and diaspora: There has been growing interest in Germany in Indian dance, music and literature, as well as the motion picture and TV industry. There are about 1.7 lakh Indians and people of Indian origin in Germany.

Note: Max Mueller was the first scholar of Indo-European languages to translate and publish

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the Upanishads and the Rigveda. German interest in Indian philosophy and languages resulted in the setting up of the first Chair of Indology at the University of Bonn in 1818.

G4 Grouping: India and Germany are members of the G-4 group, along with Brazil and Japan. The G4 nations support each other's bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council.

Read more: First of its kind program for lateral entry for women researchers in joint R&D projects between India and Germany launched

What are the policies adopted during Angela Merkel's term in Germany?
1. Admitted Syrian refugees to the country, 2. Demonstrate strong and sustained growth in the economy when other countries are struggling with their economic models (Except China), 3. Not declared China as a systemic rival, like France, as their middle-sized enterprises rely on supply chains that are centred in China, 4. Phased-out nuclear power in Germany, which results in various challenges like (a) Germany became the largest emitter of Carbon in Europe, (b) The country has the highest electricity prices in Europe, (c) Impacted Germany's foreign policy: German economy needs Russian natural gas. So, they are not condemning Russian actions against Ukraine.

Read more: Nord Stream 2 pipeline between Germany and Russia

Why is India important for Germany?
First, Germany views **India as an important partner for resolving global issues**, including climate change, food security, energy, and international peace and security.

Second, Germany is also keen to **implement connectivity projects, through the European Union, to counter China**. So, in this backdrop EU-India connectivity partnership holds importance. The coalition sees the conclusion of an India-EU BTIA as an important aspect to develop relations.

Third, Germany views **India as a pillar of Asian stability and a country that shares European political values** such as Equality, Liberty, Fraternity and Democratic values.

Fourth, In the mid of the great power rivalry between the US, China and Russia, Germany is looking to diversify its global partnerships beyond the Euro-Atlantic space and seeks to **bring India into its larger geopolitical landscape**. For instance, within the **German Indo-Pacific (IP) guidelines**, India is mentioned for enhancement of engagement and fulfilment of objectives.

Read here: Germany as a development actor in a post-Merkel area

How to strengthen India-Germany relations?
Both countries are already engaged in green energy like solar power, transportation, smart cities, metros and the *Namami Gange*. Apart from that, the following measures should be adopted:

First, The **Merkel initiative** of establishing inter-government consultations should continue.

Second, India is interested in the development of **education and skill development** policies, in which Germany can help India. Similarly, Germany is looking for **skilled manpower** from abroad and India should take advantage of it.

Third, Both countries should realize the **cooperative goals of the IP guidelines,** which should also involve businesses. German companies should be encouraged to use the liberalized **PLI scheme** to establish manufacturing hubs in India.

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Fourth, Both should also initiate an **Africa vaccine production facility** together. Germany already committed to giving a 250mn Euro loan to Africa for this. If implemented with India, as in the Quad initiative, such a facility can be established in the underserved East African region.

Fifth, Germany, despite being among the countries with the least sunshine hours in the world, is one of the largest solar power producers across the globe. So, India should **force Germany to play an active role in International Solar Alliance**.

Read more: How India and Germany can work together to tackle climate change

In multipolar world order, the convergence of India and Germany will be a win-win situation for India-Germany relations. Post-Brexit, Germany became the more important player in European Union, so collaboration with Germany will ultimately lead to a collaboration with the EU as a whole.

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