

9 PM

Compilation

16th to 21st May, 2022

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

General Studies - 1

1. [On marital rape, regressive notions undermine autonomy of women](#)
2. [Increasing the pace of India's urbanisation](#)
3. [A concerted effort in re-imagining museums](#)

General Studies - 2

1. [In Perarivalan's case, the constitutional battle between governor and government](#)
2. [Law and public opinion: On Perarivalan release](#)
3. [Delimitation fallout needs no political](#)
4. [Reforming the NITI Aayog](#)
5. [Putin's Made India The Swing State In Geopolitics](#)
6. [A war that is shrinking India's geopolitical options](#)
7. [The technical higher education market dissected](#)
8. [Improving cold chain systems](#)
9. [Bridging the health policy to execution chasm](#)
10. [Focusing on public health engineering](#)
11. [On Gyanvapi Mosque, we are debating the wrong question](#)
12. [The road to safety](#)
13. [On sedition, the Supreme Court has aligned itself with the collective conscience of India](#)
14. [In abeyance of Section 124A, a provisional relief](#)
15. [The neighbourhood in turmoil, lessons for India](#)
16. [Help Afghans](#)
17. [For a better South Asian neighbourhood](#)
18. [PM Modi's recent Nepal visit saw a successful deployment of India's soft power to repair bilateral ties](#)
19. [Modi in Lumbini: Buddhism provides India a cultural inroad in Nepal – it may not be enough to counter China](#)
20. [The importance of Lumbini](#)

General Studies - 3

1. [Needed: An economic response plan for a green transition shock](#)
2. [Fiddling with a climate response while our workers face the heat](#)
3. [Root cause analysis for the power crisis](#)
4. [Frequent policy flip-flops are bad for farmers as well as consumers](#)
5. [Lessons for today from India's 2006 wheat crisis](#)
6. [Boon to ban: How the wheat export story changed in two months](#)
7. [What explains India's U-turn on wheat exports?](#)
8. [Direct paddy sowing reaps benefits](#)
9. [For a stronger navy, India needs to fast-track the submarine project](#)
10. [Three development models that can guide Indian state economies](#)
11. [Mundka fire is a symptom of all that ails the informal sector](#)
12. [How to strengthen cyber security the right way](#)

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

13. [Digital markets must be defined well for competition regulation](#)
14. [How to tackle the inflation spiral](#)
15. [Central banks and the rule of law](#)
16. [The UN report that highlights India's vulnerability to drought](#)
17. [Let's keep GST good and simple](#)
18. [Frequent policy flip-flops are bad for farmers as well as consumers](#)
19. [Jobs scheme will not offer a long-term solution to urban unemployment. Safety nets need to be better conceived](#)
20. [Talking peace, negotiating with the Maoists](#)
21. [Simulating gravity](#)

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

General

Studies

Paper – 1

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor based courses.



MARITAL RAPE AND RELATED ISSUES

1. **On marital rape, regressive notions undermine autonomy of women**

Source: The post is based on an article “**On marital rape, regressive notions undermine autonomy of women**” published in the **Indian Express** on **20th May 2022**.

Syllabus:GS1–Society, Women issues

Relevance: Marital Rape Exception, Fundamental Rights

News: Recently, two judges of the Delhi High Court handed down separate judgments on the constitutional validity of the “**Marital Rape Exception**” under Section 375 of the IPC in **RIT Foundation v Union of India Case**.

What is the law?

Section 375 defines “rape” as when a man has sex with a woman without her consent. However, a husband having sex with his wife, regardless of consent, is not construed as marital rape. The husband can't be prosecuted for the rape of his adult wife.

Argument in favour of the marital rape exception by one judge

First, Sex within marriage has been carved out (by exception) from the definition of rape. Only in the absence of that exception, non-consensual sex within marriage would be seen as a rape.

Second, the marital rape exception is constitutionally valid. This is because the marital rape exception was “aimed at preservation of the **marital institution**, on which the entire **bedrock** of society rests”.

Third, the marital rape exception should prevail because the **impact** on a woman who is raped by her husband **cannot “be equated** with the impact of a woman who is raped by a stranger”. The “**disagreements**” in marriage are “**but natural**” and “**may even lend strength** to the **marital bond**”.

Fourth, at present, “**majority of Indian women**” are reluctant to file a complaint of rape against their husbands. There will be tens of thousands of rape complaints after the marital rape exception is declared unconstitutional.

Fifth, the court is **not empowered** to create a **new offence**. It means the court is not competent to **strike down** the marital rape exception that has already been carved out of an existing offence in the law. It would be unfair to punish someone for rape for conduct that was excluded from the definition of rape when it was undertaken.

Argument against marital rape exception

The marital rape exception is in violation of the **rights to life, equality, non-discrimination, and freedom of speech and expression** which are guaranteed under the Constitution of India. There is no reasonable basis to distinguish between **married** and **unmarried women**. Marriage is a relationship of equals. The marriage does not lead to giving up of agency and **sexual autonomy**.

The institution of marriage cannot be preserved at all **costs**. For example, when a man has non-consensual sex with his wife.

If a woman is raped by someone in whom you have **reposed trust** is likely to have an **indelible emotional impact**. It is difficult to understand how non-consensual sex can ever strengthen a marriage.

Even if a woman is reluctant to file a case, it does not mean that the woman should be **disempowered** to do so by the operation of the law.

Way Forward

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

The court should declare that its judgment will apply only to conduct **after** the **date of the judgment**.

The **Parliament** should revisit the marital rape exception. This would be the path of least resistance.

It is incumbent on courts to take decisions concerning **complex social issues**. As the marital rape exception violates **fundamental rights** under the Constitution of India. Therefore, it falls within the **Court's core competency**.

GS1 – SOCIETY – URBANIZATION

URBANISATION AND RELATED ISSUES

2. **Increasing the pace of India's urbanisation**

Source: The post is based on an article "**Increasing the pace of India's urbanisation**" published in the **Business Standard** on **19th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1 Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Relevance: Trends of Urbanisation, Importance etc.

News: In recent years, the governments has started to realise that the cities are the drivers of economic growth.

Trends of Urbanization

In 1960, the global rate of urbanisation was at 33.61%. In 2003, more people were living in cities than in villages. In 2020, the global urbanisation rate was at 56.15% in 2020.

In fact, globally, the late 20th century saw rapid urbanisation, especially among the newly **decolonised countries** from **Africa, Latin America** and **Asia**.

According to the **World Urbanisation Prospects report**, the rate of urbanisation in Asia was close to 50% by 2018. Further, it is projected to be 52.3% for Asia and around 37.6% for South Asian (sub-region) by the year 2022.

India's trends

The 20th and 21st centuries witnessed India's rapid and sustained urban growth.

In 1960, India's rate of urbanisation was **17.94%**. In 2020, India's urbanisation rate was **34.92%**. Further, India is projected to have about **35%** urbanisation by the end of 2022.

State-wise trends in India

According to the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, the **UTs** having the **highest percentage** of urban population are Chandigarh (99.63% in 2020) and Delhi (99.23% in 2020). The **states** having large area and population like Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh) have the least percentage of projected population living in cities.

Merits of urbanisation

A city is a breathing entity which is **ever-growing** and **evolving**. The cities shapes culture and give impetus to the realisation of dreams and ambitions of people who come from the countryside. There is a positive correlation between **urbanisation** and **economic growth**. The cities and the process of urbanization offer a lot of **developmental advantage**.

Urbanization leads to rise of agglomeration economies, the formation of industrial clusters, and the increase in competitiveness among and within each state

Urbanisation also offers solutions to reduce **income inequality** and **poverty**. It enhances jobs and incomes as more talent is attracted to urban conglomerates.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

What are the issues?

Looking at India's urbanisation rate, it seems India has a **sluggish rate** of urbanisation.

India's Urbanisation is below the **global rate of urbanisation** as well as the **Asian average of urbanisation rate**.

In India, "Cities" as a scope of study is a relatively new field. India has primarily been seen as a village-based country during colonisation and a few years right after independence.

In the post-independence years, industrial development, regional integration, and economic growth became priorities, and the "urban question" remained missing from the discourse of development.

Way Forward

There is a need to increase the **pace of urbanisation in** the country. At the same time, the **influx of population** should not be concentrated in bigger cities only.

Smaller cities lying on the **periphery** of the **major industrial cities** should be primarily focussed from the point of **growth** and **investment potential**.

In addition, all the **backward cities** and **towns** should be given attention for investment and development.

GS1 – HISTORY – ART AND CULTURE

MUSEUMS IN INDIA

3. [A concerted effort in re-imagining museums](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**A concerted effort in re-imagining museums**" published in the "**The Hindu**" on **18th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1 Indian Art and Culture

Relevance: Indian Museums

News: On the occasion of **International Museum Day** on May 18, the Ministry of **Culture** allowed free of cost admissions to all museums which are under its ambit for a week.

Advantages of making free admission into the museums

This will make our art and **culture accessible** to all and also provides an opportunity to propagate our **civilisational heritage**.

The provide an opportunity to re-imagine the progress made in our museums and cultural spaces.

What transformational shift has been visible with respect to our perspectives of our heritage?

First, there has been a shift from a **museum-centric approach** to a **cultural spaces approach**. As India is a **continuously inhabited civilisational state**, therefore, **our art, culture** and **heritage** are part of our museums as well as our day-to-day activities. Therefore, the government has moved to preserve and promote Indian heritage.

a) Now, the stolen heritages are restored to the original place it was taken from instead of putting into a museum. For example, the recently retrieved idol of **Goddess Annapurna** was returned to its rightful place at **Kashi Vishwanath temple, Varanasi**.

b) Second, the government has moved to build **specific-purpose museums** rather than rely on general purpose museums. For example,

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

– **Ten tribal freedom fighter museums** are being established across the country to recognise the role of tribal freedom fighters against colonial rule. For example, the Prime Minister launched the **Birsa Munda museum** in Ranchi.

– The **Pradhan Mantri Sangrahalaya** was inaugurated to showcase the contributions made by every Prime Minister of India and to pay a tribute to every PM of India since independence.

– In addition, **the Statue of Unity** to showcase the various facets of Patel, the **Biplobi Bharat museum** in Kolkata, the **arms and armour museum** at the Red Fort, a gallery on Gautama Buddha in Delhi, and the museum on Jammu and Kashmir have been established.

c) Third, now museums are looked at with a **whole-of-government approach** to provide a wholesome experience. India is home to over 1,000 museums representing different cultural, religious and scientific achievements. These museums do not just lie under the control of the Ministry of Culture. In fact, Other Ministries either manage or coordinate. For example,

– Indian railway manages the Railway museums,

– The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** assists the **National Council of Science Museums**, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture to manage its 25 science cities, centres and museums.

– The government is widening public access through **modernisation** and **digitisation** of collections and exhibitions.

Fourth, the government has moved towards **modernisation, upgradation, and establishment** of new museums. These institutions will be closer to international standards of museology in the 21st century.

What are the challenges?

The adoption of such approaches like a **whole-of-government approach** among other requires new specialized domains of skills and perspectives. It requires continued upgradation of **Human capacities** and **domain knowledge**.

There are also challenges in **modernising** our **traditional museums** to make them more interactive, through technology interfaces, innovative curatorial skills and imaginative storytelling. It needs more **imaginative thinking** and has a different set of challenges.

The efforts in **digitisation** and **reprography** are painstaking processes that can take several years to complete.

Way Forward

The **new Indian Institute of Heritage** that is being set up as a world class university aims to address these challenges.

The Ministry of Culture's **first-of-its-kind Global Summit** on '**Reimagining Museums in India**' taught a lot of things which can be incorporated to devise a blueprint for the development of **new museums**, nurture a **renewal framework**, and reinvigorate **existing museums**.

General Studies Paper – 2

PERARIVALAN'S RELEASE AND RELATED ISSUES

1. **In Perarivalan's case, the constitutional battle between governor and government**

Source: The post is based on an article “**In Perarivalan's case, the constitutional battle between governor and government**” published in the Indian Express on 20th May 2022.

Syllabus: GS2 Provisions of the Constitution of India

Relevance: The President, The Governor's Pardoning Power

News: Recently, the Supreme Court of India exercised its power under Article 142 of the Constitution and ordered the release of A.G. Perarivalan, a convict in the Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case.

This has put an end to the battle between the Raj Bhavan and Secretariat that has lasted more than two decades.

What is the legal position on mercy pleas?

The **Article 72** of the Constitution of India allows the convicts to file a mercy plea to the **President**. However, the constitution has not stipulated a time period for the consideration of the mercy pleas.

The **Article 161** allows the convicts to file mercy pleas to **the Governor**. The Madras HC has ruled that the governor cannot exercise the power of pardon without the advice of the council of ministers.

Section 433A of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) mentions that the prisoners cannot be released from prison unless they had served a **minimum sentence of 14 years** in prison.

The court opined that a life sentence means imprisonment for the remainder of one's life. The convicts can apply for remission under Sec.432, CrPC. This can be done in cases where death sentences are commuted.

Background of the present case

The assailants were tried under the **Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987 (TADA)**. Perarivalan was given the death sentence by the Special Court and was confirmed by the SC in 1998.

The convict petitioned the **Tamil Nadu Governor** for mercy under **Article 161**. The Governor had dismissed the petitions.

The Convicts also filed mercy plea to the President of India. However, **Pratibha Patil, The President of India** rejected the mercy pleas of the convicts after a delay of 11 years

Later, when the convicts were about to be executed, the convicts moved the Madras HC challenging the execution of the death warrant. Further, the case was transferred to the Supreme Court.

The SC ruled that the president's non-consideration of the mercy plea was not within a reasonable time. The president took 11 years. Therefore, their death penalty was commuted to the sentence of life imprisonment.

Later on, all the convicts applied for remission from the governor. The state cabinet also advised the governor to grant pardon. After inordinate delay, the convicts moved to the court. The court held that “**the Governor cannot sit on the state's recommendation on the release of all**

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

seven life convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case for so long". The court was informed that the governor was awaiting the final report of the CBI's Multi-Disciplinary Monitoring Agency (MDMA).

Later, the **T N Assembly** passed a resolution granting mercy to the seven accused in 2018. The governor did not take any action. The convict reached **the Supreme Court** where the governor stated that the matter was to be dealt with by the President. This matter has been dealt with in the present case.

What has been ruled in the present case?

The court ruled that the **authority** to grant pardon is with **the governor** and he is bound by the **advice** of the state government.

The court held that the **action of the governor** in delaying the matter for more than **2.5 years** was unacceptable.

The court stated that "**a barbaric crime does not have to be visited with a barbaric penalty**". India's penal system is undoubtedly reformatory and not retributive.

Way Forward

The Office of the Governor has often been manipulated by the government at the centre. This has perverted the constitutional scheme. The governor's office should not be manipulated for narrow political considerations. The Governor should work based on his wisdom.

2. Law and public opinion: On Perarivalan release

Source: The post is based on an article "**Law and public opinion: On Perarivalan release**" published in the "**The Hindu**" on **19th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 – Important Provisions of the Constitutions of India

Relevance: Governor's Power

News: Recently, the Supreme Court ordered the release of A.G. Perarivalan, one of the seven convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

How was he released?

The Supreme Court has invoked its extraordinary powers under **Article 142 of the Constitution of India**.

Why was he released?

The mother of the convict, vast sections of public opinion and many political parties have been campaigning for years for his freedom. He drew **public sympathy** because he was only 19 at the time of assassination.

In 2018, the **State cabinet** recommended the **release** to the **governor**. However, the Governor referred the advice to the President. The Centre argued, that the cases involving murder under the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** come under the **President's exclusive jurisdiction** in matters of remission of life sentences.

What has been held by the Supreme Court?

The **remission** comes under the State's jurisdiction. Therefore, the Governor is bound by the State Cabinet's advice when acting under **Article 161**. Therefore, the governor's reference to the President was "**inimical to the scheme of the Constitution**".

The **Governor's remission powers** are exercised solely on the **State Cabinet advice**. The release of these convicts would require the **Centre's concurrence** under CrPC.

What remains to be resolved?

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

The Supreme Court failed to clear the issues of the **absence of any time-frame** for the President or the Governor to decide on the matter. Traditionally, this has been the cause of **indefinitely delay** in executive decisions.

GS2 – POLITY – PARLIAMENT AND STATE LEGISLATURE

DELIMITATION COMMISSION IN INDIA

3. **Delimitation fallout needs no political**

Source: The post is based on an article “**Delimitation fallout needs no political forecasting**” published in the “**The Hindu**” on **19th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 Functioning of the Parliament of India

Relevance: Delimitation of Parliamentary Constituencies

News: India’s electoral democracy is going to observe the delimitation of the constituencies for the Lok Sabha. This will be based on the population figures returned by the next decennial Census post 2026.

Arrangements made in the Constitution of India

Article 82 of the Constitution of India provided for a periodic, Census-linked re-arrangement of constituencies to make the representation in Parliament tenable.

History of India as Bharat

India’s foundation for the **Bharat** that is mentioned in Article 1 of our Constitution can be traced back in the history of India.

North India has often been referred to as **Upper India**. North India always had the upper hand in the affairs of the nation, of being bigger, and more populous. The nation’s capital has always been in the North. These things reinforced the perceived image of India’s north as **India’s political summit**.

The Indian National Congress (INC) always kept India’s regions at **equal front** and **symmetry**. For example, It conducted its annual session in **South India** vis-à-vis at Bombay (1885), Madras (1887), Amaravati/Amraoti (1897), Coconada (1923), Belgaum (1924), and Avadi, Madras (1955) among others.

The **All-India Kisan Sabha**, the peasant wing of the **Communist Party of India** also conducted its sessions very pointedly in southern venues as much as in northern. For example, at Palasa (in 1940), and at Srikakulam.

What are/may be the issues in India’ electoral representation?

At present

The **543 Members of Parliaments (MPs)** represents a vastly increased population in the Lok Sabha. If there is a high number of people per constituency, then each voter yields a lower impact on **parliamentary representation**.

Issues in case of re-arrangement of constituencies post-2026

The delimitation will give more MPs to the States/UTs having greater population growth, and will give less MPs to the state/UTs having low population growth.

For example, according to the projections made by the **Technical Group** formed by the **National Commission on Population for 2011-36**, the share of the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan would increase in India’s total population. Whereas, the share of the states of Tamil Nadu, undivided Andhra, Kerala and West Bengal will see decline in India’s Population in 2026.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

The delimitation will inevitably lead to a **reduced representation** for States that have managed to **stabilise** their populations, and to a higher representation for States that have not stabilised their populations.

What are the alternatives?

One, the government can go on for another freeze until all States have achieved population stabilisation. [Note: To solve this anomaly, **the 42nd Amendment of the Constitution** was enacted to cause delimitation freeze in 1976 and same was extended to **2026** through the **84th Amendment**]

Two, the demographic and statistical experts can devise a **mathematical model** along the lines of the '**Cambridge Compromise**' used for the apportionment of the seats of the European Parliament between the member-states. The formula needs to be customised for our needs.

Way Forward

India cannot afford a tension on the **north-south front**. Therefore, the **upperness syndrome** of the past should not come back in the guise of delimitation.

At present, the most important thing is that India needs to limit its population, not representation. The southern States or the population-stabilising States of India continue to enrich our legislative and parliamentary processes.

GS2 – POLITY – CONSTITUTIONAL AND OTHER BODIES

NITI AAYOG AND RELATED ISSUES

4. [Reforming the NITI Aayog](#)

Source: This post is based on the article "**Reforming the NITI Aayog**" published in **Business Standard** on **16th May 22**.

Syllabus: GS2 – Govt policies and interventions

Relevance: Reforming NITI Aayog

Context: The justification for the establishment of the NITI Aayog has been more or less disproved by the way development policies are being formulated in the present Union government regime.

[Why NITI Aayog was established?](#)

The word "niti" in Hindi means policy and one can say NITI Aayog is the Policy Commission of the Union government.

The Planning Commission was designed for a top-down command economy and had to be replaced because India is a diversified country, and its states are in various phases of economic development along with their own strengths and weaknesses.

In this context, a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to economic planning is obsolete. It cannot make India competitive in today's global economy.

[What kind of role has NITI Aayog played since it was established?](#)

Looking at the work of the NITI Aayog over the past seven years, it would appear that its role in development policy has been mainly that of a **formulator of programmes** to realise grand goals announced from above.

– **For instance:** The prime minister announced that agricultural incomes would be doubled by 2022-23 and the NITI Aayog had to work out how this improbable target could be achieved.

A visit to the NITI Aayog website and the list of reports and papers it has prepared show that it **focuses mainly on sectoral issues** rather than on the overall development strategy.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

– One indicator of this is the **retaining of the old Planning Commission's sectoral divisions** but winding up of the large and influential Perspective Planning Division and Finance Division into a relatively small **Economics and Finance Division**, which seems to focus more on monitoring than on developing growth or equity or sustainability strategies.

[What are the issues involved?](#)

No medium- or long-term strategy formulation by NITI Aayog: Most policy initiatives seem to be shaped by immediate sectoral compulsions and political impact and lack a long-term perspective.

Top-down approach: Formulation of development policy is now top-down, not just with the Union government imposing its vision, but with the head of the Union government playing that role. The public hoardings and other publicity measures that associate virtually every governmental activity with the image of the prime minister (as in the Covid vaccine certificates) reinforce this perception.

The real problem of **strategy formation for development** is that it is not being done. The NITI Aayog has produced some vision documents; but they are not agreed strategies, formulated after widespread consultations with experts and discussion with the states.

[What are some key features of a development strategy?](#)

A grand strategy for development must spell out the **opportunities and threats** faced by the key objectives of development which are growth, equity and sustainability.

It must then **identify the changes** in the role of the public and private sector, shifts in global economic alliances and policy shifts that are required to maximise benefits from opportunities and manage risks from threats.

The time frame for a grand strategy has to be **long-term**, but the more specific strategies derived from it must take into account **short- and medium-term challenges** that the country faces.

[What are the challenges to India's future growth?](#)

The most immediate challenge for growth is the **disruption of the global economy** brought about by the Ukraine war and related sanctions, the **Covid shutdowns** in China and the **rising tide of inflation**.

The goal of **equity in growth** is a another difficult challenge.

Sustainability of growth: This includes components like climate change, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions etc

[What are the steps that need to be taken?](#)

India needs a strategy to **grow rapidly in a global economy** in which competitive advantages will be shaped by new-age technologies like, machine learning, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, etc. A grand strategy that does this can then be the basis for more specific strategies for infrastructure, technology development, educational quality, and skill formation and so on.

To ensure equity in growth, we need to **design and implement an employment generation and skill development strategy** that would allow the disadvantaged to earn enough to raise their living standards in a market environment. This strategy can be supplemented with public support for education, health care and social security.

India also needs to **tackle the inequality in the pace of development between states**, like the northern and eastern states and the southern, western and north-western states.

A grand strategy for sustainability must **look beyond just climate change** to the broader challenge of environmental conservation in a rapidly changing production and consumption

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

environment.

Way forward

NITI Aayog must bring in the talent required and launch a process of broad-based consultation, particularly with the states, to secure a **broad national consensus on a long-term growth strategy**.

Specific programmes must be based on the implementation of this strategy.

The NITI Aayog must be converted from a Department of Development Implementation to a High Command of Development Strategy.

GS2 – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS – EFFECT OF POLICIES AND POLITICS OF DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ON INDIA'S INTERESTS

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

5. **Putin's Made India The Swing State In Geopolitics**

Source: The post is based on an article “**Putin's Made India The Swing State In Geopolitics**” published in **the Times of India** on **21st May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 International Relations, Bilateral Relations, Regional Grouping, Multilateral Relations

Relevance: India as a Swing State; India's position in the global and regional geopolitics

News: Currently, The Russia-Ukraine War is ongoing. And the Prime Minister of India is going to attend the Quad summit in Tokyo next week.

What are the developments in the Russia-Ukraine war?

Although Ukraine may never become a NATO member, it is being strongly supported by the Western countries.

Sweden and Finland formally applied to join NATO. This will infuriate Russia. It will change forever the nature of European security.

What are the consequences of recent developments?

(A) Russian Worries

Russia may end up at the bottom end of the spectrum in terms of **global political** and **economic isolation**.

According to reports, Russia's imports from **technologically advanced countries** are dropping exponentially. This will impact **Russia's ability** to manufacture complex weapons and systems. The war has pushed the Western countries to seize **Russian government** and **oligarch assets** overseas and use that for Ukraine's reconstruction because Europe is not willing to pay for Russia wrong.

(B) Some European worries

The US is being accused of changing its war aims from **Ukraine** to **Russia**. It is putting Europe at the centre of it.

The war has escalated to a position to which Both Russia and Europe had not planned on.

What are the challenges for India?

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

The Indian leadership had the tough task of doing **two things** at once – explaining India's **Russia policy** due to India's **traditional dependence** on Russia, and focussing on **partnering** with Europe in clean, green, tech-powered development.

The war has led to increase in **energy costs**, **fertiliser costs** and **general inflation** which have become headache for **India's post-pandemic recovery**

The war has challenged India's plan to transition to a **less carbonised future**. Therefore, the war is rapidly becoming India's war.

Way Forward

India's leadership has explained to his European counterparts that India is accelerating its **diversification** away from Russian military equipment.

The Indian government needs to engage with its international partners and tell them about India's interest and plans to deal with the current mess.

India needs to address the challenge of **rising** and asserting China. India should build a partnership with Europe that is clean, green, digital and non-China.

In the new strategic context, India in many respects is acting as **a swing state**. However, it is in its **best interests** that it bends its **trajectory** more to the West. There is a growing space for India. The United States and Europe desire to engage more fundamentally with India. Therefore, India should think big with the US on the **Indo-Pacific** and **global security**.

6. [A war that is shrinking India's geopolitical options](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**A war that is shrinking India's geopolitical options**" published in the "**The Hindu**" on **17th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 International Relations, Bilateral, Grouping, Multilateral relations

Relevance: Global and Asian Geopolitics, India-China Relations, India-Russia relations

News: The confrontation between Russia and Ukraine is now raging on with no end in sight, and with its long-term implications yet unknown.

What are the consequences for India?

India's initial phase of diplomatic rush is over. Its geopolitical options are shrinking as the war drags on.

Diminishing options

Earlier, India's balancing act propelled it to the centre stage of **global attention**. Therefore, a number of **high-profile visits** were seen in India. India had a number of geopolitical options. But, the number of **options** seems to be **limited** for at least **three reasons**:

One, **Russia** which is a key strategic partner of India is **no longer available** to India for balancing purposes. Now, Moscow is more dependent on India today than the other way round.

Two, By the time the war ends, **Asia's regional balance of power** would be shifted in Beijing's favour. Therefore, India's challenge of managing China would continue to increase. The Ukraine war has complicated the China conundrum for India.

Three, today, the **focus** of the **United States** and its **western partners** has **shifted** from China and the Indo-Pacific to the **Ukraine theatre**. Further, the war will further weaken the **American influence** in the **Southern Asian region** due to preoccupations with the European theatre.

Others

In the longer run, a war-fatigued and weakened **Russia** will become a **junior partner** to China. For New Delhi, instead of how to please both sides in this war, now the bigger question is how manage China which is rapidly consolidating in the region under its influence.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

Today, India's **immediate to medium term engagement** with Russia can have a **second-order fallout** in the **medium to long term**.

War is impacting India's **north-western continental strategy** towards Afghanistan and Central Asia. Earlier, India withdrew from Afghanistan due to Taliban's return. This led to decline in **India's strategic interests** in Afghanistan. Now, due to war, China's role into the region will increase, so **India's footprint** will be reduced in the Central Asian region.

Measures taken by India

The Chinese Foreign Minister's visit to India is an indication that Beijing also seeks to calm the tempers on the LAC.

During the Chinese Foreign Minister visit, Indian leaders made it clear that the normalisation of **diplomatic** and **political ties** between India and China can happen only after the **disengagement** of troops from the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The Indian Prime Minister is to attend the BRICS Summit in China. It should leverage the summit.

India can exploit **China-Russia ties**. At present, Moscow can **nudge** Beijing to stop its aggression on the LAC. If China heats up the LAC at present, India would have to turn to the West and the U.S. for political, diplomatic, and intelligence support which would not be in Russian interests. It is important that two of its **Asian friends** China and India do not clash, at least while the war is still on.

What are the challenges if India exploits Russia-China ties?

If China stabilises the LAC at the **nudging** of Russia, it would also expect India to go slow on the Indo-Pacific.

At present due to the Ukraine war, India cannot utilise the **many inherent contradictions** between Moscow and Beijing.

Moscow should understand that the Ukraine war is going to boost Beijing's attempts to take over its **backyard** using **economic means**, which the **NATO** has been doing to Russia using military means.

GS2 – GOVERNANCE – ISSUES RELATED TO DEV & MGMT OF EDU

HIGHER EDUCATION AND RELATED ISSUES

7. The technical higher education market dissected

Source: The post is based on an article "**The technical higher education market dissected**" published in the "**The Hindu**" on **17th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 Social Sector; Higher Education

Relevance: Higher Technical Education Reforms

News: During the past two years, the higher education technical institutions have seen a drop of 18.3% and 6.01% in the number of institutions and intake capacity, respectively.

Background of technical higher education

Much of the growth in technical higher education has been after 1991, when the **All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)** became functional.

Between 1961 and 1991, the number of technical higher education institutions increased five times (53 to 277) and the enrolment increased Six times. Most of this growth has been in the government sector.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

Between 1991-2020, the institutions have gone up by 40 times and the intake capacity rose 15 times to touch **32.85 lakh**. Much of this expansion has been in the private sector.

What are the issues?

Supply exceeds demand: The total demand (based on number of students appearing in NEET, JEE etc.) for **technical higher education** appears to be more than overall available seats. Therefore, a large number of technical institutions are unable to fill their sanctioned seats. Their **capacity utilisation** is falling which stands at 53.53% in 2020-21.

The AICTE prescribes a minimum specific **student-teacher ratio (STR)**, ranging from 7.5 to 20. However, the majority of the institutions are unable to admit students. Therefore, their **STR** has gone down from 5.5 in 2012-13 to 3.0 in 2020-21 due to inadequate admissions.

Due to lower STR, these institutions are threatened by lack of **economic sustainability**. This has a **negative impact** on the creation of **quality infrastructure and human resources**.

In order to increase admission, the institutions demand for relaxation in the **eligibility criteria** for admissions. For example, relaxation in minimum percentage of marks in the school board, condition of studying science and mathematics at the intermediate level in schools, etc.

The technical **higher educational institutions** are differentiated and highly hierarchical. For example, the IIT, the NIT, the IIIT, etc. among others are the most sought after.

The **high-quality private institutions** resort to an **exploitative pricing policy**. They charge high fees. After all, **the Veblen Effect** (what is expensive is perceived to be excellent) also works in higher education institutions.

Way Forward

The AICTE should provide a **broad framework** and guidelines for determining the permissible level of fees. Then, **the State-level fee fixation committees** should work. This would be in the **true spirit of federalism** which expects States to be a responsible partner in the process.

AICTE Act mandates it “to take necessary steps to prevent **commercialisation** of (in) technical education”.

The **AICTE** should take all such steps for the **coordinated** and **integrated development** and **maintenance of standards**.

GS2 – SOCIAL ISSUES – HEALTH RELATED ISSUES

HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE IN INDIA

8. Improving cold chain systems

Source: The post is based on an article “**Improving cold chain systems**” published in the “**The Hindu**” on **18th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 Social Sector; health Sector

Relevance: Vaccine Cold Chain Management

News: The pandemic showed us that there were weak links in the supply chain, especially in the cold chain. This means that vaccines alone do not save lives. It requires a **strong service delivery network**,

What are the factors that can lead us to a sustainable vaccination programme?

A key factor is **cold chain management** because improper supply of vaccines can lead to decline in the potency or effectiveness of the vaccine.

In addition to cold chain management, electricity is required as a supportive infrastructure for cold chains.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

Why should India build a strong foundation for the cold chain system?

India runs the **Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)** to deliver routine immunisation. It was launched in 1985. Further, the programme was revitalized in 2014 to achieve full immunisation coverage of all children and pregnant women at a rapid pace.

India has rolled out one of the largest vaccination drives (Covid-19) in the world. The COVID-19 vaccination efforts relied on the **cold chain infrastructure** established under the UIP.

The pandemic has also encouraged an interest in **preventive health technology**, especially in vaccines.

Globally, nearly half the vaccines distributed around the world go to **waste** due to a failure to properly control storage temperatures.

In India, around 20% of **temperature-sensitive healthcare products** are found damaged due to insufficient cold chains.

Way Forward

The government has developed a **cloud-based digital platform** Co-WIN. This helped to facilitate registration, immunisations and appointments, and issues digital vaccine certificates, highlighting the benefits of digitisation.

The Health Ministry has been digitising the **vaccine supply chain network** through the use of cloud technology. For example, **the Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN)** is being developed with support from **Gavi**, the **Vaccine Alliance**, and implemented by the **UN Development Programme**. This will support healthcare workers in the last mile in **supervising** and maintaining the **efficiency** of the vaccine cold chain.

There is a need to **improve electrification**, especially in the last mile. The **solar-driven technology** can be explored to integrate sustainable development. For instance, 72% of the functioning health centres in Chhattisgarh have been solarised to tackle disruption in service.

The world including India need to **build back better and stronger**. In the post-covid era, there is an opportunity to develop **unbroken** and **resilient cold chain systems** that can augment the **immunisation landscape**.

The government needs to invest in the cold chain management for immunisation facilities. This would lead to **India's future pandemic preparedness**.

ISSUES RELATED TO PUBLIC HEALTH

9. [Bridging the health policy to execution chasm](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Bridging the health policy to execution chasm**" published in the "**The Hindu**" on **20th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 Social Sector, Health Sector

Relevance: Public Health Professionals or Public Health Management Cadre, Indian Public Health Standards

News: The Union government has released a **guidance document** on the setting up of a '**public health and management cadre**' (**PHMC**) as well as revised editions of **the Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS)** for ensuring quality health care in government facilities.

Background

The health sector has been facing **multiple challenges** of handling an **epidemic** and **pandemic** in the last few decades like avian flu in 2005-06, the Swine flu pandemic of 2009-10 etc. There

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

has been **emergence** and re-**emergence** of **new viruses** and **diseases** (Zika, Ebola, Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic fever, Nipah viruses, etc.)

The National Health Policy **2017** recommended for the '**public health and management cadre**' in India.

What are the issues in India's health care system?

Traditionally, the focus of public health services has been on medical care or attention on treating the sick.

At present, most Indian States have a **teaching cadre** involved as faculty in the medical colleges and a **specialist cadre of doctors** involved in clinical services in clinics and hospitals.

The above structure restricts similar career **progression opportunities** to two teaching cadres and specialist's cadre.

Therefore, health-care professionals have **limited interest in opting for public health** as a career choice.

India has a perennial shortage of trained public health workforce and infrastructure. This shortage is likely to drift India towards a **medicalised care system**.

Despite the first release of the IPHS 15 years ago, only a small proportion around 15% to 20% of government health-care facilities meet the Indian Public Health standards (IPHS).

There has not been much attention on **public health services** and **workforce** in India. There was little policy attention on a need for a public health cadre and services in India.

Importance of the revised guidance documents, PHMC etc.

The public health and management cadres and the revised IPHS can help India to make progress towards the **NHP goal**.

The proposed **public health cadre** and **the health management cadre** have the potential to address the weaknesses in our health care system.

– India's pandemic response failed because there was an absence of trained public health professionals at the policy and decision making-levels in India. The **doctors/clinicians** or a **bureaucrat** could not fulfil the role of the epidemiologists and public health specialists who are in a better position to deal with a pathogen and its behaviour.

The revised version focuses on increasing access and then ensuring quality health services through public health facilities,

What are the challenges ahead?

The **implementation** of the previous versions of the **guidance documents** has not been up to mark. For example, the IPHS has not been implemented properly in the last 15 years. Therefore, it is difficult to predict the outcome of the PHMC guidance document.

This has been thwarted due to inadequacy in the two primary factors in effective implementation:

(1) **Inadequate financial allocations** and (2) **Inadequate trained workforce**.

Way Forward

The revised IPHS is an **important development** but not an end itself. There should be an **independent assessment** on how the IPHS has improved the quality of health services.

The **Fifteenth Finance Commission** grant for the five-year period of 2021- 26 and the **Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM)** allocations are the new assured sources of funding for public health services. They can be used to strengthen the public health services.

A **centre of excellence** in every State should be designated to guide the process for implementation of the public health and management cadres. The reluctant states should be nudged through appropriate incentives.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

The government can do **mapping** and an analysis of **human resources** available for recruitment for public health. They should be well trained. Setting up these two new cadres should be used as an opportunity to improve and standardise the quality of training in public health institutions. The implementation of PHMC should start in the next **few months** to avoid the risk of it becoming a low priority.

The health staff available should be **equally distributed** for all other categories at government health facilities. Further, the vacancies of health staff should be filled up fast.

10. **Focusing on public health engineering**

Source: The post is based on an article “**Focusing on public health engineering**” published in the “**The Hindu**” on **17th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 – Issues related to Health

Relevance: **Public Health Engineering**

News: According to Startup India, one in five children die before their fifth birthday because of poor sanitation and hygiene conditions.

What are the environmental degradation problems?

Global

According to the United Nations, Globally, around 80% of wastewater flows back into the ecosystem without being treated or reused which pose a significant environmental and health threat.

India

According to the **World Bank**, about **70%** of **sewage** is discharged untreated into India’s water bodies. This contaminated water led to a staggering 21% of diseases in India,

What are the issues involved?

Both as professions and as practice, **engineering** and **public health** have been traditionally understood as different fields in India.

In India, **public health engineering** is executed by the PWD or by health officials. This differs from **international trends**. For example, **Europe** has specialized candidates in wastewater engineering.

There is the issue of **population growth**, diminishing resources and risky exploitation of natural resources.

Currently, the civil engineers don’t have **adequate skills** to address public health problems. And **public health professionals** do not have adequate engineering skills. Both fail to understand the nexus between wastewater and solid waste management and public health issues clearly.

Majority of **diseases** are **water-related** like transmitted through consumption of contaminated water, vectors breeding in stagnated water, etc.

What steps need to be taken?

It is essential to find and implement **innovative ways** of treating wastewater to achieve sustainable development goals of clean water and sanitation.

Innovative solutions are also needed to address the **growing demands** for water consumption and **preservation** of both surface water bodies and groundwater resources.

There is a need to expand the **scope** of **public health/environmental engineering science**.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

Both **engineering** and **public health field**, together can work in different fields like **wastewater treatment systems**, for understanding **complex quality** and monitoring processes, designing and managing **septic tank systems**, supplying good quality water in adequate quantities, etc.

The Government should launch **public health engineering** as a two-year structured master's degree programme or through diploma. It should be developed as an interdisciplinary field. Public health professionals can be groomed through **in-service training**.

The **health** and **engineering institutes** should provide knowledge in areas of **environment science** in the refresher course.

On one side, **public health professionals** can contribute to engineering through well-researched understanding of health issues, etc. Similarly, engineers can contribute to **public health** through their problem-solving approach. Thus, combination of **engineering** and **public health skills** can lead to development of **public health engineering**.

The **decentralised** and **onsite wastewater management systems** should be designed based on **hydro-geological data** and observations of climate patterns.

Public health engineering can help **policymakers** to understand processes, trends, and the latest technology in water and wastewater quality monitoring, treatment, and management.

There is a need to **hire environmental engineers** to address **public health problems**.

Institutions like the **Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M)** are considering initiating public health engineering as a separate discipline.

In wake of India's **Jal Jeevan Mission**, India needs a cadre of public health engineers, who can help in identification of sustainable sources of water, monitoring the quantity and quality of supply, among other things.

GS2 – GOVERNANCE – GOVT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS

GYANVAPI MOSQUE ISSUE

11. **On Gyanvapi Mosque, we are debating the wrong question**

Source: This post is based on the article “**On Gyanvapi Mosque, we are debating the wrong question**” published in **The Indian Express** on **18th May 22**.

Syllabus: GS2 – Govt policies and interventions

Relevance: Gyanvapi Mosque dispute

Context: Recently, the Varanasi court ordered a video survey of the Gyanvapi Mosque. The implied intention was to find out whether the fundamental claim of the petitioners that the mosque has been built by destroying or appropriating a temple is correct or not.

This issue here is not about secularism or that of minority rights. The question is, how will the “true nature” of our conflicted architectural sites be defined, and who has the power to define it. Reading architecture with political philosophy tells us that that depends on **what values we adopt in state formation**.

How modern values of state formation are different?

Historically, rulers derived legitimacy primarily in two ways:

– **In the case of intra-state matters**, the legitimacy for the king to rule came from God in the Abrahamic world and from mythology in the Pagan world.

– **The case of inter-state matters**, kings asserted themselves through brute force and violence. The values of pre-modern state formation were divine/mythological and violent/expansionist.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

It was against these values that those rulers judged the function of architectural sites. A ruler who possessed the building by conquering the city or by becoming the king through **clerical legitimacy** decided what a mosque, temple or palace will be appropriated into or whether it will be allowed to exist at all.

Since the French Revolution, the legitimacy is now not derived from divinity, or any historical practice, and rejects violence. This has generated a long history of political thought and modern states were created on the **values of modern morality**.

[What is the legal position wrt conversion of a place of worship?](#)

As per the **Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991**, the conversion of any place of worship from its religious character as that character existed on the 15th of August, 1947 is prohibited.

– Basically, the Act states that if a site was a temple on August 15, 1947, it shall remain a temple and so on for all religious sites.

Reason for selecting 15th Aug 1947 as the cut-off date: The Act does so in the spirit of a modern nation-state. It means that since we resolved to become a modern nation on August 15, 1947, and realised it on January 26, 1950, we shall cut our ties with the systems of politics that defined our past.

– On the 15th of August 1947, India resolved to create a break from the past and **redefine its values of political legitimacy**. From that day onwards, India was to be defined by, and courts were to judge conflicts using the **values of a modern state** enshrined in the constitution. Not against the values of the systems of politics or mythology that existed before.

[What are the issues with the court-ordered investigation in this case?](#)

As per the Places of Worship Act 1991, we define the “true nature” of our architectural sites against the values of modernity and not those of mythology or medieval warfare. The philosophical and practical resolution to that, as understood in the Act, is to **not entertain mythological claims to historical sites and to not investigate their archaeology for claims of possession**. By ordering a survey of the Gyanvapi Mosque, the courts have done exactly the opposite.

By conducting such investigations into religious sites, the courts have, like they did in the case of Babri Masjid, **legitimised the values of an anti-modern polity**. They have **acted against the values** that they are supposed to uphold. Courts cannot be acting on claims of mythology or those of medieval capture.

[Way forward](#)

Despite precedents that speak otherwise, the higher courts must maintain the status quo. Architecture of today shouldn't be defined by an arbitrarily chosen portion of its history. Such petitions need to be rejected.

ROAD SAFETY AND RELATED ISSUES

[12. The road to safety](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “The road to safety” published in the “The Hindu” on 16th May 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3 Infrastructure, Transport Infrastructure, Urban Infrastructure

Relevance: Issues and Problems in India's road infrastructure, road accidents

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

News: Recently, The Delhi government has initiated a drive to **enforce lane discipline**, starting with **strict compliance** on the bus lane. Trials over the last month have thrown up several lessons

What are the road-safety-related problems in India?

Every year, around 50,000 **accidents** take place in our mega Indian cities. A quarter of them are fatal, which leads to avoidable deaths. Nearly half of those who lose their lives are pedestrians. The burden of death is borne by the young. The **opportunity cost** of lost human lives is immense.

What are the causes of traffic, accidents, and others' problems in Indian Cities, especially Delhi?

Around half of the accidents occur on account of overspeeding and a **quarter** are due to dangerous **driving**. Further, almost half of the accidents are due to collisions with buses and trucks.

In India, in some cases, a **driving license** is obtained through wrongful means with help of an unscrupulous tout.

Even obtaining a license doesn't equip a person with driving etiquette like sticking to the lane; maintaining speed and traffic signals, etc. Therefore, there is a **large gap** between a **lab environment test** and **reality**.

The propensity of people to use **personal vehicles** instead of public transport also adds to the chaos. For example, Delhi has the **highest per capita registration** of personal vehicles — nearly 110 cars per 1,000 people, as against a national average of 25.

Measures taken by the Delhi government (Delhi Model)

Since 2009, In Delhi, the road deaths have gradually tapered despite **increasing numbers** of vehicles due to efforts of the Delhi Police. This has been done by working upon **black spots** by adopting **traffic-calming measures** and **enhanced enforcement**.

In case of deviations from the lane, the **bus driver** will invite harsh penalties. It would be useful to look at the **skill sets** of **Indian drivers**. A driving skill test confirms the ability of the driver to wield the wheel

To obtain a driving license – Delhi now has **automated driving test centres**, which have reduced the margin of **human intervention**.

Delhi's government is working on **road design** to accommodate all users fairly.

Delhi Traffic Police has installed speeding cameras in the city, with an **automatic number plate recognition system**. This has led to a spike in the number of challans and a slowdown of vehicles in the city.

The Way Forward

To obtain a driving license: the **simulator tests** and **psychological evaluation** could be embedded in the regulatory framework.

The city roads should be **remodelled** with intuitive **road designs** and **signages**. There should be **different zones** of road usage for pedestrians/cyclists, buses, and other vehicles.

There should be designated pick-up and drop-off points for taxis and auto-rickshaws. In this regard, a **pilot stretch** has been redesigned collaboratively with IIT Delhi.

There should be **cooperation** and **coordination** among all the important agencies directly and indirectly related to traffic problems such as the road-owning agency, the municipal body, the traffic police, and the transport enforcement wing for strict enforcement of the traffic rules.

Disciplining traffic requires a **collective behavioural change**. Therefore, the onus of change lies as much on **citizens** as on the government. The government can deploy **technology tools** and **artificial intelligence** to cause deterrence in traffic violations.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

The **public transport** system can be improved with the introduction of the **Mobility as a Service (MaaS) solutions**. This will integrate all options of public mobility on a common digital platform. A commuter could then choose to hop onto a bus, metro, a cab, or an auto.

A **government-backed digital aggregator** of all mobility options would make public transport more efficient and provide inbuilt solutions for last-mile and first-mile connectivity.

GS2 – POLITY – FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

SEDITION LAW IN INDIA

13. **On sedition, the Supreme Court has aligned itself with the collective conscience of India**

Source: This post is based on the article “**On sedition, the Supreme Court has aligned itself with the collective conscience of India**” published in **The Indian Express** on **18th May 22**.

Syllabus: GS2 – Fundamental Rights, Indian Constitution

Relevance: Sedition law

News: The Supreme Court’s seminal intervention in a batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of section 124A of the Indian Penal Code is a **watershed moment** in the progressive expansion of human rights jurisprudence.

The SC directed the Union government and the states to refrain from using the law of sedition. In addition, the Supreme Court has also kept all previous cases under Section 124A of the IPC in abeyance till the matter is reconsidered in a comprehensive way.

Why SC’s intervention in this case is significant?

In what is seen as a first in judicial history, the Supreme Court has virtually **rendered redundant the provision of a criminal law without expressly declaring it as unconstitutional**.

In an example of judicial statecraft, the court has **shielded individuals against a harsh law without violating Parliament’s legislative remit** or the executive’s command over policy decisions.

The intervention of the SC leans in the favour of the libertarian bent of the Indian Constitution.

Why the sedition law must go?

Rampant abuse of the archaic colonial law in recent times, compromising the citizens’ right to liberty & legal due process, right to reputation and dignity.

Suppression of dissent: Cartoonists, journalists, activists, intellectuals, students and politicians have suffered prolonged incarceration and oppressive criminal trials for their convictions and beliefs.

For more – Click [here](#)

What is the likely impact of the SC’s intervention in this case?

It can nudge the government to enact an **anti-lynching humanitarian law** and a comprehensive **law against custodial torture**, considering the proven inadequacy of the guidelines issued by it for its elimination.

What is the situation wrt custodial torture in India?

A report by the National Campaign Against Torture has confirmed that 1,731 persons died in custody in 2019 alone.

The **absence of an anti-custodial torture law**, a glaring gap in the architecture of the criminal justice system, is inexplicable considering the Article 21, recommendations of the Select Committee of Rajya Sabha (2010), the Law Commission of India (2017) and the Human Rights

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

Commission and the judgments of the Supreme Court (Puttaswamy, 2017; Jeeja Ghosh, 2016; and Shabnam, 2015).

Way forward

It is expected likewise from the court to intervene suitably and **read down the UAPA and other criminal laws** that have been repeatedly misused to trample upon the civil liberties and rights of the people.

This would **enhance India's soft power** in its engagement with the international community. The court-inspired initiatives would also **validate the nation's pre-eminent role in the shaping of a new world order.**

Governments for their part must know that they can stand only when founded upon liberty and justice. For the present, the prime minister has done well in deciding to revisit a law that is anathema in a free country.

14. In abeyance of Section 124A, a provisional relief

Source: The post is based on an article "In abeyance of Section 124A, a provisional relief" published in the "The Hindu" on 16th May 2022.

Syllabus: GS2 Important Provisions of the Constitution of India

Relevance: Sedition Law v/s Right to freedom of speech and expression

News: Recently, In Supreme Court of India in **S.G. Vombatkere vs Union of India** has directed governments, both at the level of the Union and the States, to keep "all pending trials, appeals and proceedings" arising out of a charge framed under Section 124A "in abeyance".

About Section 124A

How have the Court granted a temporary suspension of the provision?

The Union government has submitted an **affidavit** indicating a willingness to re-examine Section 124A.

The affidavit allowed the judges to issue such an interim order where the provision will be kept in abeyance until the Government, and Parliament, take a final call on the matter.

Argument against the provision

K.M. Munshi said in the Constituent Assembly, "*The criticism of the government is the essence of democracy*".

It is a **colonial-era law** used against India freedom fighters. For example, the act was invoked against Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mohandas Gandhi.

K.M. Munshi argued in the Constituent Assembly to delete the word "sedition" as a permitted restriction on free speech to prevent perpetuation of 124-A of the I.P.C". Therefore, The Constitution did not permit a restriction on free speech on the grounds of sedition.

The law has been used as a **restraint** on dissent, to crush opposition aimed at the government. The governments across India continued to charge people with the offence.

In the 1950s, two different High Courts struck down Section 124A as offensive to freedom.

In the **Kedarnath case**, the SC limited **the scope of law** to "acts involving intention or tendency to create disorder, or disturbance of law and order, or incitement to violence". However, the **limitations** imposed have rarely been observed. The law has been over exploited.

Since 1973, the sedition law has also been treated as a **cognisable offence**. The police can arrest a suspect without a warrant.

Since the **1962 Judgment**, the Supreme Court's reading of **fundamental rights** has undergone a **transformative change**. For instance, the Court has, in recent times, struck down **penal laws**

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

on grounds of lack of clarity in language, and of the chilling effect on free speech. The CJI had indicated that the law was an **anachronism**, a colonial-era relic.

Argument in favour

In 1962, the Supreme Court in **Kedar Nath Singh vs State of Bihar** declared the Section 124A as a valid restriction on free speech on grounds of public order.

The Way Forward

The government's intention of re-examining the law indicates that "the Sedition law is not in tune with the **current social milieu** in India.

The Court may constitute a Bench of **five judges** to decide upon the **constitutionality** of the sedition law.

GS2 – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS – INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

15. The neighbourhood in turmoil, lessons for India

Source: The post is based on an article "**The neighbourhood in turmoil, lessons for India**" published in the "**The Hindu**" on **21st May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 International Relations, Bilateral Relations, Regional Grouping etc.

Relevance: India's Foreign policy to deal with countries in our immediate neighbourhood

Context: India's **foreign policy** while dealing with the neighbouring countries in the South Asia Region has **changed** from 2016 to the present.

Rather than prevailing over any uncooperative neighbour using any means possible, India has now shifted towards using soft-power diplomacy, thereby improving ties with each of the South Asian countries.

However, it has virtually ignored the political developments in Pakistan.

What are the changes that have taken place in India's foreign policy?

Foreign Policy pre-2016

The Government of India adopted a "**muscular foreign policy**" with the **uncooperative South Asian neighbour**. For example, India put Pakistan on notice on terror attacks. It also cancelled Foreign Secretary-level talks with Pakistan. Further, India has been alleged to have intervened in the Sri Lanka's and Nepal's domestic Politics.

Foreign Policy post 2016

India has abandoned its uniformly muscular "**one size fits all**" approach to the region. At present, the government has made peace with a much **more consensual**, and **conciliatory policy** in the neighbourhood.

– For example, India has not been held responsible in any of its neighbouring countries, namely Myanmar, Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka which have undergone electoral changes. India has been **improving** its **ties** with each country (except Pakistan) in South Asia through high-level visits, extending development aid and lines of credit, and enabling a rush of soft power diplomacy.

India is focused on **people** in the neighbourhood rather than just those in power. For example, in **Afghanistan**, India negotiated with Pakistani officials to ensure it could send **food grains** for the Afghan people.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

India has toned down **rhetoric** on **domestic issues** in the neighbourhood. For example, the Indian Government's public reaction to **Durga Pooja violence** against Bangladesh's Hindu minority in 2021.

Way Forward

India cannot maintain a **silent** or "**neutral**" position in relations to South Asian Countries. This is not in the interest of India.

– For example, India faces the direct impact of almost every crisis in South Asian country like refugee influx, economic crisis etc. Therefore, they must be watched more closely.

India should learn that the potent combination of **populism, hyper-nationalism, religious majoritarianism, and a strident anti-elitism** does not pay in the long run.

– For example, the popular leader may come to power, but their popularity can decline sharply and suddenly. For example, fall of K.P. Oli, Imran Khan and Mahindra Rajapaksa in Sri Lanka. This means nothing is forever, especially in a democracy.

The **economy matters** above all.

– For example, In **Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka**, the defeat of populists has come due to slowdown in **growth, jobs and rising inflation**, instead of the Opposition parties. The **economic mismanagement** has brought changes in the neighbourhood

India must survey the impact of **new vulnerabilities** on smaller neighbouring countries as the vulnerabilities could be exploited by **global powers** like China

New Delhi must find newer ways to **energise regional groupings** such as the **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)** and the **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) Initiative**.

Finally, the Indian government must learn that **lack of consensus building** in political culture let down the popular leaders in neighbouring democracies.

– For example, Rajapaksa, Oli and Khan turned their opposition into "the enemy", and froze out the media, non-governmental organisations

INDIA AND AFGHAN RELATIONS

16. Help Afghans

Source: The post is based on an article "**Help Afghans**" published in **the Times of India** on **19th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 International Relations; Regional Grouping; Bilateral Relations etc.

Relevance: India-Afghanistan Relations; Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure

News: At present, the four-day meeting of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure** is being organized in Delhi, India.

Importance of the meeting

At present the **global attention** has been shifted to the Ukraine war, sanctions and their economic impact. Therefore, the US has abandoned Afghanistan to the **Taliban**. Therefore, SCO's RAT member countries, including those from Pakistan and China are focussing on Afghanistan.

Situation in Afghanistan

This is a **virtual collapse** of **administrative structures**, the **local economy, Healthcare facilities** etc. Around half of the Afghanistan's population is facing acute hunger.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

The **humanitarian** and **social condition** in Afghanistan has become terrible. For example, Girls can't attend secondary education, women can't get a driving licence and a job in the market. The **Afghan refugees** are pouring into neighbouring countries like Iran and Pakistan.

India's concern

The security situation in Afghanistan affects all SCO members, including India.

The **Islamic State** and the **Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan** have stepped up their activities on both sides of the **Durand Line**.

This jeopardises India's **painstaking investments** in Afghanistan over the last two decades.

Pakistan always tries to block Indian moves to work more closely with Tehran to maintain a **strategic foothold** in the region.

Most of the governments are reluctant to deal with the Taliban. Therefore, there is absence of any **concerted global effort** to help.

Way Forward

India should help itself by continuing to **send humanitarian aid** to Afghanistan despite the Taliban regime.

In addition, the government should also expedite **emergency visas** for Afghan nationals.

INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA

17. [For a better South Asian neighbourhood](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**For a better South Asian neighbourhood**" published in the **Indian Express** on **17th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 – International Relations, Regional Grouping

Relevance: SAARC, South Asia, India's Neighbourhood Policy, India's bilateral relations with the South Asian Countries

News: Recently, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Pakistan have been facing a lot of hardship. All the South Asian countries are facing the problem of **higher oil** and **food inflation**. This has resulted in **popular unrest** across the region. This underlines the **geographic imperative** that binds India to its neighbours in the Subcontinent.

How is India at the centre of geographic imperative in the South Asia region?

India has had a long tradition of **hosting political exiles** from the region. Delhi has welcomed leaders from the neighbourhood taking shelter in India. For example, Dalai Lama from Tibet or Prachanda from Nepal.

India's emerging **neighbourhood policy** requires the Indian leadership to provide support and assistance at such crisis time.

What are the challenges in the South Asian Regions?

India-Sri Lank relations

In the past, India has been involved in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. It has caused deep distrust between **Delhi** and the **Sinhala nationalists**

India-Nepal relationship

The **Chinese influence** is growing in Nepal. For example, China has built a new airport near Lumbini, Nepal.

India is facing the challenge of **turbulent triangular dynamics** between Delhi, Kathmandu, and Beijing.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

There is a **deep political discomfort** between India and Nepal. Nepal's politics have been dominated by the **communists** in the last two decades.

India-Pakistan

India-Pakistan **bilateral relationship** has been **frozen**. Islamabad's policies are deliberately **anti-geographic**. For example, the recent controversy in Pakistan over the routine appointment of a "trade officer" in its high commission in Delhi.

The Pakistan is unwilling to **expand trade ties** or at least have a **limited trade liberalisation** with India. For example, Pakistan said it can't trade with India unless Delhi reversed its **2019 constitutional changes in Kashmir**.

Pakistan Army has been long viewed as a **decisive arbiter** in Pakistan's political and policy disputes.

At present, Pakistan is facing a **political crisis**. Delhi had little reason to believe that Pakistan's new government can alter its self-defeating policy towards India.

Way Forward

Overall

All the countries in South Asia should work with the **logic of geography** amidst the **deepening regional and global crises** accentuated by **Russia's invasion of Ukraine**.

The **cultural geography** can help in reshaping the **Subcontinent's regional relations**. **Religion and culture** are deeply interconnected in South Asia. Therefore, all **religious pilgrimage sites** should be developed across the region. They should be made accessible. This will improve **tourist revenues** and also calm the **troubled political relations** between nations.

The Subcontinent can be reconnected through **sacred geographies** — including the Ramayana trail and Sufi shrines.

A more **intensive regional cooperation** is one of the tools for managing the new dangers by the countries in the region.

India-Sri Lanka Relations

The Sri Lankan current crisis raised hopes for **transcending** the **internal ethnic divide** in the island nation. This can rebuild **political confidence** between Colombo and Delhi.

India's has provided both material and financial support during this **unprecedented economic and political crisis** in Sri Lanka. This has generated much **goodwill** in Sri Lanka.

India-Nepal Relations

The **Nepal congress** has returned and its readiness to deepen ties with India has opened the door for a **recalibrating India-Nepal ties**.

In addition to **revitalising cultural geography**, better management of **economic geography** is inevitable.

Prime Minister Modi visited Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha in Nepal. There is an idea of a "**Buddhist circuit**" across the India-Nepal border. There is wider **international interest** in the **Buddhist's historic sites**.

The Indian government should accelerate **transborder transport** and **energy connectivity** in the eastern subcontinent.

India-Pakistan Relations

Delhi and Islamabad had agreed to open the **Kartarpur corridor** to make it easier for Sikh pilgrims to visit the shrine in Kartarpur in Pakistan.

India must continue to bet that the **geographic imperative** will eventually prevail over Islamabad's policies. India must continue to find ways to work with Pakistan.

INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS

18. [PM Modi's recent Nepal visit saw a successful deployment of India's soft power to repair bilateral ties](#)

Source: This post is based on the article “**PM Modi's recent Nepal visit saw a successful deployment of India's soft power to repair bilateral ties**” published in **The Indian Express** on **19th May 22**, and the article “**Can Lumbini bridge the Delhi-Kathmandu gap? Modi's visit this week was important. Results of Nepal's national polls in November will be key factor**” published in **The Times of India** on **18th May 22**.

Syllabus: GS2 – International Relations

Relevance: Indo-Nepal bilateral ties

Context: Indian Prime Minister's recent visit to Lumbini (Nepal) on Buddha Poonnima.

[What is the significance of the visit?](#)

This visit assumes significance since the two countries should have had the best relationship in South Asia, but have been unable to capitalise on their connections, caught in the crossroads of Nepalese internal politics.

It also conveys a **shared culture between India and Nepal** and an **attempt to deploy Indian soft power** to reclaim some space in India's Himalayan neighbour.

Significance of the venue:

– Lumbini was an inspired choice for the bilateral summit, especially since India and Nepal enjoy a close, people-centred, multi-layered, and multifaceted relationship. That Lumbini is the **birthplace of Lord Buddha** is testified by the **Pali inscription** on the pillar erected by Emperor Ashoka in 249 BC, 339 years after Buddha's enlightenment.

– Nepal lies in the centre of the Himalayan ranges, described in the **Markandeya Purana** as extending from “sea to sea”, in the east from the Dihang bend down to the Bay of Bengal, and in the west from the Indus bend down to the Arabian Sea.

– Kalidas, in **Kumarasambhava**, called the Himalayas “the Kingdom of heaven”. Its topography and rivers make Nepal one of the best endowed countries in Asia. At the same time, the ever changing Himalayas, with an uplift rate ten times higher than that of the Alps, suffer from seismic fragility.

Significant agreements signed during Modi's visit –

– A proposed collaboration between Madras IIT and Kathmandu University for a joint degree programme, and

– A second in the higher education sector between Indian Council of Cultural Relations and Lumbini Buddhist University for the establishment of a Dr Ambedkar Chair for Buddhist Studies.

[How can infrastructure projects help revive the Indo-Nepal ties?](#)

The real potential for turnaround in bilateral relations lies via the route of infrastructure projects. One of the big stumbling blocks in the India-Nepal relationship used to be Delhi's **inability to complete agreed upon infrastructure projects** in Nepal, including roads, railway lines and mega power projects. Over the last few years this has changed.

– Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba invited Delhi to take up the long stuck **West Seti hydro power project**, which was once taken up by Australia but abandoned, and later coveted by China Three Gorges Corporation.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

– The offer follows India’s success with the **900 MW Arun III hydropower project**, developed by Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN), a joint venture between the Centre and the Himachal Pradesh government.

- **Significance:** India-Nepal relations are rendered complex by Nepal’s overdependence on India, according to former Nepalese ambassador to India, Lok Raj Baral. Export of surplus Nepalese hydropower to India can reverse this situation. The agreement to have Indian PSU Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) develop the Arun-IV project is welcome in this context

[What are some pending issues that need to be addressed?](#)

Moving forward, India and Nepal need to address the following issues:

1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship: It has long been a thorn in the relationship. India is willing to consider reviewing, modifying, or updating the Treaty in line with the requirements of the 21st century.

China factor: Nepal joined China’s Belt and Road Initiative in 2017, but little progress has taken place on the two identified projects – constructing a **transHimalayan network**, including a **rail connection** from Tibet to Kathmandu, Pokhara and Lumbini, and creating a Nepal-China Free Trade Area.

Unlike Nepal’s other partners, including India, China does not provide much grant assistance to Nepal. **Stepping up its investments and development partnership in Nepal** will allow India to address the China factor.

Kalapani boundary issue: Deuba has a difficult inheritance on the Kalapani boundary issue because Nepal’s previous regime vitiated it by altering maps and making exaggerated claims. Deuba has proposed a **resolution through a dialogue mechanism**. Only 2% of the India-Nepal boundary remains to be settled. Differences exist only in the areas of Kalapani and Susta. India and Nepal can resolve their boundary issues should both sides have the will to do so.

[Way forward](#)

There is some urgency in getting India-Nepal relations back on the rails. Nepalese parliamentary election is due by November this year. Its outcome will determine much of the future trajectory of India-Nepal relations.

19. **Modi in Lumbini: Buddhism provides India a cultural inroad in Nepal – it may not be enough to counter China**

Source: This post is based on the article “**Modi in Lumbini: Buddhism provides India a cultural inroad in Nepal – it may not be enough to counter China**” published in **The Indian Express** on **17th May 22**.

Syllabus: GS2 – International Relations – India and its neighbourhood

Relevance: Indo-Nepal bilateral relations

News: On the occasion of Buddha Purnima, PM Modi **made a trip to Lumbini** in Nepal, becoming the first Indian PM to do so. He offered prayers at the Mayadevi temple, believed to be the Buddha’s birthplace, and then laid the foundation for the International Buddhist Conference and Meditation Centre.

The trip has come one month after Nepal PM’s India visit.

[Why the PM’s trip to Nepal is being considered significant?](#)

The trip is being projected as a “cultural visit” but there are many who call it India’s late awakening from a deep diplomatic slumber.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

– Late awakening, because Delhi has been **indifferent to the deep inroads China** has been making in Nepal.

– And moreover, **very little has been done to repair Indo-Nepal bilateral relations**, which suffered immensely b/w 2016 and 2021. India not only refused to welcome Nepal's constitution promulgated in September 2015, but also launched an economic blockade for 134 days.

Hence, PM Modi, by befriending Deuba, has made an **effective attempt to repair the damage** in bilateral ties that took place

Deuba, who is also the chairman of the Nepali Congress, recently accepted Modi's invitation for his party and the BJP to establish fraternal relations — something the Chinese Communist Party tried with the unified Communist party of Nepal.

[What has been agreed at Lumbini?](#)

India and Nepal agreed to develop a **Buddhist circuit**, linking shrines located in the two countries with Lumbini occupying a prime position.

India also agreed to set up the **Dr B R Ambedkar Chair in Lumbini University**, with around 1,000 students, including from China, enrolled.

[China's efforts at establishing its foothold in Nepal](#)

China **first offered to spend \$3 billion to build up Lumbini as the world peace city** under the aegis of its NGO – Asia Pacific Exchange and Foundation – co-opting Maoist leader Prachanda as its vice chairman.

China has also built a **monastery in the core area of the Lumbini Development Project**. China's offer to develop it as the World Peace Centre and **construct a railway line connecting Tibet and Kathmandu** is as yet in abeyance, but not completely given up.

[How has Lumbini become the centrestage for competing international forces in Nepal?](#)

The **increased presence and influence of the US and the European Union, along with India**, has become more pronounced in Nepal's domestic politics – especially following the political changes of 2005-06.

China retaliated with a matching presence and economic investments. This has had an impact on internal politics and policy-making in Nepal. But unlike its competitors, China's outlook had depth and took into account multiple dimensions.

Lumbini, thanks largely to China, has now become sort of a microcosm of the competing international forces in the country.

India first reacted to the Chinese presence in Lumbini on November 8, 2011, in the wake of enthusiastic publicity by the Chinese about the World City initiative.

[Way forward](#)

Modi's visit to Lumbini and the laying of the monastery's foundation may give India a foothold and cultural space. But that provides zero guarantee that it will be able to outdo its competitors, including the West and China, who are already deeply entrenched in Nepal.

20. [The importance of Lumbini](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "The importance of Lumbini" published in the "The Hindu" on 16th May 2022.

Syllabus: GS 2 International Relations; Bilateral Relations

Relevance: India-Nepal Ties

News: Recently, The Prime Minister of India visited Lumbini, Nepal for the first time in the last few decades.

How this Indian PM's visit to Lumbini, Nepal is important?

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

The visit reiterated the **message** of peace; compassion; non-violence; tolerance; dialogue and debate; reconciliation; consensus; and the middle path forged (preached by the Buddha) in Indian society which is facing strife and turmoil and anger and hatred.

In a **Political sense**, Indian PM's visit has put to rest the **unnecessary debate** on whether the Buddha was born in Lumbini, Nepal which is a sensitive issue for Nepal.

In a strategic sense, the visit was aimed to counter the **growing presence** of China in **Lumbini**, which is close to the Indian border. For example, it has built the **largest monastery** in Lumbini, sponsors **international conferences** on Buddhism, sponsors **massive celebrations** on Buddhist festivals, promotes Chinese tourists to Lumbini, and Chinese investments in the region. It means China is exploiting the **soft power potential** of Buddhism in Nepal.

What is India's soft potential?

India is home to some of the **most sacred sites** of Buddhism: Bodh Gaya; Sarnath; Kushinagar; Shravasti; Nalanda; and Rajgir, among several others.

Both Lumbini and the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya are UNESCO World Heritage sites. They are to Buddhists what Mecca is to Muslims or Kashi is to Hindus.

What are the issues from the Indian Side?

India has not utilized its **soft power potential** in Lumbini. Although, India assisted in building a **small museum** in Lumbini in the late 1990s. Further, an India Ambassador planted a sapling of the sacred Bodhi tree in the gardens of the Maya Devi temple where Gautama Buddha was born in 2014.

Lumbini is home to **beautiful monasteries** from several countries. But India does not have a monastery in Lumbini.

There were talks about developing a **Buddhist circuit** between the major pilgrimage sites in Nepal and India. But, talk has not fully translated into action.

There is the poor state of border infrastructure and immigration and other facilities in the area. The road networks are poor. For example, it is a nightmare to cross the Sunauli-Bhairahawa India-Nepal check post that is designated for tourists.

The relationship between the **monasteries** of foreign countries in Bodh Gaya and the local communities is fraught.

What should be done?

India can assist the international committee for the development of Lumbini and Nepal in the implementation of the master plan for development of Lumbini, which is pending for decades.

The basic infrastructure like **roads network** between India and Nepal should be upgraded. For example, Kushinagar Airport (India) as well as Bhairahawa Airport (Nepal) should be constructed timely. Further, **the integrated check post** could also be built speedily. The measure would **boost tourism** and **the local economy**.

On the lines of a master plan to **develop Lumbini**, India should also adopt a **master plan** for Bodh Gaya in order to develop it as a **sacred place** for pilgrimage for both Hindus and Buddhists. India can set up a **high-level coordination committee** comprising representatives of State governments, Central governments as well as of foreign monasteries to promote coordination between foreign monasteries.

The Buddhist circuit, namely **Lumbini-Bodh Gaya-Sarnath-Kushinagar** should be declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** with master plans for each segment of the circuit.

India and Nepal can organise an international conference on the development of the Buddhist circuit as a **joint initiative**.

India can also establish an **international museum** of Buddhist traditions in Bodh Gaya and invite all Buddhist countries to participate.

General

Studies

Paper – 3

TRANSITION TOWARDS CLEAN ENERGY

1. [Needed: An economic response plan for a green transition shock](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**An economic response plan for a green transition shock**” published in the **Live Mint** on **18th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3 Indian Economy; Environment and Ecology

Relevance: Green Transition

News: India is facing severe heat waves in many parts of the country. This is a reminder that the risks from climate change are rising.

What are the issues involved in transition towards a green economy?

Around a **fifth** of Indian households have access to either **air-conditioners** or **coolers** in their home. Nearly half of the **Indian labour force** works **outdoors** in the sun during heat waves month.

This excess heat will have an impact on India’s wheat crop. This can lead to other **supply shocks** in the coming years

The **existing capital stock** in several sectors such as **energy** or **mobility** will become prematurely obsolete because of the government’s tax policy or regulations that seek to reduce carbon emissions to mitigate climate events.

The debate on how the costs (based on discount rate) should be borne to tackle climate change should be spread over time

If a **lower discount rate** is imposed. It means today’s generation bears a bigger burden of the costs.

If a higher discount rate is imposed, It means that the costs of mitigation can be pushed further into the future for coming generations to pay.

The ‘**green interest rate**’ refers to how the **welfare of future generations** is to be treated while decisions are made today.

– Frank Ramsey developed a **mathematical framework** for a proportion a nation should optimally save from its income. His insights have been used for a range of other applications, including climate change computations. He insisted that **the well-being** of future people should be given the **same weight** as that of present people.

What are the challenges?

The climate scientists have shown that the **window available** for serious action is closing by the year.

A green transition can only be achieved over time. Any sudden action will almost certainly lead to **economic collapse**.

The costs of the transition will be spread over multiple generations, as most commitments to reach **carbon neutrality** are between 2050 and 2070. The challenges are how to distribute the costs (discount rate) over time, or who will bear than burden, i.e., present or future generation? There is a **different viewpoint on discount rates**. For example, **Nicholas Stern** argued for a discount rate of 1.4%. **William Nordhaus** (the Nobel Prize Winner for economics in 2018), has argued for 4.3% in his model. He argued that the **discount rate** should be based on actual observed behaviour, and especially real interest rates in financial markets. On the contrary, **Stern** used a discount rate which was derived broadly on **ethical considerations**.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

The green transition will involve a supply shock that will reduce potential growth.

Over the next decade, the **fiscal policy** will be **constrained** because the **public debt** across the world had bloated because of government spending during the pandemic. Therefore, the green investments will be a political and economic challenge.

Way Forward

The green transition will open up **opportunities** in new technologies, better infrastructure and the redesign of cities.

In the coming future, there should be **significant reallocation** of both capital as well as labour, assuming factor markets are flexible.

In addition to fiscal policy, the central banks will have a **dilemma** about whether they should add climate change mitigation to the policy targets to address inflation, growth and financial stability.

The **fiscal authorities** as well as **central banks** should maintain **low interest rates** to help new investments in a green economy. It will effectively make it easier for enterprises with older technologies to survive. The higher interest rates will kill polluting enterprises and make investments in new technologies more expensive.

The central banks can also choose **one interest rate** for green activities and **another one** for brown activities. This will lead to credit planning.

Much depends on how a **society** either **values** or should **value benefits** that will be available only many years down the line.

HEATWAVES IN INDIA

2. Fiddling with a climate response while our workers face the heat

Source: This post is created based on the article “Fiddling with a climate response while our workers face the heat” published in Live Mint on 16th May 2022.

Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Disaster management – heat waves

News: Meteorologists are predicting that temperatures will rise above 50°C across much of South Asia, owing to less rainfall than usual in this period.

Extreme heat and high humidity can prevent human sweat from evaporating, reducing the body’s ability to cool down, this condition is called ‘**Wet-bulb**’ temperature. Several Indian cities have recently experienced wet-bulb temperatures of close to 30°C. If it exceeds 35°C, then spending even a few hours outside in the shade with no physical activity can lead to death.

What are the implications of increasing heat for India?

The central government has asked state governments to take measures to prevent deaths due to heat waves and fire incidents. However, the available measures are not sufficient.

National Action Plan on Heat-Related Illnesses does not focus on protecting people from heat exposure. Instead, it outlines relatively minor strategies for dealing with the consequences.

Also, these measures are **ineffective for employees who are engaged in informal activities** with no legal or social protection. They have to come out for work or sleep hungry, as we have seen during covid times.

An International Labour Organization (ILO) report on heat stress and work states **that agriculture and construction sector would be worst affected** in terms of deteriorating conditions and working-time losses, due to global warming. But the **hundreds of millions of Indians who work such jobs typically have no choice** but to keep doing them.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

The unpaid work of hundreds of millions of women and girls in India has been ignored even by ILO report. They have to go to fetch water for daily household use to faraway places. Now, as the scorching heat may dry up existing surface water sources and reduces groundwater supplies, they will have to walk long distances.

What should be done?

Governments have to be the main drivers of adaptation to higher temperatures. Universal social protection and occupational safety can be provided even for informal work.

GS3 – ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE – INDIA'S ENERGY SECTOR

ENERGY SECURITY

3. **Root cause analysis for the power crisis**

Source: This post is created based on the article “Root cause analysis for the power crisis” published in Business Standard on 16th May 2022.

Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Energy – Electricity sector

Context: The root cause of the present electricity crisis in India is said to be the demand surge due to heat waves. However, it is not the case with other products where the private sector is involved.

For example, the surge in the ice-cream demand is higher compared to electricity in summers. However, no one would see a shortage of ice cream in the market. It is because ice cream is produced in the market economy, and profit-seeking producers ensure the availability of ice cream through projections and a sufficient supply of raw materials.

Why there is a shortage of electricity?

Lack of market-based mechanisms and State control.

An increase in the global price of gas (Market based) has not resulted in the shut down of captive gas-based thermal generating plants or an increase in the price of electricity(State determined). There are specialized “imported coal thermal plants” that only generate electricity with imported coal and sell electricity. These plants have 25-year lock-in prices for electricity. When the price of coal goes up, they stand to make a loss by operating the plant, and prefer to shut down the plant.

State-regulated systems lack self-correcting mechanisms, where High prices offer profit opportunities and less demand and vice versa.

What are the solutions?

The Indian electricity sector is at a breaking point through the forces of global warming, heatwaves, the carbon transition, financially unviable discoms, etc.

Thus, the price system of electricity should be market based so that profit-motivated firms start figuring out how to extract, store, import, and transport coal.

High prices encourage reduced consumption owing to changed behavior by self-interested customers.

FALL IN PROCUREMENT OF WHEAT

4. **Frequent policy flip-flops are bad for farmers as well as consumers**

Source: This post is based on the article “**Frequent policy flip-flops are bad for farmers as well as consumers**” published in **Livemint** on **19th May 22**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Indian Economy – Agriculture

Relevance: Wheat export ban, food inflation

Context: In a sudden move, the central government banned the export of wheat on 13th May, a day after retail inflation numbers for April were released.

It was wheat inflation at 9.6% that triggered this panic reaction.

None of it was unexpected, given the trend so far. The Food and Agriculture Organisation food index has been at its highest since the series began, driven by inflation in edible oil and cereals. Wheat prices have been rising since November and gained pace after the Russia-Ukraine war.

How did India go from making claims of ensuring global food security to worrying about its own in just a month?

The reason appears to be a **lack of understanding of the agrarian economy** or its food security impact.

What factors did the Govt failed to consider?

It was known that **wheat production would suffer** due to **extreme heat waves**, which damaged standing crops. While the government revised its production estimate down by only 5.7% to 105 million tonnes, actual output may be even lower.

Russia-Ukraine war: That wheat prices were rising internationally was also known months in advance. With the Russia-Ukraine war, there was a clear indication that global markets would witness a **25-30% fall in supply**, given the dominant share of these two countries in the global wheat trade. This information was available and used by traders to pay higher prices to farmers for grains. It was obvious even to the government, given the low arrival of grains at public procurement centres. As against our target of 44 million tonnes, actual procurement has been **less than 20 million tonnes**.

What steps could have been taken?

Relaxing the quality of wheat procurement will help, but is too little, too late.

A **bonus over the minimum support price**. This would not only have allowed the government to meet its procurement target on time, but also provided better prices to farmers. Instead, the government allowed private traders and speculators to take advantage of the situation and mop up supplies from the market. These were mostly bought for exports, but are now trapped by the ban.

How domestic food security is being impacted by shortage of wheat?

There’s been a **cut-back in the NFSA allocation of wheat** in several states, many of them mainly wheat-consuming states.

The entire allocation under the PMGKAY for major wheat-consuming states Bihar and Uttar Pradesh has been withdrawn. The offer to replace these with rice shows a **confused bureaucratic approach** that assumes people can change their dietary preferences and tastes according to government fiat.

What is the overall negative impact of the policy uncertainty?

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

First, the Govt created a hype of a bumper crop and made claims that India had the ability to feed the entire world and the only reason it was not able to do so currently was due to WTO's rules.

Just a day before the export ban, India announced sending trade delegations to nine countries, including Morocco, Tunisia, Indonesia and Thailand, to explore opportunities for exporting wheat.

Then after all this hype, Govt put an export ban on wheat.

Such sudden decisions and overall policy uncertainty can have the following negative impacts:

– **uncertainty over government policies.**

– Apart from sending mixed signals to farmers and traders, it also reflects **a lack of understanding of the domestic food and agricultural economy.** At a time when inflation is likely to erode real purchasing power, especially in rural areas and of the poor, the withdrawal of NFSA and PMGKAY wheat allocations will worsen lives.

– But a far worse outcome would be a **loss of faith in public policy.**

5. Lessons for today from India's 2006 wheat crisis

Source: This post is based on the article "**Lessons for today from India's 2006 wheat crisis**" published in **The Indian Express** on 19th May 22.

Syllabus: GS3 – Agriculture

Relevance: Wheat shortage in India

News: India faced a wheat crisis in 2006. The present article lists out the reasons that caused it and lessons that can be learnt.

The author of this article was appointed as the Secretary of Food and Public Distribution during that time.

What was the situation in 2006 and the reasons behind it?

– **Centre decides to liquidate its excess stock:** The central pool had been carrying large stocks and there was wide criticism that these were being held for no good reason and costing the taxpayer huge sums of money. The government had, after due consideration, decided to liquidate some stocks with the FCI for export.

– **Procurement begins to go down:** Coincidentally, procurement had started going down from a high of 20.6 MMT to 15.8 MMT in 2003-04, to 14.8 MMT in 2005-06. This trend and the resultant depletion of stocks went "unnoticed".

Procurement in 2006-07 (April-March) at 9.23 MMT was **far below** the requirement.

The **buffer stocks were drawn down by 2 MMT.**

Hence, the stock position at the end of a poor procurement season had put the government in a tight spot.

What were the reasons behind the 2006 food crisis?

The thought that India has a food surplus and can feed its people and "the world" resulted in the **unintended depletion of public stocks.**

The **reduction in public stocks without reviewing the production and stock position** every quarter was ill-planned.

Overlooking the drop in production almost every alternate year, particularly in 2000-01, 02-03, and 04-05 followed by 05-06 proved costly.

Not estimating the impact of climate change (high temperatures) on production — grain formation and grain size/weight — turned out to be critical.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

– The Department of Food, overconfident about procuring large quantities, believing that the crop size estimated by the Ministry of Agriculture is above 75 MMT, went about disposing of old stocks. By the time the third advance estimates came by end of May (*there were no drones or satellite imagery in those days*), the damage was done.

No data about private stocks: The government depended on only production and public stock data to take policy decisions, ignoring the importance of private stocks in the market.

What can India do to avoid such errors?

Set up systems to get reliable and timely estimates of crops. The second advance estimates come in mid-February and the third in mid/ late May. Food management requires a better picture by early March (same for kharif).

The National Crop Forecasting system including “FASAL soft” will have to be reset.

The much-hyped **Drone-Artificial Intelligence- Blockchain technologies should be deployed** to do a simple thing: Prepare a **correct estimate** of the crop well in time, for the government to plan and act ahead of any crisis.

Reliable price data has always been a missing link in policy planning. **Mandatory reporting of price** (not just the APMC price data) of all large (limits can be defined) transactions are a must. Price movement is an important indicator of the supply-demand mismatch.

The government should be aware of the quantum of private stocks, preferably in anonymised, aggregated formats. This needs legal backing. A **provision to mandate the submission of anonymised stock data** from all warehouses should be put in place.

The futures market remains grossly under-utilised. A **vibrant futures market** can help plan better. A futures market should be allowed to function without knee-jerk interventions from the government.

A **robust system (drones, satellites, ground data) to monitor weather conditions** like temperature, moisture stress, etc needs to be put in place immediately with a focus on key crops and major growing regions.

With the expertise available in the country today, **algorithms can be built to assess the impact of weather and pest events on crop** size and quality. The government needs this information more than anyone else.

6. **Boon to ban: How the wheat export story changed in two months**

Source: This post is based on the article “**Boon to ban: How the wheat export story changed in two months**” published in **The Hindu** on **18th May 22**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Indian Economy **Relevance:** Export of Wheat

News: On May 13, the government effectively banned the export of wheat.

Why were wheat exports banned?

On May 4, the government revised down its wheat production estimates from **111.32 million tonnes (MT) to 105 MT** for the crop year ending June.

– **18 MT** of wheat were procured till May 14 of the ongoing 2022-23 marketing year, much less than the **36.7 MT** in the year-ago period.

So,

- the **decrease in production estimates** and
- **a considerable fall in wheat procurement**

raised concerns that domestic consumption may get impacted.

Moreover, the **local prices started to rise**. In March, the wholesale inflation of wheat crossed the 14% mark, though it eased a bit to about 10% in April.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

In April, retail inflation of wheat flour accelerated to 9.59% from an already higher 7.77% in March. As of May 17, the average retail price of wheat flour was ₹33.05 per kg. The maximum price had touched ₹59/kg.

These factors forced the government to ban wheat exports on May 13, two days after the decision to send delegates to nine countries to explore the option of enhancing exports was taken.

What led to the decrease in production?

The **extreme temperatures** recorded in March and April, across north India, were the reason behind the sudden turnaround of the government. **For instance**, across Punjab, between April 8 and 14, the maximum temperature was over **6°C higher than the usual**, compared to the long period average.

The extreme heat led to a **marked decrease in wheat yields across north India**. Hence, the wheat arrivals in Punjab's mandis were 20% lower in the first twenty days of the 2022 season compared to the same period in 2021.

7. What explains India's U-turn on wheat exports?

Source: This post is created based on the article "What explains India's U-turn on wheat exports?" published in Live Mint on 16th May 2022. This post is created based on the article "Government ban on wheat exports hurts farmers and traders, dents India's image as a reliable global supplier" published in Indian Express on 16th May 2022.

Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Agriculture – Cropping pattern and marketing of farm sector

News: Union government has recently banned the exports of wheat.

However, there are certain conditions, under which exports will be allowed:

First, where an irrevocable letter of credit has already been issued.

Second, one window has been kept open for the neighboring countries in the notification. It says export will be allowed to other countries "based on the request of their governments". It will be helpful in ensuring supplies to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal

What are the factors that led to the ban on exports of wheat in India?

Heatwaves at the end of March, have impacted the production of food grains, especially in northwest India.

The government has revised the wheat production estimates, lowering them by 6 million tonnes. Wheat prices have increased nearly 20% and prices of essential food items such as Atta has risen nearly 15% last year.

The government has given its reasons for export ban, i.e. to check prices and curb hoarding.

What are the implications of the wheat exports ban?

First, India is the world's second-largest wheat producer and countries were expecting India to fill the gap created due to the Ukraine-Russia war.

Agriculture ministers from the G7 condemned India's decision to withhold wheat exports amid a global grain shortage.

Second, Indian wheat traders have lost the opportunity to gain from the global grain shortage. Building export markets and establishing supportive infrastructure, like warehousing, takes time. Such policy decisions will create more difficulties in it.

Third, it will be a loss for farmers as well because the market price of wheat had become higher than MSP. Many farmers were preferring to sell in the market. It led to the highest purchase of wheat by private traders in Punjab in the last 8 years.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

Fourth, it will raise questions about the farm trade policy's credibility. Signs of low output due to March heat were already visible, still, the delegation was sent abroad by the commerce ministry with the slogan Indian farmers "feeding the world".

GS3 AGRICULTURE - ISSUES RELATED TO FARMERS

SUSTAINABLE FARMING IN INDIA

8. **Direct paddy sowing reaps benefits**

Source: The post is based on an article "**Direct paddy sowing reaps benefits**" published in the Business Standard on 16th May 2022.

Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Major Crops – Cropping Patterns in various parts of the country, – Different Types of Irrigation and Irrigation Systems.

Relevance: Sustainable Agriculture; Less water-intensive cropping methods; Direct Paddy sowing method

News: Recently, the Haryana government has announced a **higher incentive** of ₹ 10,000 per hectare for the **direct planting of rice**.

What are the issues in present rice cropping practice?

At present, rice growers generally use much **more water** than the crop **actually needs**. Around **40-45%** of the water used for irrigation goes to paddy alone.

There is a mistaken belief that paddy is an **aquatic plant** that needs waterlogged fields. But they do not necessarily need flooding all the time.

The **constant submergence** causes loss of **applied plant nutrients** due to leaching. It encourages the proliferation of **pests** and **diseases**. Further, it increases emissions of **methane** into the environment. Unsurprisingly, nearly 10% of the methane emission come from paddy fields.

The **water table** is declining rapidly in areas where such a cropping practice is done. For example, the water table in Punjab is receding, on average, by about one meter every year.

What are the causes behind the flooding of rice fields?

Free or subsidized supply of power and diesel for running water pumps. For example, the **intensive rice-wheat growing belt** in the Indo-Gangetic plain, particularly Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh are notorious for splurging water.

What are the solutions?

Changing Cropping Pattern: This includes replacing paddy with another **equally lucrative** but less **water-consuming crop**. However, this option may face a primary challenge from the **policy of open-ended rice procurement** at pre-determined prices.

Direct Paddy direct seeding method: This is the method that can be used instead of taking the **transplanting route**. This can **promote economical** and **efficient use of water**. In fact, this is a more **practical option** for the government to promote and farmers to adopt.

About the direct seeding method

Under this system, dry or pre-germinated seeds are sown straight in the fields with the help of **seed-drill machines**. The **laser land leveling equipment** should be used to level (perfectly even) the farmland. In addition, the menace of weeds can be tackled by **spraying herbicides** prior to sowing or after seed planting.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

This technique originally experimented for medium to heavy textured soils. But it could be used even on relatively **light-textured sandy loam** and **loam soils** as well. Therefore, this can be adopted by farmers in a large part of the country including the **rain-dependent areas**.

Benefits of Direct Seeding

It ensures a normal harvest with substantially **lower water consumption**. It also does away with the **labour** and **cost-intensive operations**, such as nursery planting, soil puddling, and seedling transplanting.

Likewise, it cuts down the consumption of water by 20-35%. Furthermore, it also cut the requirement for diesel and power by nearly 40%.

It helps **save, 3540 man-days of labour** for every hectare of cropland. It involves lower cash inputs. Not only that, but it improves soil health and fertiliser-use efficiency. At last, it results in higher crop output, thereby, raising the net profits.

It **reduces methane emission from paddy fields**. In addition, the method also allows the crop to mature seven to 10 days earlier than normal. Therefore, farmers have more time to appropriately manage paddy stubbles instead of torching them to cause air pollution.

The Way Forward

The system is already gaining popularity in **unirrigated lands** in many states. It got a major boost during the Covid-19 pandemic. As there was paucity of labour due to **reverse migration**. Therefore, farmers were forced to look for less **labour-intensive ways** of growing rice. For instance, In Punjab, about 600,000 hectares of paddy was planted with this method last year.

The governments can offer **incentives** to promote direct seeding of rice in areas where agro-ecological conditions permit the deployment of this technology.

GS3 – SCIENCE AND TECH – INFORMATION AND TECH

DEFENCE TECH IN INDIA AND RELATED ISSUES

9. [For a stronger navy, India needs to fast-track the submarine project](#)

Source: This post is created based on the article “For a stronger navy, India needs to fast-track the submarine project” published in Indian Express on 16th May 2022.

Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Defence technologies

News: Recently, the French defence major, Naval Group, announced its inability to participate in India’s Project 75-I.

Russian and German submarine builders have also withdrawn from this project earlier.

India’s Project 75-I

Under this project, conventional (non-nuclear or diesel-electric) submarines are to be built domestically.

What are the issues with India’s Submarine project?

Installation of an air independent propulsion system (AIP): Conventional submarines are propelled underwater by electric-power. The submarine has to periodically expose itself to draw air for running generators that charge their battery-banks. Many European countries are thus trying to develop an air independent propulsion system. India’s contract for license-production of six Scorpenes was without including this system. Whereas Pakistan Navy (PN) may field up to 11 AIP-equipped boats by 2028.

Delays: The programme saw huge delays over contractual issues. The sixth and last submarine was launched in April 2022, a full 17 years after signing of the contract.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

Trials: DRDO has developed an indigenous AIP system, based on electrolytic fuel cells. This system produces energy by combining hydrogen and oxygen with only water as the waste product. This AIP system will be subjected to stringent underwater trials before the Indian Navy can accept it. Now the challenge is (a) who will provide a submarine for trials? (b) Who will undertake installation and conduct trials? (c) And most crucially, who in our system will take such crucial decisions in a timely manner?

Now DRDO and its partners have to look for a foreign collaborator for P-75I who will install the indigenous AIP on the selected submarine and conduct collaborative trials.

Previous plans: In 1999, the government accorded approval to a “30-Year Submarine Building Plan.” The program envisaged the simultaneous serial production of two types of submarines in separate shipyards; 1) advanced submarine of imported design, 2) a home-grown product, designed by our own naval architects with foreign assistance. However, the project was stalled due to delays in decision-making.

GS3 – INDIAN ECONOMY – ISSUES RELATED TO GROWTH AND DEV

EMPLOYMENT INTENSIVE GROWTH

10. **Three development models that can guide Indian state economies**

Source: The post is based on an article “**Three development models that can guide Indian state economies**” published in the **Live Mint** on **20th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3 Indian Economy, Issues and challenges in the growth and development of India.

Relevance: The state development models in India

News: At present, India’s economic policymakers are trying to look after potential stagflation.

Possible long-term strategies for high, employment-intensive growth

Three broad groups of states are identifiable, each with a distinct development model.

Bihar model

Coverage: The model is generally found in a group of the **least developed states** which includes Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Assam and all the north-eastern states, among others.

Features: In this model, the states are growing at rates comparable to the **national average**. They have **very low per capita incomes**, the share of industry in the state’s gross domestic product (GSDP) is below the national average.

Further, there is a lack of modern industrial hubs, few existing large industrial units are often state-owned, there is a weak backward or forward linkage with the local economy.

These states have low levels of **human or social development** and **infrastructure development**.

The workforce depends upon agriculture, the non-agricultural workforce is mainly engaged in low-productivity, and low-wage jobs in thousands of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Problems

These states have a large size of government relative to GSDP: 26% compared to the 17% national average.

Government expenditure is **heavily dependent** on central transfers rather than the state’s own resources: over 59% as compared to the national average of just over 36%.

Solution

Cooperative federalism is important in **accelerating inclusive development** in these states.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

If the government expenditure is strategically deployed, then it can significantly impact the development trajectory of the state.

Gujarat model

Coverage: It includes a group of fast-growing state like Gujarat, Haryana and Telangana.

Features: They have a high per capita income, nearly 6 times that of Bihar. A large share of its workforce is still dependent on agriculture. The share of industry in GSDP is at 44% (way above the national average).

The state's growth is driven by **traditional industries** like agro-processing, **modern industries** like pharmaceuticals, petrochemicals, IT services and modern financial services.

In fact, infrastructure is highly developed.

Problems

These state's lag behind the country's leading states in social development, such as education and health outcomes. This challenges the quality of human resources which determines competitiveness.

Causes of problem

The **deficit** in education and health outcomes is due to the relatively small size of government expenditure (only 11% of GSDP). Further, much of the spending goes to physical infrastructure.

Tamil Nadu Model

Coverage: This includes industrialized states/UTs like Tamil Nadu, Delhi, and Maharashtra. Kerala too

Features: These are **prosperous states** with high per capita income. These are India's most industrialized states. In addition, the Industrials sector accounts for over **34% share** in GSDP.

Unlike Gujarat, the share of its workforce in agriculture is not above 30%. There is high social development indicated by high life expectancy.

The state's dependence on **central transfers** is also quite low, in fact lower than Gujarat's.

Much of the achievements have been despite **Tamil Nadu government's expenditure** well below the national average.

Solutions

The Tamil Nadu model of development is thus the most successful model under Indian conditions.

The states should improve their power situation and leverages on **science and technology research institutions** to emerge as a knowledge economy hub.

Way Forward

The **three development models** described above spell out a roadmap for long-term development in different states.

States following the Tamil Nadu model should stay the course and do more of the same.

States that follow the Gujarat model should course correct, prioritizing education and health services

States that have followed the Bihar model should switch to the Tamil Nadu model. They need strong central government support to do so.

Further, the labour migration from Bihar model states to Gujarat model states and especially Tamil Nadu model states will serve as the **market-based adjustment** within the country.

INFORMAL ECONOMY AND RELATED ISSUES

11. Mundka fire is a symptom of all that ails the informal sector

Source: The post is based on an article “Mundka fire is a symptom of all that ails the informal sector” published in the **Indian Express** on **17th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3 Disaster Management, Infrastructure (Urban Infrastructure)

Relevance: Fire Incidents, Informal Sector

News: Recently, a fire broke out at **Delhi’s Mundka**, with a death toll of 27 persons so far. A majority of the persons who died in the incidents were women workers in informal manufacturing units.

What issues have been exposed the fire incident in our urban areas?

The reports on buildings catching fire leading to fatalities exposes the picture of **illegal constructions** and **unplanned infrastructural development** in urban centres. The buildings do not have required **fire clearance** and **no-objection certificates (NOC)** from concerned authorities. For example, the norms of construction were not followed in the building involved in the Mundka mishap.

The incident underscores the **invisibilities** and **insecurities of informal workers** in the city. This shows the lack of identity of informal sector workers.

Although **enquiry commissions** are instituted and assurances are made of **tightening procedures**. But no substantial change takes place at the ground level. Such incidents keep on repeating.

There are thousands of **unregistered/informal industrial units** functional in cities like Delhi. These workplaces violate all norms, including basic labour laws.

What is the nature of informal industrial units in urban areas?

Working conditions: There are extremely poor working conditions, like Poorly ventilated workplaces, dilapidated buildings and violation of even the basic norms of occupational safety requirements, shady and stingy rooms, inadequate safety precautions, the provision of drinking water and toilet facilities are often denied to workers

The **quality of jobs** is very poor in the **informal establishments**, especially for women. For example, long working hours, absence of any leave, including maternity leave, dusty among other things.

Most of the workers are young in their 20s or 30s. They are **migrants** with **poor economic conditions**. They are forced to join the labour market in **low-paid** and **highly-informal jobs**.

There is often a clear separation of tasks for men and women. Women workers are involved in packing or as helpers that are the lowest skilled.

Wages are kept **very low** in the informal units because the **labour pool** remains massive and the job profiles **do not require** much **skill**. The living expenses have soared. Thus, a dignified life is beyond imagination. Many women workers are often the sole earners or primary earners of their households.

Due covid-induced resultant decline in work opportunities and household income, women are compelled to join employment to compensate for the loss of employment or declined income of male household members.

There is poor enforcement of the labour laws by the **enforcement machinery** as the corruption has entered into administration.

What are the consequences of such an informal sector?

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

There are limited **opportunities** for **personal** or **economic advancement**, with monotonous repetitive work filling the day. The conditions expose the issues in **economic empowerment** of women.

What are the issues in The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (OSHC)?

There are anxieties that **the new labour codes** will add to the vulnerability of informal workers. The code has left the compliance to the small units themselves. They will follow prescribed safety conditions themselves. This can go unaccountable.

Way Forward

The accountability of employers should be increased. In addition, the political will can improve working conditions.

GS3 – SCIENCE AND TECH – INFORMATION TECH

CYBERSECURITY AND RELATED ISSUES

12. How to strengthen cyber security the right way

Source: This post is based on the article “**How to strengthen cybersecurity the right way**” published in **The Indian Express on 17th May 22.**

Syllabus: GS3 – Information Technology

Relevance: CERT-In directions on cybersecurity compliance

Context: On 28th April, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) issued “directions” under Section 70-B(6) of the IT Act 2000 relating to information security practices, procedure, prevention, response and reporting of cyber incidents.

These directions have expanded the scope of obligations of the above requirements compared to the IT (The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team and Manner of performing functions and duties) Rules, 2013 (Rules).

Some of the provisions in the absence of clarification from CERT-In have raised concerns amongst industry observers and cyber security experts.

What are the obligations under the new directions?

Among the activities in which compliance is sought by service providers, intermediaries, data centres and body corporates are the –

- **Synchronisation of computer clocks** to the network time protocol set at the National Physical Laboratory and National Informatics Centre (NIC)
- **Mandatory reporting of all cyber incidents** within six hours of noticing or being brought to their notice in the prescribed format
- **Designating point of contact and notifying CERT-In** and undertaking to perform such actions for cybersecurity mitigation when notified by CERT-IN
- **Maintaining all logs of all ICT systems** up to 180 days within Indian jurisdiction and for data centres, virtual private network service providers, cloud service providers and virtual private server providers to maintain all records of their users and usage for a minimum of five years.

What are the concerns with the new directions?

The directions **do not differentiate between the scales and nature of the incident**. Some cyber incidents are far more common and occur regularly. An organisation might receive hundreds of phishing emails and the effort to notify each would drastically **increase their compliance cost**.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

A window of 60 days has been provided before implementation of these compliances begins. Given the scale of the revamp, this might be **too short** a window. The government must look at the concerns that arise from such directions and work out a realistic timescale. In this case, there will be multiple companies even from the MSME sector that will **take time to set up systems for compliances**.

At present, most entities maintain logs for around 30 days, and in order to maintain logs for 180 days, the **additional data storage device cost** would be huge.

– Similarly, data centres, virtual private server providers, cloud service providers and virtual private network service providers **will need to retain additional information for five years or more** after the cancellation or withdrawal of registration.

– The virtual asset industry too will have to **maintain all KYC records and details of all financial transactions for five years**.

The compliance cost in each case is going to rise substantially.

Many of the entities will have to shift their servers geographically as well as add excess storage capacity. Most importantly, the **recruitment of additional manpower for compliance may take far longer**. A realistic timeline would be six months, which would allow the entities to effectively migrate to the new regime.

The **penalty for non-compliance is stiff** (including up to one year of imprisonment and monetary fines). But it is also unfair to create unrealistic deadlines for industry.

Privacy concerns: With VPNs and virtual asset wallets being asked to store and share KYC and transaction data, these concerns become evident. In the **absence of legislative backing for data protection in India**, the question is: How will the user have any say on which information can be held back or how his sensitive personal information is being protected?

[Way forward](#)

While CERT-In has been proactive in recognising the changing frontiers of technology and trying to deal with unknown cyber threats, it is wanting in terms of a **graded approach** to ensuring compliance.

GS3 – INDIAN ECONOMY – INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND GROWTH

REGULATION OF DIGITAL MARKETS

13. [Digital markets must be defined well for competition regulation](#)

Source: This post is based on the article “**Digital markets must be defined well for competition regulation**” published in **Livemint** on **16th May 22**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Industrial policy and growth

Relevance: Regulation of digital markets

Context: Digital markets operate differently than traditional markets. Hence, the rise of the digital sector has presented **unique challenges for Indian regulatory authorities**, including the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

Further, several issues emerging from the growth of digital markets are being analysed by regulators in other countries simultaneously, resulting in a **lack of guidance from other jurisdictions**.

There is growing demand, worldwide and in India, to hold digital platforms responsible and accountable for adverse impacts caused by them. This is evidenced by recent investigations

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

initiated by the CCI into the operations of digital platforms such as Google, WhatsApp, Apple, Zomato, Swiggy, etc.

Proper assessments of **relevant markets** is needed, so that India's digital emergence story doesn't end up stifled by over-regulation.

How a relevant market can be defined?

The Competition Act of 2002 requires the CCI to define a 'relevant market' based on what is regarded as **interchangeable or substitutable by a consumer** ("Relevant Market Test").

The factors required for consideration by the CCI while defining a 'relevant market' include

- the physical characteristics or end use of goods
- prices of goods or services
- consumer preferences
- Regulatory trade barriers
- Local specification requirements

What has been the CCI's approach so far?

Until 2016, while defining a 'relevant market' for e-commerce companies and marketplaces (*such as Snapdeal, Ebay, Yepme, Cloudfair, etc*), the CCI **viewed online and offline segments as different channels of distribution and not different relevant markets.**

In 2018, when examining a complaint filed against e-commerce companies that alleged 'abuse of dominance' by way of predatory pricing and preferential treatment to certain sellers, the **CCI diverged from its initial view** and recognized the possibility of a distinction between online and offline segments.

In October 2019, the CCI drew a defined distinction in its prima facie order initiating a probe against MakeMyTrip by defining the 'relevant market' in its case as "*the market for online intermediation services for booking of hotels in India*". This case is still under consideration.

What needs to be done?

Given the pace at which the digital sector is expanding in India, and the emergence of several issues prompted by this growth, it is essential that the **CCI carefully consider the question of 'relevant market'**, and more particularly, the question of whether the online and offline distribution segments of such a market are substitutable in each case and industry.

A 'one-size-fits-all' approach to this question will prove unsatisfactory, given the large variation in business models today and the significant number of businesses that have add-on 'online' delivery channels.

Accordingly, the **CCI should define a 'relevant market' in the digital sector** by taking into consideration all substitutable and interchangeable products or services for each industry, including what's available offline.

CCI should **conduct market surveys to explore consumer preferences, habits and dependence on digital platforms**, on a case-to-case basis. It needs to reach out to consumers on a wider scale and not limit its analysis to secondary studies or surveys.

Way forward

It is critical that the CCI's approach in digital markets is well considered, consistent and proportionate, so that the digital sector gets space for growth while safeguarding the interests of competition and consumers.

INFLATION AND RELATED ISSUES

14. [How to tackle the inflation spiral](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**How to tackle the inflation spiral**” published in the **Indian Express** on **18th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3 Indian Economy, Effects of liberalization on the Indian Economy

Relevance: Macroeconomic Situation

News: Recently, The World Economic Outlook, published by the IMF in April, expects global growth to be slower than the forecast made in January, with inflation on the rise.

The global macroeconomic situation is showing signs of **macro instability**. The global debt has increased sharply during the pandemic, inflation is on the rise, and macroeconomic uncertainties have increased due to the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine.

What are the causes?

Inflation has been caused due to **war**; and **fiscal** and **monetary expansion** that happened during the pandemic. This was witnessed in both the **G20 emerging markets** and developing countries like Brazil, Turkey, India and Indonesia.

As per the IMF’s Fiscal Affairs Department, there has been **revenue foregone** and **additional expenditure** during Covid.

The problem of rising debt and inflation is going to compound macro challenges for the low-income **developing countries**.

Globally, the total support comprising **revenue foregone**, **expenditure stimulus** and **liquidity support** was estimated to be \$17,000 billion. Out of this, the government guarantees were one-fourth of the total. In case of default, it can weaken the fiscal balance sheet in the medium term for items that are below the line at the moment.

There has been an increase in **money supply** during the last two years to **support governments** to deal with Covid..

There has been an increase in money supply due to the **government operation** and the central bank’s support to the government during Covid. In the year 2020, this support increased to 9%. In addition, the growth of the US central bank’s support to the government had increased immediately after **the global financial crisis** in 2010.

According to **the IMF international debt statistics** for 2022, both **domestic** and **external debt stock** increased sharply during the pandemic. The external debt stock to the export ratio, export to debt service ratio and the share of public sector external debt in total external debt has shown increase for low-and middle-income countries during this period.

Way Forward

The central banks in many countries including India have raised interest rates for **inflation management**.

Reduction of debt takes time, but management of inflation can’t wait.

The global economy needs **coordinated policy** for **monetary tightening** and **fiscal sustainability**.

There is a need to start **fiscal normalisation** without creating adverse distributional consequences. For this, every country needs to chart out a **fiscal normalisation plan** which are sequenced in a proper manner to bring back global economy on track,

There is a need to enhance fiscal resources for the government for **public investment** in the social and economic sector

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

The government should also create a framework for **sector-specific differentiated responses** for a full recovery.

There is a need for a **quick** and **efficient resolution** of the challenges arising due to the elevated debt levels of **low-income countries**.

There should be greater **international cooperation** to ensure more resource flow to the poorer regions of the World. This will lead to an equitable, fair and sustained recovery during post-Covid.

GS3 – INDIAN ECONOMY – MONEY AND BANKING

FUNCTIONING OF THE RBI

15. **Central banks and the rule of law**

Source: This post is based on the article “**Central banks and the rule of law**” published in **Business Standard** on **19th May 22**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Indian Economy

Relevance: Functioning of the RBI

Context: Two recent developments in India underline the need to inspire the rule of law in the functioning of central banks (CBs).

What are these two recent developments and the reasons behind it?

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) normally makes policy announcements in line with a predictable schedule. But on May 4, **it went off the schedule and increased the policy rate by 40 basis points**. Markets were surprised by this and the 10-year government bond yield jumped. The inflationary outlook had not changed between the last MPC meeting of April 8 and the off-schedule announcement of May 4. So, why the RBI did this?

– **One possibility relates to the exchange rate.** Over the last year, the US dollar has appreciated by 8%. Holding other things constant, this means the normal rupee depreciation should be about 8%. The RBI seems to be countering this by selling reserves, and by responding to the large hike by the US Fed that was coming a few hours after the RBI's surprise announcement.

The second development is the **public statement of the co-founder and chief executive officer of a NASDAQ-listed crypto exchange** that his company disabled the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system from its platform due to informal pressure from the RBI. The company had earlier announced that they would build systems in India whereby investors could receive/send money using UPI. The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) came out with a negative press release, and all Indian banks refused to do business with the exchange. Such ostracisation by banks, with or without the involvement of the RBI, is tantamount to **violating the Supreme Court order** striking down the RBI ban on cryptocurrency.

What are the recommendations of FSLRC wrt integrating rule of law in and independence of financial agencies?

Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission (FSLRC) recommended three pillars:

Pillar one- Regulation-making function of all SRAs, which is relevant in India as the RBI has been given the role of financial regulation for the payments and banking industries (and some

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

other components). There is a problem of **democratic legitimacy** when unelected officials write law.

– The solution lies in **technical expertise** that is displayed, in consultation and control of all regulation-making process by an expert board where private persons have a majority. All these elements address the problem of “the administrative state”, the rule of officials, and generate legitimacy in the writing of law by the agency.

Pillar two – Executive functions of investigations, prosecutions and punishments. There is a case for **political independence** here. It should not be possible for the political masters to trigger punishments for their enemies.

– This requires processes, encoded in parliamentary law, which enshrine separation of powers, define and limit the powers of investigation, require due process in prosecutorial decisions, hygiene in how hearings take place, etc.

Pillar three: Monetary Policy is defined as the control of the short interest rate of the economy. There is a role for political independence here.

– It should not be possible for the political masters to trigger a rate cut prior to a tough election. Most of the developed world has gravitated towards an independent expert MPC structure for the discharge of this function.

What are some other issues with the functioning of RBI?

The mandate of RBI at present has an improbable combination of functions, ranging from running an exchange to investment banking for the Union government and state governments.

The **sheer scope of this mandate** induces innumerable conflicts and rule of law concerns.

GS3 – ENVIRONMENT – ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS, SURVEYS

DROUGHT IN NUMBERS REPORT

16. The UN report that highlights India’s vulnerability to drought

Source: The post is based on an article “**The UN report that highlights India’s vulnerability to drought**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **19th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Environment and Ecology; and Disaster Management

Relevance: Drought, UNCCCD COP15

News: Recently, the Droughts in Numbers, 2022 report was presented by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

What is the Drought in Numbers Report?

The report is a collection of data on the **effects of droughts** on our ecosystem and the manner in which they can be mitigated through **efficient planning** for the future.

The report also gives information about negotiations that are undergoing at the **UNCCD’s 15th Conference of Parties (COP15)** on key issues like drought, land restoration, and related aspects such as land rights, gender equality and youth empowerment.

What is UNCCD’S COP15?

UNCCD’s COP15 focuses on **desertification, land degradation, and drought**. The theme for COP15 has been kept to be “**Land. Life. Legacy: From scarcity to prosperity.**”

The conference has brought together **government representatives, private sector members, and civil society stakeholders** to ensure that land continues to benefit present and future generations. They are expected to **brainstorm** sustainable ideas to further land restoration and drought resilience, focusing on “**future-proofing** land use.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

It proposes to tackle “**the interconnected challenges of land degradation, climate change, and biodiversity loss**” in the ongoing **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-30)**. The UNCCD envisions restoring **one billion hectares** of degraded land by 2030, creating a **land degradation-neutral world**.

What are the findings of the report?

The number and duration of droughts around the world has increased by an alarming 29% since 2000.

As per the report, Globally, droughts have caused **economic losses** of approximately \$124 billion between 1998 and 2017 due to severe droughts. Similarly, India’s **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** reduced by 2 to 5% in the same period.

Pattern of drought emergencies between 2020 and 2022: It has revealed that **many parts of India** fall under the list of regions that are **vulnerable** to droughts globally.

Human impact: Drought is the **second-worst disaster** after flooding. For example, Africa was the worst hit, with 134 droughts, of which 70 occurred in East Africa.

It affected more than **a billion people** around the world between 2000-19. The **worst sufferers** are **women and girls**, especially in emerging and developing countries. The droughts impact their education, nutrition, health, sanitation, and safety.

- For example, droughts cause water stress, therefore, women and girls who bear the disproportionate burden of water collection are forced to go out to fetch water during droughts.

The droughts lead to **water stress** and also impact **livestock** and **crops** in almost every part of the world.

Environmental aspects

If global warming reaches 3° C by 2100, drought can lead to 5 times higher **drought losses** than today’s levels. The largest drought losses are projected in the **Mediterranean** and the **Atlantic regions** of Europe.

The droughts will intensify wildfires, which will threaten 84% of all terrestrial ecosystems. For example, **2019-2020 Australia’s mega drought and wildfires** caused the killing or displacement of about three billion animals in addition to loss of their habitats.

According to a FAO Report 2017, around **12 million hectares of land** are lost each year due to **drought** and **desertification**.

Other aspects

According to the **World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)**, weather, climate and water hazards have accounted for 50% of all disasters and 45% of all reported deaths since 1970. Most of the deaths have occurred in developing countries.

According to **World Bank estimates, drought conditions**, along with other factors like water scarcity, declining crop productivity, rise in sea levels and overpopulation can force up to **216 million people** to migrate by 2050.

According to the report, climate change alone will cause 129 countries to experience an increase in drought exposure in the next few decades.

SC'S VERDICT WRT GST COUNCIL

17. **Let's keep GST good and simple**

Source: This post is based on the following articles:

- “**A timely reminder**” published in **The Hindu** on **21st May 22**.
- “**Let's keep GST good and simple**” published in **Times of India** on **20th May 22**.
- “**Explained: The SC ruling that GST Council decisions are not binding on Centre or states**” published in **Indian Express** on **21st May 22**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Indian Economy

Relevance: GST and related issues, GST Council

Context: The **Supreme Court ruled on May 19th that the recommendations of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council only have persuasive value, and cannot be binding on the Centre and states.**

It should be noted that the case – *Union of India vs Mohit Minerals Pvt Ltd* – was dealing with the levy of Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) on ocean freight and not per se on central and state legislative powers.

Must Read: **Objection milords: SC's GST Council ruling is an overreach and can be hugely disruptive**

What are the concerns with the SC verdict?

There are concerns that after the SC decision is **various states will now begin pulling in different directions**, taking indirect taxes back to the VAT era.

The SC decision comes at a time when states have been very concerned about their ability to manage their fiscal situation once the compensation cess provided to counter revenue losses on account of GST comes to an end in June 2022. Suggestions by states to increase the period of the cess by two or three years, have not yet elicited any positive response from the Centre. In this situation, and given the SC ruling, there is concern on **whether the level of uniformity in GST legislation across states, presently in force, will continue in future.**

How have the stakeholders reacted?

Opposition-ruled States have hailed the verdict as upholding their rights *vis-à-vis* what a few termed as the ‘arbitrary imposition’ of Centre’s decisions in the Council.

The Finance Ministry has sought to disperse the anxiety by indicating that the Court has only elaborated on the Council’s existing arrangement and the status quo would continue. States can already reject the Council’s decisions, but none has chosen to so far, it said.

How has the GST Council performed so far?

The GST Council has met 46 times till now and its decisions have largely been unanimous, indicating a **high level of fiscal maturity** and understanding between the Centre and states.

While some states have had divergent viewpoints on some issues, the Council however has been **effective in balancing the interests of the Centre and the states.**

It has also **dealt with various implementation issues** during the past five years and ensured that the overall aim – a common indirect tax across the country – is not diluted.

Way forward

There does not appear to be any reason for immediate alarm, as the **outcomes of GST Council meetings have largely been implemented** by all states till now.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

– Also, both the Centre and states have worked on GST in a spirit of **cooperative federalism** and the uniformity in GST laws across states has benefited both consumers and manufacturers. At worst, the SC verdict can trigger **more contestations** in Council meetings, and at best, **infuse a fresh sense of responsibility** among members.

The Centre can **strive to be more conciliatory towards States' concerns and fiscal dilemmas**. The Council should also **meet more often** to nurture the critical fiscal federalism dialogue in the right direction and minimise trust deficits.

There are **many pending reforms that require the Centre to work more cohesively with States** to take India's economy forward and lift those left behind. **For instance:** An overhaul of land and labour markets as well as the agrarian sector.

What we need right now is a restatement of the principle of 'One Nation, One Tax', that it won't become a 'One Nation, Many Taxes' situation all over again.

GST should now move further along the path of **procedural simplification**, improving the ease of doing business. It is in essence a tax collected from consumers by businesses and paid to both central and state governments. Therefore, **collective views of both consumers and businesses should be duly considered** before considering any changes in the GST decision-making framework.

18. [Frequent policy flip-flops are bad for farmers as well as consumers](#)

Source: This post is based on the article "**Frequent policy flip-flops are bad for farmers as well as consumers**" published in **Livemint** on **19th May 22**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Indian Economy – Agriculture

Relevance: Wheat export ban, food inflation

Context: In a sudden move, the central government banned the export of wheat on 13th May, a day after retail inflation numbers for April were released.

It was wheat inflation at 9.6% that triggered this panic reaction.

None of it was unexpected, given the trend so far. The Food and Agriculture Organisation food index has been at its highest since the series began, driven by inflation in edible oil and cereals. Wheat prices have been rising since November and gained pace after the Russia-Ukraine war.

[How did India go from making claims of ensuring global food security to worrying about its own in just a month?](#)

The reason appears to be a **lack of understanding of the agrarian economy** or its food security impact.

[What factors did the Govt failed to consider?](#)

It was known that **wheat production would suffer** due to **extreme heat waves**, which damaged standing crops. While the government revised its production estimate down by only 5.7% to 105 million tonnes, actual output may be even lower.

Russia-Ukraine war: That wheat prices were rising internationally was also known months in advance. With the Russia-Ukraine war, there was a clear indication that global markets would witness a **25-30% fall in supply**, given the dominant share of these two countries in the global wheat trade. This information was available and used by traders to pay higher prices to farmers for grains. It was obvious even to the government, given the low arrival of grains at public procurement centres. As against our target of 44 million tonnes, actual procurement has been **less than 20 million tonnes**.

[What steps could have been taken?](#)

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

Relaxing the quality of wheat procurement will help, but is too little, too late.

A **bonus over the minimum support price**. This would not only have allowed the government to meet its procurement target on time, but also provided better prices to farmers. Instead, the government allowed private traders and speculators to take advantage of the situation and mop up supplies from the market. These were mostly bought for exports, but are now trapped by the ban.

How domestic food security is being impacted by shortage of wheat?

There's been a **cut-back in the NFSA allocation of wheat** in several states, many of them mainly wheat-consuming states.

The entire allocation under the PMGKAY for major wheat-consuming states Bihar and Uttar Pradesh has been withdrawn. The offer to replace these with rice shows a **confused bureaucratic approach** that assumes people can change their dietary preferences and tastes according to government fiat.

What is the overall negative impact of the policy uncertainty?

First, the Govt created a hype of a bumper crop and made claims that India had the ability to feed the entire world and the only reason it was not able to do so currently was due to WTO's rules.

Just a day before the export ban, India announced sending trade delegations to nine countries, including Morocco, Tunisia, Indonesia and Thailand, to explore opportunities for exporting wheat.

Then after all this hype, Govt put an export ban on wheat.

Such sudden decisions and overall policy uncertainty can have the following negative impacts:

– **uncertainty over government policies.**

– Apart from sending mixed signals to farmers and traders, it also reflects a **lack of understanding of the domestic food and agricultural economy**. At a time when inflation is likely to erode real purchasing power, especially in rural areas and of the poor, the withdrawal of NFSA and PMGKAY wheat allocations will worsen lives.

– But a far worse outcome would be a **loss of faith in public policy**.

GS3 – INDIAN ECONOMY – INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND ISSUES ARISING OUT OF IT

INEQUALITY AND RELATED ISSUES

19. **Jobs scheme will not offer a long-term solution to urban unemployment. Safety nets need to better conceived**

Source: This post is based on the article “**Jobs scheme will not offer a long-term solution to urban unemployment. Safety nets need to better conceived**” published in **The Indian Express** on **21st May 22**.

Syllabus: GS3 -Indian economy – Issues related to growth and development

Relevance: Tackling the rising inequality in India

Context: A few days ago, the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister released a report on the state of inequality in India. The report, prepared by the Institute of Competitiveness, provides a detailed examination of the existing disparities in society.

Some of the suggestions to tackle rising inequality in India included putting in place an urban equivalent of MGNREGA and introducing a **universal basic income**.

These require careful consideration.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

- For more on the report – Click [here](#)

Why the proposal for an urban employment guarantee scheme has been made?

The proposal to introduce an urban employment guarantee scheme comes in the backdrop of the pandemic, exposing the critical position of workers, especially those employed in the informal sector in urban areas.

It's also argued that not only would this provide employment during times of distress, but this would also **serve as a channel to push funds** through quickly in periods of stress.

Several states have in fact been experimenting with this concept. Recently, the Rajasthan government announced a scheme for urban areas — the Indira Gandhi Shahri Rozgar Guarantee Yojana — on the lines of MGNREGA.

What are the problems associated with the idea of an urban employment guarantee scheme?

First, such a scheme may simply **encourage migration**, which without the creation of the attending infrastructure, will only exert further **pressure on the crumbling facilities of these cities**.

Second, demand for work under MGNREGA tends to move in line with the agricultural cycle. As such, it is seasonal in nature. However, in urban areas, there is **no such seasonality in either work demanded or unemployment**, complicating the design of such a scheme. And moreover, many of the migrant workers are unlikely to have the **requisite skills** needed for regular jobs in cities.

Third, it is also **debatable whether the educated but unemployed workers will take up these jobs**.

Fourth, there are **capacity constraints with the urban local bodies**, which are likely to be the implementing agencies.

Lastly, there is also the **question of financing** such a scheme at the national level.

Way forward

The proposal seeks to address the continuing employment and inequality crisis that plagues India. However, India's job challenge is **structural in nature**, owing in part to the absence of a labour-intensive manufacturing sector.

A more prudent approach would be for economic policy to **focus on boosting growth, lowering inequalities in opportunities, improving access to education and health, and providing pathways for upward mobility**.

GS3 – INTERNAL SECURITY – THREATS TO INTERNAL SECURITY

LEFT WING EXTREMISM

20. **Talking peace, negotiating with the Maoists**

Source: The post is based on an article “Talking peace, negotiating with the Maoists” published in the “The Hindu” on 21st May 2022.

Syllabus: GS3 – Internal Security

Relevance: Extremism in India

News: Recently, **the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh** announced that the State government was ready for peace talks with the Maoists provided they laid down arms and expressed their faith in the Constitution of India.

Earlier attempts

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May, (Third Week) 2022

In 2010, the then Home Minister tried to bring the Maoists to the negotiating table. He asked them to halt violence and come to talk. In response, the Maoists placed **three pre-conditions** to a dialogue.

In 2014, the **Andhra Pradesh State government** lifted the ban on the party. Consequently, there was a **four-day peace dialogue** between the representatives of the People's War (PW) party and government. Maoists proposed a **11-point charter** of demands such as legislation on land ceiling; creation of a separate state of Telangana; and questions associated with armed action by either side. However, the **peace process collapsed mid-way** and the ban was re-imposed on the CPI(Maoist) and its sister organisations.

What are the major conditions of the Maoists?

First, the '**withdrawal of all-out war**', i.e., a cessation of hostilities by both sides simultaneously, i.e., mutual ceasefire and not unilateral ceasefire by the Maoists.

Second, lifting of the ban on the party was necessary for peaceful legal work by the Maoists,

Third, the government should adhere to the **Constitution** and end the **illegal** arrests, tortures and murders in the name of encounters. The government was also required to release some leaders

Should the Govt withdraw security forces from Maoist areas?

For

The government should **go ahead with the Maoist's demand of withdrawal of armed police forces** with a mutually agreed 'ceasefire'. For example, Maoists must abjure violence and the Security force's Anti-Maoist operations must be halted for some period.

Against

The State government cannot afford the risk of moving out security forces as a pre-condition for initiating peace talks. The Maoists misused the ceasefire during the 2004 peace talks in Andhra Pradesh.

Way Forward

The State governments should implement **the Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, 1996**.

The release of jailed Maoist leaders should not be made a pre-condition by the Maoists. In fact, the Chhattisgarh government has withdrawn criminal cases against many tribals and has also ensured expeditious trial of Naxal cases.

The government may give some **concessions** with regard to lifting a ban on the CPI(Maoist), the PLGA and its front organisations.

GS3 – SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY – DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR APPLICATIONS AND EFFECTS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

SIMULATING GRAVITY

21. **Simulating gravity**

Source: The post is based on an article "**Simulating gravity**" published in the **Business Standard** on **20th May 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Developments in Science and Technology; Space Technology

Relevance: Artificial Gravity, Space Settlement

News: Recently, the **Orbital Assembly Corporation** announced a plan to develop a **space business park** (hotel) which will be made operational by 2025. The hotel will be equipped with **artificial gravity**.

Benefits of artificial gravity

It would keep astronauts **healthy** on long trips, prevent loss of **bone density** and **muscle atrophy**. For example, in **microgravity**, the fluids in the body shift upward to the head. This put pressure on the eyes and causes vision problems. This worsens humans' physical and mental health.

Further, the creation of artificial gravity can help humanity to **settle** on **celestial bodies** beyond Earth.

What are the proposals to create artificial gravity?

The first and considered most feasible is making **a spaceship rotate**. The inertia or the pseudo "**centrifugal force**" in such a scenario would be the basis of the solution to artificial gravity as was in the movie **2001: A Space Odyssey**.

– The **centrifuge solution** is worth considering when looked at for setting up space colonies. It is called **the O'Neill system**. In fact, the space company **Blue Origin** has shown interest in building O'Neill cylinders.

– Similarly, **centripetal acceleration** could be used and a person on board would feel the outer hull of a spaceship pushing him/her towards the centre.

Second, another approach could be to use **electricity** and **magnetism** to substitute for **gravity**. The electricity will be run in circles to produce magnetism. This will result in a magnetic field. Astronauts would wear metal boots and the magnetic attraction should allow them to walk on the floor.

Third, the scientists could also **harness real gravity**. Everything with mass has gravity. Therefore, the scientists can go for creating a planet which will have enough gravity. The key might be to get a lot of mass into a very small area. **For instance**: A teaspoon of **neutron-star material** might be enough to give us gravity, or a tiny pencil prick of a **black hole**. Both of these are neither feasible nor possible currently.

Fourth, another idea is making **gravity generators**. A Russian engineer named **Eugene Podkletnov** has claimed to have designed and demonstrated **gravitomagnetic devices**. These devices consisted of rotating discs constructed from ceramic superconducting materials.

The **string theory** does predict that gravity and electromagnetism could be unified in hidden dimensions. This can act as a way to "generate" gravity in the future.

What are the issues with these ideas?

At present, there is no confirmed technology that can simulate gravity, other than **actual mass** or **acceleration**. All the above-mentioned solutions are in the realms of concept and the fictions. In case of **centrifugal approach**, there is an issue of size. With rotating spacecraft, the radius of rotation grows with the square of the orbital period. The delivery of materials to space is very expensive. Such a concept was envisioned in the epic science fiction movie **2001: A Space Odyssey** released in 1968.

The **electricity and magnetic approach** would require a lot of **power supply** which is very difficult due to limited resources.

Creating a planet is easier said than done.

The **claim of gravity generators has not been verified by third parties**. In 2006, another research group created a similar device but the gravity created was very small. The process wasn't replicated.