

**9 PM**

# **Compilation**

**13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2022**

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# General Studies Paper – 1

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GS1 – HISTORY – ART AND CULTURE

### INDIC CIVILISATION

#### 1. Musings on 'Indic civilisation' and Indianness

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Musings on ‘Indic civilisation’ and Indianness” published in the “The Hindu” on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS1 – Salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times

**Relevance:** To know about India’s civilisational heritage

**News:** Contemporary international politics has rendered less significant to cultural influence. The modern indices of strategic thinking, economic interests, and geopolitical affinities have gained more prominence than the cultural aspects. But India must treat Indic civilisation as a matter of pride.

How Indic Civilization is different from geographical and geopolitical India?

**Geographical idea of India:** This includes the subcontinent bordered by the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the Himalayan mountains.

**Geopolitical idea of India:** This include the Republic of India; at its biggest extent, the British Raj as it was in 1914, or more pragmatically, the British India of 1947.

**Indic Civilization:** Civilisational idea of India is much broader than Geographic and Geopolitical ones. These are countries that are ‘culturally as much Indian. For instance, in Asia countries such as Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Java, Bali, or Sumatra are part of the Indic Civilization.

What is the composition of Indic Civilization?

The idea of Indian civilisation is not solely comprised of Hindu dharma but also consists of multiple non-Hindu influences (Such as Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism, and also British colonial area) that have shaped contemporary Indian civilisation.

How impactful is Indic civilization in South East Asia?

To this day, **a)** The kings of Thailand are crowned in the presence of Brahmin priests; **b)** the Muslims of Java still bear Sanskritised names, despite their conversion to Islam; **c)** Garuda is Indonesia’s national airline, and Ramayana its best-selling brand of clove cigars; **d)** Even the Philippines has produced a pop-dance ballet about Rama’s quest for his kidnapped queen.

**e)** Many Southeast Asian countries also mirror the **idea of a ‘sacred geography’**: the **old Thai kingdom of Ayutthaya** derived its name from the Indian Ayodhya, **f)** Since 1782, Thai kings are still named Rama in continuation of the Ramayana tradition; the current monarch, Vajiralongkorn, is styled Rama X. (The Javanese city of Yogyakarta in Indonesia is also a transliteration of Ayodhya).

Indic Civilization in Cambodia

Hinduism was brought to Cambodia by merchants and travellers more than a millennium ago. It has long since disappeared, supplanted by Buddhism. But at its peak, Hinduism profoundly influenced the culture, music, dance, and mythology of the Cambodian people. The 16th century saw Hindus and Buddhists worship side by side in adjoining shrines within the same temple complex.

Cambodia is indeed the last outpost of Indic civilisation in a world increasingly overrun by the forces of Chinese culture.

Angkor Wat, Cambodia has exquisite sculptures from Ramayana and the Mahabharata tales.

What should be done to preserve Indic Civilization?

Indians should treat India’s civilisational heritage as a matter of pride, and not of parochialism; as a heritage that unites, rather than divides one Indian from another.

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# General

# Studies

# Paper – 2

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**INDIA-IRAN RELATIONS**

1. **Iran foreign minister's visit reaffirms resolve of two countries to strengthen ties**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Iran foreign minister's visit reaffirms resolve of two countries to strengthen ties” published in the Indian Express on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 International Relations; Bilateral Relations

**Relevance:** India-Iran relations

**News:** Iran's Foreign Minister was on a three-day visit to India in keeping with Iran's “Asia-oriented” foreign policy. It was the first ministerial-level visit from Iran since Ebrahim Raisi assumed the Iranian presidency.

**What is the convergence of interests between India-Iran?**

The “**Tehran Declaration**” between India and Iran affirmed the shared vision of the two countries for an “**equitable, pluralistic and co-operative international order**”. It symbolizes common geopolitical interests:

Ex-Iranian President envisioned “**dialogue among civilisations**” as a **paradigm of international relations** based on principles of **tolerance, pluralism and respect for diversity**.

India sees Iran which borders the **Persian Gulf** and the **Caspian Sea**, as a **land bridge** to Central Asia and Eurasia which have seen emergence of **independent landlocked countries** over the last three decades.

**Some developments in the India-Iran Relationship**

Despite the US Sanctions, Iran, India, Russia and a few other countries in the Eurasian region, have continued to work on the **multi-modal International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**.

Both countries have pledged to redouble their efforts to build the railway line between **Iran's Caspian port of Rasht** and **Astara on the Iran-Azerbaijan border**, aimed to connect the railway networks of Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia.

**Iran's Chabahar** port, which India is building, is also a story of perseverance in the ties between the two countries.

In recent times, India has abstained on the resolution by the US and its allies to censure Iran at the **IAEA**.

**What are the challenges in India-Iran relationship?**

The US sanctions on Iran and Tehran **withdrawal** from the **nuclear deal in 2018**, worsened the bilateral relations, especially in India's energy imports from Iran

At present, India is strengthening its **new partnerships** within its **regional vision** centred on the **Indo-Pacific**. Whereas, **Iran** is deepening its relationship with **China** and **Russia** which have been playing aggressive geopolitical games in their own neighbourhood and also at the global level.

The “**sluggish**” **pace of the port's development**. Tehran has maintained that **Chabahar** does not seek to rival **Pakistan's Gwadar port** being developed by **China**.

Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, Pakistan has been leading the efforts to link Central Asia with Karachi through a trans-Afghan railway.

**Way Forward**



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New Delhi is pushing for integrating Chabahar into the 13-nation **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**.

Recently, the maiden **India-Central Asia summit** agreed on creating a **Joint Working Group on Chabahar**.

The revival of the US-Iran nuclear deal could give a fillip to **India's economic ties** with Iran. India's interests in continental Asia can be served with an improved **bilateral relation** with Iran.

### **INDIA – SRI LANKA RELATIONS**

#### 2. **On India – Sri Lanka ties: Drawing closer**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Drawing closer**” published in **The Indian Express** on **16th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – International relations – India and its neighborhood

**Relevance:** India – Sri Lanka ties

**News:** Connectivity between Sri Lanka and India seems set to improve, especially between the Tamil areas in the north and Tamil Nadu across the Palk Strait.

The projects to link Jaffna by air to Trichy and by boat to Karaikal on the Coromandel Coast form a part of India's development outreach to Sri Lanka. It focuses on building **long-term infrastructure projects** in the island nation, besides aid for emergency needs such as fuel, food and essential medicines.

Better connectivity between India and Sri Lanka could help them **realize the full potential** of their partnership.

#### Efforts by the govt to improve India-Sri Lanka connectivity

**Multiple transport links** existed between India and Sri Lanka until the 1980s when the civil war severely curtailed exchanges and transactions.

Before that, a cyclonic storm in 1964 destroyed the Pamban Bridge and the railway terminus and jetty at Dhanushkodi that forced the government to end the popular “**Boat Mail**”. It connected Chennai and Talaimannar in northern Sri Lanka via Rameswaram through a rail link and a ferry.

Since the war ended in 2009, **transportation has been a key area that India-Sri Lanka ties have focussed on**, with railways and ports in focus. IRCON, an Indian Railways subsidiary, restored the **Colombo-Jaffna railway line**, which was opened for the public in 2014, and has since expanded to Kankesanthurai beyond Jaffna.

The **proposed ferry services between Karaikal and Jaffna/Kankesanthurai** could at a later stage be upgraded to facilitate transport of cargo from India to Sri Lanka. At present, Colombo is the only port of entry for Indian goods, which involves extra travel.

#### Issues that still remain

The **air connectivity** from Indian cities has so far been restricted to Colombo.

– Direct flights out of Jaffna to cities in Tamil Nadu will save travel time and money, which could give a fillip to tourism, particularly pilgrimage, in the Jaffna peninsula as well as in India.

#### Way forward

The current crisis in Sri Lanka has forced Colombo to recalibrate ties with New Delhi and the latter to emphasise its “**Neighbourhood First**” policy.



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The challenge, however, would be to **insulate bilateral relations from regional politics** in both countries and build on the gains for both.

### 3. In Sri Lankan crisis, a window of economic opportunity

**Source:** The post is based on an article “In Sri Lankan crisis, a window of economic opportunity” published in the “The Hindu” on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 International Relations, Bilateral relations

**Relevance:** India-Sri Lanka relations

**News:** Recently, in an interview with an Indian TV channel, the Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, talked about significant aspect of India-Sri Lanka relations

#### **Proposal for forging closer ties between Sri Lanka and the southern parts of India – the sub-regional integration**

There are various **commonalities** between Sri Lanka and the southern parts of India.

The **south India-Sri Lanka sub-region** can be developed as a **single market**. It would provide **more opportunities** for the **economic growth** of both countries.

In addition, in 2016, the Sri-Lankan PM had also proposed the **tri-nation economic convergence**, encompassing Singapore too.

#### **What are the reasons behind present bonhomie in the India-Sri Lanka relations?**

The present economic crisis in Sri Lanka has pushed it closer to India for immediate relief.

For the last few months, the **Indian media’s regular coverage** of the crisis has led to better **understanding** and even created a sense of **empathy** in India about the plight of the **neighbouring country**.

India, as part of its **‘Neighbourhood First’ policy**, has extended \$3.5 billion aid to Sri Lanka to help secure food, health and energy.

The **Government of Sri Lanka** and the **Export-Import Bank of India** have signed an agreement for a **\$55-million short term Line of Credit**.

India’s Finance Minister has urged the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** to provide urgent assistance to Sri Lanka.

On its part, **Tamil Nadu** decided to provide aid in the form of rice, life-saving drugs and milk powder.

#### **What is India’ foreign policy challenges?**

Some sections of the **Sinhalese** believe that **“India has been a threat to them. It can be a threat to them in future too”**. For example, South Indian rulers had invaded Sri Lanka during ancient times. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Indian government supported Tamil rebels.

Despite India’s **open willingness** to take part in the development of Sri Lanka after the civil war, the scale of its **involvement** has been modest.

The Sri Lankan government, in the past, had unilaterally scrapped a **tripartite agreement** signed with India and Japan for the development of **Colombo’s East Container Terminal**.

Another project, a collaboration between **NTPC Limited** and the **Ceylon Electricity Board**, was cancelled.

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Further, the Sri Lanka government has not shown much political will in other projects such as the development of the **Kankesanthurai harbour** and the expansion of the **Palaly airport** in Jaffna.

The project of building a **sea bridge and tunnel**, connecting **Rameshwaram** to **Talaimannar**, remains on paper despite India's readiness for it.

Several popular brands of **south Indian restaurants** and **retail textile establishments** have not opened their branches in Sri Lanka, despite their presence outside India or overseas.

### Way Forward

The Sri Lanka Crisis provides an opportunity to bring Indian and Sri Lankan societies closer. It is a **prerequisite** to achieving an **economic union** between Sri Lanka and the **southern States of India**.

India has received the projects for development of the **West Container Terminal**, the **Trincomalee oil tank farm** and a couple of renewable projects.

Recently, the Sri Lankan Cabinet cleared **two connectivity proposals: flights** from Jaffna to Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu, and **a ferry service** from Kankesanthurai to Karaikal in Puducherry.

There is enormous scope for collaboration between the two countries in the area of **infrastructure development**.

– For example, the Sri Lanka's electricity grid can be linked with India's Grid. India already has **cross-border energy trade** with Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar.

India's interests would also be served by developing **the east coast** of Sri Lanka, especially the **Trincomalee-Batticaloa belt**, whose potential for **tourism, commerce, trade and industry** is well known.

The **regular movement of people** and goods should be allowed again on the traditional sea routes of **Thoothukudi-Colombo** and **Rameshwaram-Talaimannar**.

The Indian side should dispel the apprehension among Sinhalese about India being a threat. It can be done by facilitating greater **people-to-people interaction** like pilgrimages to Buddhist Sites.

## GS2 – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS – WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION (WTO)

### AGRICULTURE AND RELATED ISSUES

#### 4. Free trade can't yet pass a basic food security test (14th Jun 22)

**Source:** The post is based on an article "Free trade can't yet pass a basic food security test" published in the Live Mint on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS – 2 Issues of Buffer Stocks and Food Security

**Relevance:** Free Trade Reforms in WTO

**News:** At present, the 12th World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial conference is being held in Geneva. Food security is one of the agenda on the discussion table on the ministerial conference.

### Importance of Free Trade

Free trade ensures that agricultural products flow from zones of abundance to regions of scarcity, just as the free exchange of ideas, goods and services. This eases hunger and maximizes nutrition.

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### What are the challenges?

#### Ultimate Challenge

Agriculture has always been the final frontier of trade, given national anxieties over food sufficiency. For example, India has been criticized for its ban of private wheat exports.

The governments are running a massive **food security programme**. They procure harvests from farmers at prices not determined by the market. This imposes ecological costs, results in **fiscal bloat**, and keeps grain supply out of sync with demand.

#### Proximate Challenge

The Ukraine War has led to barriers to free trade. For example, trade has been weaponized for geopolitical aims. The Ukraine war has led to a **wheat-supply squeeze**. Now the costs of **farm input** have soared up. Over **two-thirds of humanity** is living in countries that are **net importers of food**. The United Nations recently estimated that 276 million people are at risk of starvation.

### What are the issues with WTO farm subsidy rules?

There are issues in the 10% subsidy limit rule. It was calculated based on prices of 1986-88, when food was much cheaper.

The rule placed burdens on **developing economies**, while the **rich world** found various opportunities for its own farms. Therefore, in 2013, a tentative "**peace clause**" was inserted at the Bali meet. It granted immunities to the countries from being charged with 10% rule violation.

#### The Way Forward

As fair-trade requires a **level playing field**. Therefore, the elimination of **distortive subsidies** is a key enabler.

Today, the circumstances have changed. Therefore, the **WTO's subsidy rules** need an update. The revised rules should be made on food stockpiling, which offers autonomy in assuring our **people's food security**.

In general, India must foster free trade. India should adapt our farm sector to market forces. In other words, there is a need for **market-oriented farm reforms**.

### WTO REFORM

#### 5. [World Trade Organisation Must Get Back To Trade](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**World Trade Organisation Must Get Back To Trade**" published in **The Times of India** on **18th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Effects of liberalization on the economy

**Relevance:** To understand the evolution of WTO and the challenges associated with it.

**News:** For the first time in a decade, the members of the [World Trade Organization \(WTO\)](#) have finalized a historic deal at the 12th Ministerial Conference(MC12). The key issues include a reduction in fishery subsidies, patent waivers for making a vaccine for the pandemic, food security and e-commerce.

**Read more:** [Outcomes of 12th Ministerial Conference of WTO](#)

What are the concerns associated with the MC12 outcomes?

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World trade has two core components: goods and services. Both with an annual value of \$28.5 trillion. But the current WTO outcome does not include new rules on goods, services, or other trade-related subjects.

For the past 27 years, WTO members did not agree on a single multilateral agreement liberalising trade in goods or services.

**Note:** The trade deal signed in 2013 is related to trade facilitation only.

### About the evolution of GATT

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), established in April 1947 with 23 members, was the beginning of the multilateral trade system.

The US, EU and Japan cut their tariffs on industrial goods without seeking reciprocal cuts from other countries. They did not lose much as they produced and traded most goods among themselves.

This led big firms to shift production to low-cost countries like China in search of profit. Further, they required the free flow of products across countries.

From 1947 to 1994 talks at GATT led to a fall in average import tariffs from over 100% to 4% for developed and 10% for developing countries. These tariff cuts benefited the trade of rich and poor countries alike. But the major gainer was China.

### About the evolution of WTO

Offshoring and tariff cuts increased the profits of Western corporates. Hence, there was an opinion that GATT could be more beneficial if it dealt with more subjects.

Hence, a new body, WTO, soon replaced GATT in 1995. It added intellectual property rights, services, agriculture and an effective dispute-settlement system.

**IP Rights:** WTO's dispute-settlement process ensured time-bound punishment for violation of intellectual property. IP became the first non-trade subject to be included in WTO.

**WTO's agriculture rules:** These rules were drafted by large agriculture trading firms that legalised most subsidies provided by the developed countries. At present, if support given by a developing country like India exceeds more than 10% of the production value then it is considered that the government violated WTO rules.

### What are the challenges associated with the WTO?

**Burden for Poor countries:** The WTO rules included many Non-trade subjects. The subjects like environment, labour standards, fossil fuel subsidies, plastic pollution and transparency in government procurement into the WTO fold.

This made a poor country exporting cotton shirts must first meet high environmental standards at home. This will only raise costs and cut exports from poor countries.

**Legitimise trade protectionism:** Specialised multilateral and regional institutions exist for the environment and labour protection. Developing countries are active participants in these bodies. Discussing them at WTO is an attempt to legitimise trade protectionism.

**Trade war paralysed WTO:** In 2017, the US administration imposed steep tariffs in January 2018 on China alleging IP violations. In December 2019 the US also blocked the appointment of new nominees to WTO's appellate body. This paralysed WTO as a judge and enforcer of global trade rules.

### What should be done?

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**First**, out of 164 members, at least 140 are developing or least-developed countries accounting for 45% of world trade. Hence, WTO needs a new plan that reflects the aspiration of all members.

**Second**, WTO should handle only trade-related subjects, while retaining core principles like decision-making by consensus and restoring the dispute-settlement process.

GATT/WTO rules have to increase trade for both rich and poor countries. A new WTO agenda with a focus on this core value should be framed.

### 6. **Proposed WTO reform aims to bully developing nations: Civil society members**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Proposed WTO reform aims to bully developing nations” Civil society members” published in the Down to earth on 13 June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 International Relations, International Organizations

**Relevance:** World Trade Organization (WTO) and Multilateralism

**News:** The ‘WTO Reform’ proposal has been pushed in the **12th Ministerial Conference (MC12)** of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). However, the proposed reforms are said to weaken the position of the developing countries.

#### **What are the issues in the proposed WTO reforms?**

As per some experts, the reforms may undermine the participation and say of the developing countries:

**First**, the proposed agenda will undermine the fundamental WTO **principles of consensus** and **multilateralism**. It will favour **plurilateralism** and create differentiation among developing countries.

**Second**, instead of addressing **serious flaws** within the existing harmful WTO rules, the new ‘reform’ will end up producing a framework which will be **pro-corporate**, and **pro-developed countries**. The richest nations and the global corporations will have complete control over the WTO.

**Third**, the reforms will subvert the key principles of WTO, which are: **One nation one vote**, **decisions by consensus** and **‘special and differentiated treatment’** to protect developing country interests.

**Fourth**, it will lead to permanently abandoning the **mandated, long-unresolved issues** of the **development agenda**. It will attack developing countries’ ability to access flexibilities enshrined in the WTO.

GS2 – POLITY – PARLIAMENT AND STATE LEGISLATURE

### **GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN THE PARLIAMENT**

#### 7. **A ‘man’s Parliament’ striving for an inclusive India**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “A man’s Parliament striving for an inclusive India” published in the “The Hindu” on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS2 Functioning of the Parliament of India; Social Sector

**Relevance:** Gender Inclusivity

**News:** There is a **burgeoning movement** for **gender inclusivity** during the past few years. In solidarity, citizens have begun asserting their gender identity by specifying their personal



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pronouns (she/her, he/his, they/them, etc.). This trend has been, in fact, reflected in the context of Indian Parliament.

### **Role of Women in the Struggle for Indian Independence and in the Post Independent India**

Thousands of women across profession, class, caste, and religion participated in the struggle for India's Independence.

At a time when women formed only 1.7% of the total members of the United States Congress and 1.1% of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, India was leading the way in the fight towards more **inclusive** world democracies with **5.5% women representation**.

India has also seen a woman as the Prime Minister, and a woman as the President of India

### **What are the gender issues in the Parliament of India?**

There are systemic issues due to which the Parliament of India continues to alienate women.

The number of women representatives is still considerably small. Further, the Parliament as a workspace continues to be built exclusively for men.

There is a lack of **gender-neutral language** in the Parliament of India. The Parliament refers to **women in leadership positions** as Chairmen instead of chairperson. For example, the Vice-President of India is referred as the ex-officio Chairman, as per the rules of procedure of Rajya Sabha.

In **law-making**, there have hardly been any **gender-neutral Acts**. For example, women in profession like policing are referred to as policemen.

Most of the **ministerial replies** to questions asked by the Women Parliamentarians are given with the use of the salutation "Sir" instead of (sir/madam).

### **What are the trends of gender-neutrality in the law making bodies in India and across the world?**

Internationally, even **mature democracies** that legalised **universal suffrage** after India, such as Canada (1960 for Aboriginal women), Australia (1962 for Indigenous women), and the United States (1965 for women of African-American descent), have successfully adopted a framework for **gender-inclusive legislation** and **communication**.

In 2014, the **Rules of Procedure of the Lok Sabha** were amended to make it entirely gender neutral. Since then, each Lok Sabha Committee Head has been referred to as Chairperson in all documents.

### **Consequences**

When **Parliament** and **government offices** reinforce gender biases through **stereotypical language** in their **communication**. It sends the wrong message to the people of India.

### **Way Forward**

The Supreme Court judgment in **National Legal Services Authority vs Union of India , 2014**, has given impetus to gender identity and has given the movement greater impetus.

There should be political will to amend legal documents to make them inclusive for all genders.

In the **21st century**, the Indian Parliament needs to send the **right message** for citizens to follow. It can begin with an **amendment** to the **Constitution** and the entire reservoir of laws. Thereafter, the Parliament can shift its focus on other deeper issues like women empowerment, **aspirations** and growth of its **woman workforce etc.**

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The Parliament must lead to sensitivity, equal treatment, and appreciation for the people of India, regardless of gender

The Indian Parliament can conduct **gender audits**. For example, in 2018, **the U.K. Parliament** conducted a **gender audit** to understand its culture, environment, and policies as a workspace.

GS2 – POLITY – JUDICIARY

### **DEATH PENALTY AND RELATED ISSUES**

#### 8. **There is a concerted effort to plug procedural gaps in death penalty sentencing**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “There is a concerted effort to plug procedural gaps in death penalty sentencing” published in the Indian Express on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS2 Important Provisions of the Constitution of India

**Relevance:** Death penalty

**News:** Recently, the Supreme Court of India delivered a judgment in **Manoj & others v. State of MP** which attempted to reform the administration of the death penalty. The judgment is prominent in **India’s criminal justice jurisprudence**.

#### **The SC’s Observations**

It reflected the state of the death penalty in the country. It attempted to fix a broken sentencing system.

The framework of mitigating factors placed four decades in the **Bachan Singh** Case is not being followed.

#### **What were the issues in death penalty sentencing since Bachan Singh Case?**

The Supreme Court, the Law Commission of India, research scholars and civil society groups have acknowledged a **judicial crisis in death penalty sentencing** in India. It has been on account of **unprincipled sentencing, arbitrariness** and high levels of **subjectivity**. The death penalty sentencing has been, by and large, crime-centric.

The crisis prevailed despite **requirements imposed** on sentencing judges by the Supreme Court in **Bachan Singh (1980)**.

#### **What are the reasons for non-compliance to the Bachan Singh Framework?**

There has been **utter confusion** across all levels of the judiciary on the requirements of this **framework** and its **implementation**.

The nature of the crime and its brutality has often dominated over the consideration of mitigating factors. The **socioeconomic profile** of death row prisoners has not been used as a mitigating factor into the courtroom.

There is now empirical evidence that a vast majority of **India’s death row prisoners** are extremely poor. They do not receive competent legal representation.

Till yet, the measures have not been taken to put in place a system to gather the information required for mitigating factors.

#### **Manoj & others v. State of MP Judgement**

The Judges must follow the laid down a framework to choose between **life imprisonment** and **death sentence**.



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Sentencing Judges couldn't impose the **death penalty** only on the basis of the **crime** or **aggravating factor**. They'll give **appropriate weight** to both the **aggravating factors** related to **crime** and **mitigating factors** related to background of the accused, the personal circumstances, mental health and age of the accused, to ascertain if a case is fit for the death sentence. They have to determine if the option of life imprisonment was "**unquestionably foreclosed**".

It has attempted to **plug the procedural gap** in gathering information related to mitigating factors. The judgment is clear that **certain procedural thresholds** must be met for sentencing to be fair.

The judgment recognised **reformation** as integral to the **Indian criminal justice system**, especially **death penalty sentencing**. The sentencing judges must establish that there is no probability of reformation of the accused.

The accused's life, both **pre-offence** and **post-offence in prison**, are relevant. The courts have to call for reports from the **probation officer** as well as **prison** and **independent mental health experts**.

**What will be the challenges to procedural coherence and integrity in the trial courts and the high courts?**

Achieving meaningful compliance across all levels of the judiciary will be a significant challenge. The sentencing judges do not understand the need for this wide range of sentencing information.

In addition, translating these **procedural reforms** into **substantive fairness in determining punishment** will also be a challenge.

There will be a challenge in producing detailed and high-quality sentencing information to the courtrooms.

### Way Forward

The Supreme Court will have to provide a **rigorous normative basis** for consideration of these factors.

The psychological studies ascertain that criminality cannot just be reduced to terrible decisions by individuals in the exercise of their free will. All our actions are a result of a **complex web of biological, psychological, and social factors**. Therefore, their understanding is important for discussions on criminality and punishment.

## GS2 – POLITY – FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

### RIGHT TO HOUSING

#### 9. Bulldozer injustice to 'teach a lesson'

**Source:** The post is based on an article "Bulldozer injustice to 'teach a lesson' published in the Indian Express on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 Important Provisions of the Constitution of India

**Relevance:** Rule of Law

**News:** In recent times, a fringe but influential national spokesperson has been alleged for **inciting violence** by saying something offensive about the Prophet.

### Laws in India

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The Constitution of India permits only a **peaceful assembly** without arms. Violence in protests cannot be justified under any circumstances.

There are **adequate provisions** in the **Indian Penal Code** for the police to act against any violator.

### Trends of bulldozer justice in India

Persons accused of **far lesser offences** have attracted stringent charges against them. They have been subjected to stringent laws such as the Sedition law, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the National Security Act (NSA) or the Public Safety Act.

For example, In the law on sedition, the SC has made it clear that the **one inciting violence** is the **guilty person**. However, in today's interpretation of the law, it does not matter whether there is incitement or not; a charge of sedition will be slapped anyway if anything which is said is not liked by the government.

However, the law does not take its course against **an influential fringe** or **well-connected person** who has committed an offence. For example, senseless mob lynching and offensive saying against the Prophet.

In general, the government comes down on the violent protesters with a heavy hand with an iron fist. For example, recently, the governments have used bulldozers to demolish the residential premises of those allegedly involved in violent protests.

### Javed's House Demolition Case

In the Javed House demolition case, the government has resorted to a lot of **arbitrariness**. For example; (1) first, the state collected taxes for the so-called **illegal construction**, and later issued order for its demolition, (2) the demolition order was delivered on **Saturday night** and the demolition took place on **Sunday morning**, which was a government holiday. Therefore, giving no time to challenge the correctness of the demolition order in a court of law or file an appeal.

In another case, the **Uttar Pradesh police** sent two persons to judicial custody for almost two months on no charges at all.

### Argument Against such a move

In *Avas Evam Vikas Parishad vs Friends Coop. Housing Society Ltd (1996)* and in *Chameli Singh vs State of Uttar Pradesh (1996)*, the Supreme Court of India has held that "The right to shelter is a fundamental right under the Constitution of India".

### The Way Forward

The government should conform to **well-settled principle** like requiring state action to be **just, fair** and **reasonable mandates**.

First, the state should adequately **compensate** the victims for their loss and the mental distress caused.

The officers concerned in the decision making at all levels must be held accountable and punished enough to 'teach them a lesson'.

The government should work upon building **accountability jurisprudence** in India and the culture of impunity should be banished.

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GS2 – POLITY – INDIAN CONSTITUTION

### **ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA**

#### 10. **Being Truly Presidential**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Being Truly Presidential**” published in **The Times of India** on **18th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

**Relevance:** To understand the importance of the Presidential Election.

**News:** With the Presidential election around the corner, there is a question that who will be the ideal president for 21st-century India?

What are the different types of Presidents India witnessed?

According to the author, the past Presidents of India can be grouped into three categories.

**Presidents of stature:** These are individuals who had formidable personal achievements before entering the office. Such as

**a) Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** – He is a magisterial scholar who served in top global universities and authored several classic books, **b) Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam** – He is regarded as the father of India’s nuclear weapons programme, **c) KR Narayanan** – He is a distinguished former diplomat.

**Political presidents:** These are the persons who had political backgrounds and, as former legislators. Such as

**a) Rajendra Prasad:** He is India’s first president. He is a veteran activist who was imprisoned several times during the Independence movement. **b) Ramaswamy Venkataraman:** He was a four-time Lok Sabha winner. **c) Pranab Mukherjee** – He was always a master politician. So, he managed to serve two diametrically opposed political regimes.

Both the first and second types of Presidents faced controversies but they understand the intricacies of politics. For example, Rajendra Prasad made his displeasure with Jawaharlal Nehru known during the passage of the Hindu Code Bill.

**“Loyalist” presidents:** These are the persons who are stand-ins of the governing political executive. Generally, they are hand-picked politically. They are responsible for some disputable decisions.

**Read more:** [Procedure and importance of President’s Address in Parliament](#)

What type of President does India want?

India’s democratic institutional checks and balances need reinforcement. Hence, India needs a **constitutionalist president**. A President who can stand as a guardian of the Constitution and act as neutral umpires.

A President who can ring the warning bell in time and signal that the governments must not cross the Lakshman Rekha of democratic norms. An ideal president is someone who will stand as democracy’s conscience keeper.

**Read more:** [The process of electing India’s President](#)

## **RIGHT TO PROPERTY**

### 11. **Rights violations – Right to speech and property must be protected**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Rights violations**” published in the “**Business Standard**” on **13<sup>th</sup> June 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

**Relevance:** To understand the reason to protect the Right to property.

**News:** The government has the duty to protect the rights of its citizens. These include the rights to free expression and property also. The right to free expression includes the right to protest. But, the recent UP government decision to demolish property without a full public investigation is a violation of the Right to property.

#### **About the Right to freedom of property**

The right to property, like the right to free expression, was enshrined in the Constitution. But later, through amendment, the right to property was weakened.

But the right to free expression does not include the right to violent protest. The government’s response to violence should be firm but also constrained by individual rights.

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

The limits placed on rights to free expression and property by the state continue to lead to significant problems. For instance, The Indian state has long constrained free speech about religious issues precisely because it believes this will prevent violence. But the experiences show this is hardly the case.

A constant infringement of rights will make India a poorer country in terms of both economy and quality of life. Hence, **a)** The State should propagate and enforce a culture of tolerance and respect for the law. **b)** Criminal activity should be punished after investigation and trial, and that property should not be expropriated by the state without clear requirements.

**Read more:** **[Demolition drives violate international law](#)**

GS2 – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS – EFFECTS OF POLICIES AND POLITICS OF DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON INDIA’S INTERESTS

## **NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND RELATED ISSUES**

### 12. **The fragile state of nuclear disarmament**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**The fragile state of nuclear disarmament**” published in **The Hindu** on **16th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – International Relations (IR)

**Relevance:** Trends in international security, military spending

**News:** The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) released its yearbook a few days back, highlighting some worrying trends of the past year in international security.

The **expected rise of the global nuclear arsenal** was the chief cause of concern.

The comprehensive report claims that while absolute numbers of nuclear arsenal have reduced, they are expected to grow over the next decade.

#### **What are the key findings of the report?**

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During 2012-2021, military spending as a percentage of gross domestic product has largely been stable. If anything, the average worldwide trend has been slightly downward.

**For more:** Read [here](#).

### What have been the trends wrt global arms imports?

**Military modernization** is seen to be a global trend.

All nuclear weapon owning states have, over the years, stated and worked upon their intention to modernize multiple facets of their armed forces, which may result in **aggravating security concerns** for other countries.

The yearbook has highlighted **India as being the top weapons importer** during the 2017-2021 period.

### What are the key developments/concerns flagged by the yearbook?

As per the report:

**Some worrying indicators** of an unstable system. **a)** low level border clashes between India and Pakistan, **b)** the civil war in Afghanistan, and **c)** the armed conflict in Myanmar.

**Cause of concern trends:** **a)** Chinese-American rivalry, **b)** involvement of state and non-state actors in multiple conflicts, and **c)** the challenge that climatic and weather hazards pose.

#### Key developments:

– The **marginal downsizing** observed in the nuclear arsenal has come mostly from the **U.S. and Russia** dismantling retired warheads.

– But the **Russian invasion of Ukraine** has raised some serious concerns because of the continuous rhetoric of a possible use of nuclear weapons.

**China's recent activities** surrounding construction of 300 new nuclear missile silos.

Over in the subcontinent, **India and Pakistan seem to be making gains** over their nuclear arsenal (*in absolute numbers*).

**Iran increased its enrichment of Uranium-235** to 60% in 2021.

### What is the general attitude among countries about existing nuclear and arms related treaties?

Recently, the leaders of the **P5 countries** (China, France, Russia, the U.K. and the U.S.) issued a joint statement affirming the belief that *“a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought”*.

The joint statement also highlighted their seemingly collective belief that bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements and commitments were indeed important.

The nation states are making sure to remain well within the ambit of what the treaties and agreements ask for. The tactic here seems to be to milk the treaties and agreements to the hilt.

### What lies ahead?

The recent geopolitical events transpiring around the world in practically all regions have made the global security climate more unstable.

This instability is further aided by **actions of authoritarian leaders** of not just non-democratic systems, but also of strongmen leaders of democratic systems.



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A **strong political opposition** would be needed to help keep the ruling dispensation in check.

Furthermore, the two largest nuclear weapons holding states need to take on a more engaging role in the international arena.

### **RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT**

#### 13. **Economic impact of Russia-Ukraine conflict: Global macro in 2022/2023**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Global macro in 2022/2023**” published in the “**Business Standard**” on **12<sup>th</sup> June 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

**Relevance:** To know about the economic impact of Russia-Ukraine conflict

**News:** The [Russia-Ukraine conflict](#) has the potential of creating macroeconomic/financial crises in many countries.

**What is the vulnerability of dependence on Russian oil and gas?**

Before invading Ukraine, Russia was the world’s biggest exporter of oil, at about 8 million barrels a day. In addition, about a third of Europe’s gas supply came from Russia.

Russia’s gross domestic product (GDP) is of Spain’s size, with strengths in two fields: Natural resources and food. Hence, the energy export cash flow is critical to the Russian economy and funds the war in Ukraine.

**What is the present status of the Russian oil and gas?**

Around 85% of individuals in Europe were in favour of reducing energy dependence on Russia. In recent months, Russian gas sales to Poland, Bulgaria and Finland have been shut off. This is visible from,

**a)** LNG imports into Europe have surged. Their demand for LNG is also driving up its global price, which influences all users, including ones in India. **b)** Carbon transition investments are taking place at an unprecedented pace all over Europe.

**What is the economic impact at the global level due to higher oil prices?**

**Depreciate savings:** For energy-importing countries worldwide, in the short term, there is negligible price elasticity. Hence, higher import prices are tantamount to a consumption tax and result in a reduction in savings.

**Shake the foundation of debt stability:** Long years of sustained low-interest rates in the world economy, coupled with the pandemic, have led to a significant build-up of debt.

If the prices of oil increase, then the foundation of debt stability of the borrowers will also be shaken. For example, Italy by 2023, could be in the grip of an expanding debt /GDP ratio.

**‘Developing markets’ (DM) interest rates go up:** Central banks worldwide are freshly conscious about the problems of inflation and are tightening monetary policy. As the US Fed hikes the interest rates, the global capital also starts retreating.

**Other impacts:** Some firms will face credit stress. Some ponzi schemes will get unveiled.

**What is the critical Importance of good economic machinery?**

The need for enlarged capital inflows to fund the gap between investment and savings in many energy importing countries. This is required **a)** At a time when debt levels are unprecedentedly

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high, **b)** At a time of slow global growth in GDP and trade, and **c)** In a period of unprecedented DM monetary tightening.

**The benefit of floating exchange rate:** In countries with good institutions, there is capital account convertibility and inflation targeting. In these countries, the exchange rate depreciates, and more foreign capital without any friction comes in.

**In other countries:** In places where these machineries are not in place, they might get some episodes of economic distress. Some countries will mishandle macro policy and experience macroeconomic/financial crises.

GS2 – GOVERNANCE – ISSUES RELATED TO DEV AND MGMT OF EDUCATION

### **HIGHER EDUCATION AND RELATED ISSUES**

#### 14. [A common admission test could worsen higher education access](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**A common admission test could worsen higher education access**” published in **Livemint** on **16th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education

**Relevance:** To understand the challenges associated with CUET.

**News:** Recently, a Common Undergraduate Entrance Test (CUET) for admission to 53 central universities has been introduced.

What is the Common Undergraduate Entrance Test (CUET)?

**Must read:** [Central University Entrance Test: Benefits and Concerns – Explained, pointwise](#)

What is the difference between the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and CUET?

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is taken by high school students in the US. The CUET is modelled on SAT. American colleges use SAT test scores alongside high school results and other criteria for making admission decisions.

Under the NEP, the CUET results alone will decide college admissions. In this situation, the quality of schooling and efforts taken by parents to prepare children for the entrance exam would be vital for a good CUET score.

**Read more:** [On CUET: Centralising tests](#)

How will CUET worsen higher education access?

**The exodus of students from government schools:** According to the National Sample Survey’s 75th round on Household Social Consumption: Education, only 35% of children were studying in government schools in urban India in 2017-18, but in rural areas that proportion was around 72%.

Further, around 32% of parents who had enrolled children in a private school listed the inferior quality of education in government schools as the top reason for their decision and another 5% listed it as the second most important reason.

Hence, unless the revised school curriculum and its delivery in government schools improve, the CUET may lead to a further exodus of students away from state-run schools.

**Additional expenditure to parents:** Parents have to pay for ‘shadow schooling’ or private tutoring to ensure children don’t lag behind or gain a competitive edge over peers.



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Parents with higher income levels can help their children with school work or afford tuition. Similarly, an inverted U relationship exists between mothers' education and enrolment in private tuition.

**Read more:** [Common University Entrance Test won't solve the real problems](#)

Along with Joint Entrance Examination for engineering and National Eligibility Entrance Test for medicine, CUET will increase the tuition industry, undermining the core schooling system and students from poorer backgrounds and lower quality schools will affect further.

**Read more:** [CUET will provide a level playing field for students from all boards](#)

GS2 – GOVERNANCE – GOVT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS

### **CULTURE OF FREEBIES IN INDIA**

15. [What commodities should be distributed free or at a subsidised level](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “What commodities should be distributed free or at a subsidised level” published in the Indian Express on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Governance

**Relevance:** Freebies

**News:** Recently, the newly elected Punjab government's announcement of providing up to 300 units of free power to every household.

#### **Types of allocation of budgetary resources by the policymakers**

- (1) providing support to **low-income households** for augmenting their **consumption** of selected goods and services.
- (2) offering incentives to support selected categories of **investors** and **producers** to do **investment** or **production**. For example, for production-linked incentives to various sectors and tax concessions.

Note: The economic objectives of the budgetary allocation in these two categories are quite different.

#### **What constitutes “freebies”?**

There is, in fact, **no consensus** on the definition of a “freebie”. It is almost a **pejorative term**. They constitute a **sub-set** of **goods** and **services** distributed by the government **free** or at **highly subsidised prices** to **low-income households**.

The **freebie** depends on the **nature of the commodity** or the services distributed by the government. For example,

The subsidisation or the free provision of **essential** and **merit goods** can be justified and cannot be called as freebies. The “**essential**” goods are food grains and the “**merit**” goods are those, which if consumed, lead to positive impact on **health** and **education-related provisions**.

- For example, mid-day meals. In these cases, the consumption of these goods causes benefit to the **immediate consumer** as well as the **wider community**. Their consumption meets social objectives.

However, the **subsidisation** or the **free provision** of items such as **TV sets**, free power up to 300 units can be referred to as “**freebies**”. Such distribution cannot be justified on various grounds.

#### **What are the issues?**

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India has **limited budgetary resources**.

In India, the **revenue to GDP ratio** has been stagnating over a long period of time.

– For example, **combined revenue receipts of central and state governments**, relative to GDP, is lower than many developed and emerging market economies.

### Way Forward

(A) A suitable model should be developed for providing budgetary support in both consumption and production-supporting initiatives.

#### (1) What goods and services should be selected for such programmes?

It is advisable to limit the **distribution** of subsidized or free provisions of **commodities** and **services** to **essential** and **merit goods**. Any distribution **beyond** these **two categories** must be treated as “**freebies**”.

#### (2) What should be their ideal mode of delivery of the essential items or merit goods?

It may be provided either through **direct income support** or by a **free** or **highly subsidised provision**. However, in case of the latter, i.e., provision of subsidised goods, the government requires a **procurement set-up** and a **public distribution system**. This involves **additional costs** like avoidable administrative costs as well as possibility of leakages.

(3) **What should be their ideal mode of delivery of production-related incentives?** It can be provided through alternative methods like **direct budgetary support** and **indirect support** through **tax concessions**.

In the case of **tax concessions**, the outcomes have not been good. For example, the provision of free power to farmers was often misused. The Government of India has registered **forgone revenues** in the context of tax concessions. Therefore, these schemes require careful designing to avoid their misuse and minimise their costs.

(B) In addition, it would be prudent to limit **overall fiscal support** to such schemes to less than **10% of the total expenditure** of the central government and state governments until their revenue GDP or GSDP ratios increase in a sustained way.

## REGULATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

### 16. [An ideal approach to social media grievance redressal](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**An ideal approach to social media grievance redressal**” published in **Livemint** on **13th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Govt policies and interventions

**Relevance:** IT rules, Intermediary guidelines

**News:** Recently, the govt released a set of draft amendments to the IT (*Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code*) Rules, 2021.

Once enacted, digital intermediaries will have to ensure that the community standards to which they hold their users answerable comply with Indian law and India’s constitutional principles.

This, the govt clarified, has become necessary because a number of intermediaries have taken it upon themselves to act in violation of the rights of Indian citizens.

[What has been proposed in the draft amendment?](#)

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**Constitution of a Grievance Appellate Committee:** It will be tasked with dealing with “problematic content” in an expeditious manner.

– Users unsatisfied with how their complaint to an intermediary has been handled will be able to appeal the decision at this body. And have it resolved within 30 days.

**For more:** Read [here](#)

Are the draft amendments a threat to free speech ?

In the view of civil society, the proposal of setting up a Grievance Appellate Committee is being called as yet another attempt by the government to either **curtail or interfere with free speech**.

– What the government sees as an escalation mechanism to provide redress to users against unfair decisions of the social media platforms they subscribe to, many members of civil society view as **just another tool of government censorship**.

Moreover, if an appeal is made by a government agency whose take-down notice has been rebuffed, it is likely that a government-appointed appellate committee will **rule in favor of its own agency**.

**Need for the Grievance appellate committee:** Not all appeals to the Grievance Appellate Committee will be about government take-downs. Some will address illegal content—like violations of copyright. Hence, allowing social media platforms to have last word on all such content moderation issues is problematic.

Way forward

As much as social media platforms are designed to enable free speech, they must also eliminate—or at least mitigate—the harms that could arise from speech unfettered.

They need to arrive at a **balance** between the rights of persons who post and those they offend.

The industry can establish a **self-regulatory appellate body** to which appeals from all content moderation decisions can be referred. The government has already indicated that it is open to considering self-regulatory alternatives.

– It could be **staffed with experts from industry and the domain of law**, so that its decisions will be sufficiently robust, i.e. informed both by industry context and applicable laws and judicial precedents taken into account.

– Ideally, this body should **operate as an appellate forum** for all content moderation decisions, regardless of the platform from which the appeal originates. This will keep it beyond the power hierarchy of the platforms themselves, offering the process a measure of independence that is absent in internal grievance redressal systems.

– Since it will not be operated by the government, it will, hopefully, have the **neutrality required to remain impartial** while deciding on take-down notices issued by the government.

### MEDICAL PROFESSION

#### 17. [Dictates for doctors](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Dictates for doctors**” published in **The Hindu** on **15th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Govt policies and interventions

**Relevance:** Medical sector in India and related issues

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**News:** The National Medical Commission (NMC) has published a draft of the regulations it proposes for the professional conduct of doctors and invited comments by June 22.

The draft regulations have overlapping with the existing regulations of the erstwhile Medical Council of India.

What are the constituents of the draft regulations?

Chapters 2 to 6 deal with the **a)** professional conduct of doctors, **b)** the duties of registered medical practitioners towards their patients, **c)** the responsibilities of doctors to each other, **d)** the responsibilities of doctors to the public and allied health professionals, and professional misconduct, respectively.

The guidelines are a mix of **templates for certificates** and **extensive instructions**.

It is interesting that guideline 3, the NMC code of medical ethics, has **dropped the controversial Charak Shapath** and returned to the **Declaration of Geneva**. This is a wise move. India is a founder member of the World Medical Association and contributed to the drafting of the declaration.

What are some associated issues?

**Patient records:** Every registered medical practitioner will have to **maintain patient records for three years** from the last consultation.

– This will be **difficult to implement for most general practitioners** who provide high-quality services at low prices and depend on high volumes of patients to earn a decent income.

– It will **reduce the number of patients who can be attended to**, add considerably to **costs**, and **delay treatment**.

This measure is unwise and should be withdrawn.

**Informed consent:** In the section on informed consent, the statement that “in an operation that may result in sterility, the consent of both husband and wife is required” is poorly thought out and must be redrafted.

– It is possible that the person requiring such surgery may be single. Even if the individual is married, this regulation is **contrary to the principle of individual autonomy**.

The guidelines on **continuous professional development** resemble a decree. All practitioners of medicine need to keep abreast of evolving knowledge in medicine to provide competent care to patients. Such continuing education cannot be a repetition of college education. The rules suggested demonstrate a **schoolteacher’s approach** with excessive regulation and control.

– Medical practitioners are mature learners and do not need the stick to be forced to learn.

The **blanket prohibition on medical practitioners** participating in educational activities sponsored directly or indirectly by pharmaceutical companies and the allied health sector will severely restrict access to the latest developments.

In the guidelines on social media, the prohibition of sending scan images on social media will considerably **impair communication** and needs rethinking.

The **guidelines on telemedicine read more like a briefing paper** than a guideline. It is one of the most elaborate sections and there is some repetition, but it provides a good framework.

Way forward

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There is a lack of harmony in the draft. The first part, the regulations, read like typical bureaucratise.

In summary, the **draft needs extensive reworking**.

### **LIFE EXPECTANCY IN INDIA AND RELATED ISSUES**

#### 18. **Regarding the Abridged Life Tables report: The longevity puzzle**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**The longevity puzzle**” published in the “**Business Standard**” on **13<sup>th</sup> June 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.

**Relevance:** To understand the challenges highlighted by the Abridged Life Tables report.

**News:** According to the recent Abridged Life Tables report for the period of 2015-19, the average Indian can expect to live about 69.7 years, around two years more than the life expectancy 10 years ago.

**What are the findings of the report?**

India’s life expectancy has improved by leaps and bounds from an abysmal **32 years** around the time of independence to 70 years now. The life expectancy also looks modest when one compares it with the global average of 72.6 years and when compared with neighbouring Bangladesh at 72.1 and Nepal at 70 years.

However, India’s life expectancy rate is also significantly behind China’s at 76.9 years. The life expectancy crosses the global average in the following Indian states and Union Territories — Delhi, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Maharashtra — But, none of them surpasses China’s record.

Read here: [Abridged Life Tables report](#)

**What are the challenges highlighted by the report?**

**Challenges with infants:** Indian babies, especially girl children, still have a low chance of survival at birth and infancy.

For instance, the latest abridged sample registration system data shows that the gap between life expectancy at birth and that at ages one or five has improved by only about 20 years over a 45-year period.

**Life expectancy is not even throughout India:** States in the north and east of India have a lower life expectancy. Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh became the worst performers on life expectancy with 65.6 years and 65.3 years respectively.

**Difference between rural and urban India:** There are wide discrepancies between rural and urban life expectancy, which can vary as much as five to eight years.

**What are the steps taken to improve life expectancy?**

Since 1975, **a)** the Indian government has run a **massive programme** that was set up to focus on the health and nutrition needs of children under six years of age. **2)** A large network of anganwadi centres was set up, and **c)** Almost every state offered mid-day meal schemes in their schooling system, **d)** Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) boasts being one of the largest such programmes in the world.

**What is the reason for India’s poor showing on life expectancy?**



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a) Abysmal access to medical infrastructure for the average Indian, particularly women, b) Over the years, both budgetary allocations and institutional attention to the implementation of ICDS and related schemes appear to have reduced. This results in far lower coverage and c) Major beneficiaries of government schemes such as ICDS and MDMS have been middle and lower-middle class children rather than the poor and marginalised.

The findings on life expectancy suggest that an urgent course correction is long overdue to improve life expectancy.

### ONE NATION – ONE LANGUAGE ISSUE

#### 19. English-Vinglish, Hindi-Shindi: India doesn't need a national language. Plus, Hindi is growing & English is no longer elitist

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**English-Vinglish, Hindi-Shindi**” published in **The Times of India** on **12th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Issues Arising Out of Design & Implementation of Policies

**Relevance:** One nation – One language issue, national language policy

**Context:** Should India have a national language? And if not, then why not. The article discusses the reasons as to why India is better off without any national language and why it must not try and impose Hindi on non-hindi speakers.

#### Global examples

In theory, a national language is a nice idea, but imposing it on a multilingual country can be disastrous.

This can be easily seen from the following examples:

– **Pakistan:** When Pakistan was born, Jinnah declared spiritedly that Urdu would be the national language.

At the time, the mother tongue of 55% of Pakistanis was Bangla; only 7% understood Urdu. Resentment soon built up among the proud Bengalis, and it eventually led to Pakistan breaking up and the birth of Bangladesh.

– **Sri Lanka:** Similarly in Sri Lanka, Bandaranaike implemented in 1950s the ‘**Sinhala Only Act**’, disenfranchising the Tamil minority. Riots followed, followed by civil war. Once a model South Asian nation, Sri Lanka was brought to its knees.

Many countries have managed well without any national language, including India.

– **Switzerland** is another multilingual nation without a national language. It has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world and ranks high on the Happiness Index. A successful nation doesn't necessarily need a national language.

#### What is the most prevalent argument against English and why it doesn't hold any longer?

In India, there is a deep-seated resentment of English as the language of the elite that has ruled for the past 75 years. English is not just a language in India, it is a caste.

However, three changes make this argument less powerful.

**One**, English has quietly become an Indian language, just as cricket has become an Indian game. Whoever speaks a language owns it, just as whoever plays the game possesses it. **English is now the most widely spoken language in India after Hindi**, with 130 million speakers in the 2011 Census.

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The second change is that **Hindi is the fastest growing language in India**, spreading rapidly thanks to Bollywood. If English is our language of opportunity, Hindi is our language of entertainment.

The third change is the **rise of a confident hybrid, popular among young, decolonised minds**. **For instance:** Youngsters in Chennai comfortably mix English with Tamil as easily as they mix Tamil with English.

– It has the makings of Indian English, a language that may one day aspire to become a national language.

### Way forward

India's language policy should **focus on the future, not on the past**. It should help create opportunities for the young.

The New Education Policy is basically correct. It is a good idea for children to **begin learning in their mother tongue**. However, kids should simultaneously learn English from KG onwards.

English is the **global language of opportunity**. It is why many government schools are emptying, and why more than half of India's children attend non-elite private schools.

So, why try and force Hindi down the throats of non-Hindi speaking people when it is already the fastest growing Indian language? Hindi, English, Hinglish are spreading on their own.

If India has managed without a national language, why fix something that isn't broken? Why risk the break-up of our country or a civil

## DATA PROTECTION AND RELATED ISSUES

### 20. Finger in every pie: Regular theft of biometric data shows how lax information storage is and why we need a strong law

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**Finger in every pie: Regular theft of biometric data shows how lax information storage is and why we need a strong law**" published in **The Times of India** on **12th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Govt policies and interventions

**Relevance:** increased use of biometrics, Data protection

**News:** Hyderabad police recently caught a man with around 2,000 fingerprints of separate individuals that were being used to purchase SIM cards, create bank accounts, and then engineer more frauds.

### Widespread use of biometrics

Smaller public and private entities have now taken to biometrics with passion.

**Bengaluru Metro** is mulling a facial recognition-based pass and similar boarding is being planned for various airports as well.

Biometric access systems are proliferating in offices and apartments.

### What are the challenges posed by increased use of biometrics?

The immense problem with this trend is that it is running apace without strong data protection protocols being put in place.

India has comprehensively embraced the digital economy **without a matching data protection regime**.



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– Tons of personal data is being constantly collected. Moreover, there is a **confusion about how it will be stored and used and who will have access to it.**

Furthermore, disincentives in the Aadhaar Act are weak relative to the damage criminal behavior can wreck.

– For example, impersonation by providing false demographic or biometric information is punishable only by imprisonment up to three years or a fine of Rs 10,000 or both. Even such provisions are brought to bear on only a fraction of the cases of data misuse.

Way forward

Two key measures must be taken by India

– **First**, UIDAI should take steps to address issues highlighted in the [CAG audit](#).

– **Second**, Parliament should no longer delay a comprehensive data protection law – with the strongest possible regulation against security-poor or unauthorized storage of identity information.

### **GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTION OF MISLEADING ADVERTISEMENTS 2022**

#### 21. [Controlling the hard sell](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Controlling the hard sell**” published in **Business Standard** on **12th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Govt policies and interventions

**Relevance:** Guidelines for advertising

**News:** ‘Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022’ have been notified by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA).

These [guidelines](#) have been long overdue.

What are the key provisions under the new rules?

Under the new rules,

– **Penalties for misleading advertisements** have been linked to the definition of such infractions and the punitive measures provided under Section 2 (28) of the Consumer Protection Act.

– The Central Consumer Protection Authority can also **prohibit an endorser of a misleading advertisement** for up to one year, and three years for a repeat offence.

Two other critical points about the new guidelines are that they **clearly define “bait” and “free claims” advertising** and strictly set limits to advertising for children, including those with celebrity endorsements.

The guidelines also **require a disclaimer to be published** in the same language as the claim made in the advertisement and the font used must be the same as that used in the claim.

Why the new guidelines were necessary?

The advertising industry’s well-meaning **attempts at self-regulation** have **proven inadequate so far**.

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The proliferation of advertising for online gaming sites and mutual fund products has magnified the **problem of misleading advertising**.

Tightening standards of advertising for children, including disallowing celebrity advertising in some cases, as children are key purchase influencers in middle-class Indian households.

**What are the challenges involved?**

The key question, however, is how the government will **enforce the guidelines**.

The Central Consumer Protection Authority, which was formed in 2020, is responsible for regulating false and misleading advertisements and punishing offenders, the functions that the Advertising Standards Council of India used to perform.

– Tracking advertising in India’s more than 10,000 print publications and 850-plus TV channels in multiple languages is challenging enough.

– But the principal problem today is the **proliferation of online advertising**, not all of it originating in India.

This will require a gargantuan organisation to track effectively.

**What is the way forward?**

The CCPA should consider **banning the advertising of junk food and drink**, just as it has done for fairness creams, alcohol, cigarettes, and chewing tobacco. The volume of junk food advertising has played a key role in the exponential rise of childhood obesity and diabetes among middle-class Indians.

As with alcohol, for which surrogate advertising has sensibly been banned as well, **point-of-purchase publicity** for junk food should be considered sufficient publicity.

A requirement of **slowing the pace at which disclaimers are read** on TV ads would also be useful.

It would also make sense for the CCPA to work closely with other similar authorities to regulate claims on health and personal product packaging and include health warnings as is done on tobacco products. In that sense, the new guidelines could be considered a good starting point.

### GS2 – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS – INTERNATIONAL ORG AND GROUPINGS

#### **BRICS AND RELATED ISSUES**

#### **22. China wants a larger BRICS to challenge the existing international order**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “China wants a larger BRICS to challenge the existing international order” published in **the Indian Express** on **15<sup>th</sup> June 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 International Order, Regional Grouping, Multilateral Forum

**Relevance:** BRICS

**News:** Recently, a virtual meeting of BRICS+ foreign ministers was held in which representatives of various countries participated and it was proposed to expand the BRICS membership.

#### **What was proposed?**

It was decided that this is an opportune time to expand BRICS and challenge the domain of the G7 by including members from the G20.

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In 2022, China is taking the lead and setting the agenda for BRICS expansion. It has been working with the 2022 theme of “**Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development**”.

### Why is there a proposal for expansion of BRICS?

The BRICS expansion is part of **China’s strategic challenge** to the international order and to collect **middle powers** around them.

The fashion of **competitive plurilateral form** is visible because the cracks in the G20 are looming. The world is facing convulsions in the international order. It has been heightened by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the hardening of Western positions.

This is part of China’s aim to challenge Western influence over countries and wants to use BRICS to that end.

### Precedents

The New Development Bank associated with BRICS, expanded membership in 2021. It admitted Bangladesh, the UAE, Uruguay and Egypt, i.e., first four countries to be admitted after the establishment of the NDB.

### What are the likely criteria that could emerge to guide the process of inducting new members into BRICS?

The first likely criteria will be to prioritise **G20 members** like Argentina, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. Other prospective members may include, the UAE and Egypt, which are **NDB members**, Kazakhstan was invited as the largest country in **Central Asia**, Nigeria was invited as another important **African economy**, Senegal was invited as the current chair of the **African Union**, Thailand, as the chair of the **APEC**. Indonesia was invited also as part of Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia (MIKTA).

Other criteria could be countries which have an **emerging economy status** and adherence to **BRICS objectives**.

### What are the issues?

While proposing BRICS expansion, **China** has not obtained the concurrence of other members except **Russia**.

In reality, the **setting of criteria** is a battle to choose partners who are more amenable to the individual members of the BRICS.

– For example, **Russia** and **China** want Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Argentina. Brazil would not want Argentina because both have a rivalry in Latin America. South Africa would not want Nigeria and Egypt because he would no longer be the African representative in the BRICS.

### Way Forward

There could be an easier consensus on **Indonesia** because India is unlikely to oppose it as its relationship has been improving.

The inclusion of **UAE** and **Saudi Arabia** in the BRICS could be advantageous to India because India has rapidly enhanced its engagement with these countries. Both countries have a longstanding relationship with the US. Both seek to diversify and would not be averse to joining BRICS.

On the inclusion of **Kazakhstan**, Russia and China have to deal with the other Central Asian countries.

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A consensus with **Brazil** and **South Africa** for members from their regions will be critical.

India needs to ensure that expansion is not on **Chinese terms** and that the countries admitted are equally **receptive** to India.

India can leverage the **IBSA trilateral of democracies** within BRICS to assert itself. India can consult on criteria and members.

### **FATF AND RELATED ISSUES**

#### 23. **The FATF and Pakistan's position on its 'grey list'**

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**The FATF and Pakistan's position on its 'grey list'**" published in **The Hindu** on **13th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – International Organizations and groupings

**Relevance:** Pakistan on FATF's grey list

**Context:** Ahead of the plenary session of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), in Berlin, Pakistan is hoping for a removal of its name from the FATF's 'grey list' or the list of countries presenting a risk to the global financial system.

In its last plenary meeting in March, the FATF had retained Pakistan's listing, asking it to expeditiously address the remaining deficiencies in its financial system.

#### What is FATF?

The Financial Action Task Force is an international **watchdog for financial crimes** such as money laundering and terror financing.

It was established at the **G7 Summit of 1989 in Paris** to address loopholes in the global financial system after member countries raised concerns about growing money laundering activities.

The FATF currently has 39 members.

The FATF sets standards or recommendations for countries to achieve in order to **plug the holes in their financial systems** and make them less vulnerable to illegal financial activities.

It conducts regular **peer-reviewed evaluations called Mutual Evaluations (ME)** of countries to check their performance on standards prescribed by it. The reviews are carried out by FATF and FATF-Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs), which then release Mutual Evaluation Reports (MERs).

For the countries that don't perform well on certain standards, time-bound action plans are drawn up.

For more details: Read [here](#).

#### What are FATF's 'grey' and 'black' lists?

At the end of every plenary meeting, FATF comes out with two lists of countries.

**Grey list:** The grey countries are designated as "**jurisdictions under increased monitoring**", working with the FATF to counter criminal financial activities.

– For such countries, the watchdog does not tell other members to carry out due-diligence measures vis-a-vis the listed country but does tell them to consider the risks such countries possess.

*The words 'grey' and 'black' list do not exist in the official FATF lexicon.*

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**Black list:** As for the black list, it means countries designated as ‘**high-risk jurisdictions subject to call for action**’.

– In this case, the countries have considerable deficiencies in their AML/CFT (anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing) regimens.

– In these cases, the FATF calls on members and non-members to **apply enhanced due diligence**. In the most serious cases, members are told to **apply counter-measures** such as sanctions on the listed countries.

– Currently, **North Korea** and **Iran** are on the black list.

**What is the impact of being on FATF’s grey or black list?**

Being listed under the FATF’s lists **makes it hard for countries to get aid from organisations** like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the European Union.

It may also affect capital inflows, foreign direct investments, and portfolio flows.

**Why is Pakistan on the grey list?**

Pakistan was retained on the grey list in March as it was yet to address concerns on the front of **terror financing investigations** and **prosecutions targeting senior leaders and commanders of UN designated terrorist groups**.

Steps have been taken in this direction by Pakistan, such as the sentencing of terror outfit chief Hafiz Saeed, prosecution of Masood Azhar, but India suspects the efficacy and permanence of these actions.

Pakistan has found itself on the grey list frequently since 2008, for weaknesses in fighting terror financing and money laundering.

GS2 – POLITY – PARLIAMENT AND STATE LEGISLATURE

### **DEBATE AROUND ESTB OF RAJYA SABHA**

#### **24. What has Rajya Sabha achieved that a stand-alone Lok Sabha has not, or would not?**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**What has Rajya Sabha achieved that a stand-alone Lok Sabha has not, or would not?**” published in the “**Indian Express**” on **13<sup>th</sup> June 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these

**Relevance:** To know about concerns associated with the functioning of Upper House.

**News:** Constituent Assembly was divided on the opinion on establishing Rajya Sabha. That debate still holds relevance even after so many years.

**What are the arguments against the establishment and functioning of the Rajya Sabha?**

Lokanath Misra in the Constituent Assembly was of the opinion that, **a)** It will not serve any useful purpose, **b)** the Lower House is more representative of the people. On the other hand, the Upper House only result in a waste of public money and waste of time.

**Note:** Lokanath Misra was also of the opinion that **huge number of people** either in the House of the People or in the Council of States **does not serve any very useful purpose**. He highlighted that the “Constituent Assembly consists of more than three hundred members that so few of take a real part in and are really useful to constitution-making”.



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Apart from this, **c)** Upper Chamber have twelve nominated members. The persons who have been nominated and who will never seek the vote of the people can become ministers also, **d)** Earlier any citizen desirous of contesting a Rajya Sabha election had to be an elector from that particular state. But an amendment to the Representation of People's Act 1952 did away with the domicile requirement also.

**e)** Twenty-four states have unicameral legislatures, that is, only one legislative body, and only six states are bicameral. There is no justifiable legal basis for this classification. A question arises if the bulk of the states can function with one House then why does the Centre need to be bicameral.

What should be done?

There is also a question, except for being a continuous House, what has Rajya Sabha been able to achieve that a stand-alone Lok Sabha has not or would not?

Hence, there should be an amendment to Article 83 (2), to make Lok Sabha remain in existence till the time its successor body/house is not constituted through general elections mandatorily held three months prior to the completion of the present one.

**Note:** Kesvananda Bharti case held parliamentary democracy to be a basic structure, not bicameralism

### GS2 – SOCIAL ISSUES – HATE SPEECH

#### **ISSUE OF HATE SPEECH**

##### 25. Hate speech, IPC Sec 295A, and how courts have read the law

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Hate speech, IPC Sec 295A, and how courts have read the law**” published in **The Indian Express** on **16th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Polity – Judiciary

**Relevance:** Hate speech and how courts have read the law

**Context:** The debate surrounding the comments on Prophet Mohammad have put the spotlight on the law that deals with criticism of or insult to religion. Provisions in the Indian Penal Code (IPC), primarily **Section 295A**, define the contours of free speech and its limitations with respect to offences relating to religion.

**India does not have a formal legal framework for dealing with hate speech.** However, a cluster of provisions, loosely termed hate speech laws, are invoked. These are primarily laws to deal with offences against religions.

#### Section 295 and others

Section 295A defines and prescribes a punishment for deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs.

It is one of the **key provisions in the IPC chapter** to penalise religious offences.

– The chapter includes **a)** offences to penalise damage or defilement of a place of worship with intent to insult the religion (Section 295), **b)** trespassing in a place of sepulture (Section 297), **c)** uttering, words, etc, with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person (Section 298), **d)** disturbing a religious assembly (Section 296).

Section 295A has been invoked on a wide range of issues from penalising political satire and seeking bans on or withdrawal of books to even political critique on social media.

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The state often invokes Section 295A along with **Section 153A** of IPC, and **Section 505** of the IPC that punishes statements conducing to public mischief

– Sec 153A penalises promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc, and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony

In cases where such speech is online, **Section 66A of the Information Technology Act** that punishes sending offensive messages through communication services is added.

– In a landmark verdict in 2015, the Supreme Court struck down Section 66A as unconstitutional on the ground that the provision was “vague” and a “violation of free speech”. However, the provision continues to be invoked.

### Origins of the hate speech law

Colonial origins of the hate speech provisions are often criticised for the assumption that Indians were susceptible to religious excitement.

– Section 295A was brought in **1927**.

For more: Read [here](#)

### Rangila Rasool case

Rangila Rasool was a tract — brought out by a Hindu publisher — that had made **disparaging remarks about the Prophet’s private life**.

Cases against the first pamphlet, filed under Section 153A, were dismissed by the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

When a second, similar piece was published, it **raised tensions**.

While the magistrate had convicted the publisher Rajpaul under Section 153A, the Lahore High Court held that a “scurrilous and foul attack” on a religious leader would prima facie fall under Section 153A — although not every criticism.

This debate in interpretation prompted the colonial government to enact Section 295A with a wider scope to address these issues.

### Other cases

In 1957, the constitutionality of Section 295A was challenged in **Ramji Lal Modi v State of Uttar Pradesh**.

– The Supreme Court **upheld the law** on the grounds that it was brought in to preserve “public order”.

In a 1960 ruling, in **Baba Khalil Ahmed v State of Uttar Pradesh**, the Supreme Court said that “malicious intent” of the accused can be determined not just from the speech in question but also from external sources.

In 1973, in **Ramlal Puri v State of Madhya Pradesh**, the Supreme Court said the test to be applied is whether the speech in question offends the “ordinary man of common sense” and not the “hypersensitive man”.

In **Baragur Ramachandrappa v State of Karnataka**, a 2007 decision of the Supreme Court, “a **pragmatic approach**” was invoked in interpreting Section 295A.



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GS2 – SOCIAL ISSUES – VULNERABLE SECTIONS

### **LGBTQ+ AND RELATED ISSUES**

#### 26. **A month of Pinkwashing**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**A month of Pinkwashing**” published in the **Indian Express** on **18<sup>th</sup> June 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Social issues – Vulnerable sections

**Relevance:** Fundamental Rights; Corporate Governance; Pinkwashing Concept

**News:** Recently, corporations like Walmart and Meta have announced their **pride “campaigns,”** in the **June Month** for queer movement. These corporations have also been ranked high on the **US’ Human Rights Centre’s Corporate Equality Index**.

#### **About Pride Month**

June, recognised as Pride month, is a political movement for and by the queer and transgender / LGBTQ+ community.

#### **What are the problems being faced by the Queer community?**

There has been passing of the regressive Trans Act **2019** in India, and rejection of the Equality Act in the US, among other measures.

Around 375 deaths were registered in the form of **murders** of transgender people across the world.

#### **What are the issues with celebration of the pride month by the corporations?**

The **corporations** are practicing the **pinkwashing concept**. On the one side, the corporations see that the LGBTQ+ community has emerged as their **unique consumer base**. Therefore, they claim to be the allies in the bid for **queer liberation**. Whereas, on the other side, the corporations also **fund politicians** who pass legislations that shrink spaces for LGBTQ+ people.

(1) In 2021 alone, Walmart donated a **million dollars** to politicians who have worked actively to roll back **LGBTQ+ protections**.

(2) Similarly, AT&T has funded **anti-LGBTQ+ legislators** with over a million dollars in the last year.

The Corporation like Netflix fired 150 employees in North America, the majority of which were LGBTQ+ individuals or people of colour.

As per some reports, social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter their algorithms tilt the balance in favour of conservative accounts which indicates promotion of the queerphobia on their platforms.

Corporations, instead of working for the **queer rights**, are attempting to **maximise profits** and **capitalising** on an expanding consumer base.

#### **India’s Case**

In India, the LGBTQ+ or queer movement doesn’t have the influence it enjoys in the West.

However, corporations have been witnessing the expanding consumer base in India. This can lead to Corporate pinkwashing in India also. For example, Companies with a presence here, like Amul, have also started announcing campaigns.

#### **Way Forward**

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The companies should be held **accountable**. Any corporation claiming to support **LGBTQ+ people** must prove it through the policies which are non-discriminatory.

The **political engagement** and **investments** of the corporation must be properly assessed as **LGBTQ+ people** agitation for queer liberation is rooted in civil rights.

### 27. India's lingering homophobia

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**India's lingering homophobia**” published in the “The Hindu” on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 Importance Provisions of the Constitution of India

**Relevance:** LGBTQ+ Community, Fraternity

**News:** Recently, the Kerala High Court sanctioned a lesbian couple to live together after they were coercively separated and incarcerated by their family.

Indian society has been facing a problem of **homophobia**. For example, the attitude like “**God made Adam and Eve; not Adam and Steve**” still lingers in Indian society.

#### **What is homophobia?**

George Weinberg, an American clinical psychologist, coined the term ‘**homophobia**’ in his book ***Society and the Healthy Homosexual*** (1972).

Homophobia is defined as culturally produced fear of or prejudice against homosexuals. This can manifest into legal restrictions or, in extreme cases, **bullying** or even **violence** against **homosexuals**. It is a culturally conditioned response to homosexuality.

#### **Argument against such homophobia**

The **Indian Psychiatric Society** authentically stated that **homosexuality** was not a **mental disorder**.

The **social** and **psychological abhorrence** against the LGBTQ+ community nullifies the constitutional **principles of fraternity** and **dignity**, enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

There are various historical figures or mythological characters who signalled towards queerness. For example, **Shikhandi** became a man to satisfy her wife; Mahadeva became a woman to deliver his devotee's child; and **Chudala** became a man to enlighten her husband.

#### **Way Forward**

In words of J.**B. Kripalani**, a prominent member of the Constituent Assembly, “the **principle of fraternity** means that **we are all sons of the same God**”.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, elucidated the Indian roots of the ideal of fraternity. He derived the principle from the teachings of the Buddha. He gave the highest place to fraternity because this is the only real safeguard against the **denial of liberty** or **equality**. He championed the ideal of fraternity to uphold the cause of the oppressed castes, Dalits. The same principle is also applicable to the LGBTQ+ community in India

GS2 – SOCIAL ISSUES – ISSUES RELATED TO CHILDREN

### **CHILD MARRIAGE IN INDIA**

#### 28. **The way to end child marriage**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**The way to end child marriage**” published in the “**The Hindu**” on **15<sup>th</sup> June 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Social issues

**Relevance:** Child Marriage and related issues

**News:** Recently, the government has increased the age of marriage of women in India from 18 to 21 years, as a delayed marriage might offer significant **public health dividends** and **substantive benefits** at the individual and societal levels.

#### **Benefit of increasing age of marriage**

There is a significant association between **early marriage** and **adverse health and educational outcomes** of women and their children.

Early marriage of women leads to **early pregnancy**. Further, it leads to lower likelihood of accessing ante-natal care, higher risks of **maternal morbidity** and **mortality**, poor nutritional status of women and poor nutritional outcome. In addition, it leads to poor **educational outcomes** of children.

#### **Is increasing the legal age of marriage enough?**

As per NFHS-5 data, about 25% of women aged 18-29 years married before the **legal marriageable age** of 18. It means that the legally mandated age of 18 has not been complied.

#### **State-wise pattern**

West Bengal has the highest prevalence (42%), followed by Bihar and Tripura (40% each). Oddly, the decline in child marriage has been paltry at best in these high-prevalence States. At the other end of the spectrum are Goa, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala (6% to 7%).

#### **What are the ultimate factors?**

The association between **child marriage** and **adverse health outcomes** is based on **structural factors**, which includes, **social norms, poverty, and women’s education**.

(1) The **social norms** compel the parents to begin preparations for a **girl’s marriage** once she has reached menarche. For example, 39% of **child marriages** take place among **Adivasis** and **Dalits**, 17% among advantaged social groups and the remaining among Other Backward Classes (OBC).

(2) The **poverty** plays an important role in child marriages. It is aimed to avoid the burden of the huge costs of dowry associated with delayed marriages. For example, 58% take place among the **poorest wealth groups**, about 40% of them take place among the middle 50% and only 2% of them take place among the top 10% of wealth groups.

(3) **Education outcomes:** Only 4% of child marriages in India take place among women who have completed more than 12 years of education. A significant proportion of child marriages takes place among women with less than 12 years of schooling.

#### **Is increasing the legal age of marriage enough to improve the health outcomes?**

A mere increase in age at marriage without an increase in education is not going to give good result. For example,

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As per NFHS-5, Around **27% of illiterate women** who married before 18 years, and around **24% of illiterate women** who married at the age of 21 years are **underweight**.

However, women with 12 years of schooling married before 18 years and at 21 years have hardly any difference in **underweight** prevalence (14% and 13%, respectively).

### Way Forward

The child marriage is substantially lower among women with a **higher level of schooling**. Therefore, an increase in **years of schooling** would increase the age at marriage.

– Therefore, the government should focus more on increasing **education** in addition to increasing the age of marriage. If education is not improved, it might adversely impact the poor and illiterate.

– It would be advisable that women **complete education** at least up to 12 years. For example, **Bangladesh** improved women's education and imparted modern skills to increase their employability, which reduced child marriage and improves health and nutrition.

The schemes should ease the **financial burden of marriage**. The **eligibility criteria** of these schemes should include **educational attainment** in addition to age.

In the absence of an improvement in women's schooling or skills, a **legalistic approach** to ending child marriage might become counterproductive.

## GS2 – SOCIAL ISSUES – ISSUES RELATED TO POVERTY AND HUNGER

### MALNUTRITION IN INDIA

#### 29. Malnutrition in India is a worry in a modern scenario

**Source:** The post is based on an article "**Malnutrition in India is a worry in a modern scenario**" published in the "**The Hindu**" on **15<sup>th</sup> June 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 Social Sector; health Sector, Poverty and hunger

**Relevance:** Malnutrition

**News:** Even after **75 years of independence**, India is still struggling to meet the nutritional needs.

#### **Nutritional Indicators**

**Stunting** is defined as low height-for-age

**Wasting** is defined as low weight-for-height

**Anaemia** is defined as the condition in which the number of red blood cells (RBCs) or the haemoglobin (Hb) concentration within them is lower than normal.

#### **What is the finding of NFHS-5?**

**Marginal improvement:** As per the survey, there has been marginal improvement across the nutrition indicators in India since the findings of the NFHS-4.

#### **What are the factors behind poor nutritional outcomes?**

A **child's nutritional status** is directly linked to their **mother**. Poor nutrition among **pregnant women** affects the **nutritional status** of the child and has a greater chance to affect future generations.

#### **What are the issues?**

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The progress in tackling malnutrition among children and women over the past decade has been slow. This has been despite **declining rates of poverty**, increased **self-sufficiency** in food production, and the implementation of a range of **government programmes**.

Children in several States are more **undernourished** now than they were five years ago.

(1) Since NFHS-4, 13 States or UTs (including Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Kerala) have seen an increase in **stunted children**.

(2) **Wasting**, the most visible and life-threatening form of malnutrition, has either risen or has remained stagnant over the years.

(3) India also has the highest prevalence of **anaemia** in the world. More than 57% of women (15-49 years) and over 67% children (six-59 months) suffer from anaemia.

### **What are the consequences of poor nutritional outcomes?**

Anaemia has **major consequences** in terms of **human health** and **development**. It reduces the work capacity of individuals. This in turn impact the economy and overall national growth. For example, India loses up to 1.18% of GDP per annum due to iron deficiency anaemia.

Undernourished children are at risk of **under-performing** in studies and have limited **job prospects**.

The workforce, affected mentally and physically, has reduced work capacity. This **vicious cycle** restrains the development of the country.

### **Way Forward**

The **investment** in women and children's health and nutrition should be increased. This will ensure their sustainable development and improved quality of life.

India must adopt an **outcome-oriented approach** on all the nutrition programmes.

The **parliamentarians** should monitor interventions in their constituencies. All **nutritionally vulnerable groups** at the local level should be engaged. If individual persons are made aware about the nutritional aspects. They will become an agent of change.

The programmes should be monitored and evaluated. The systemic challenges should be addressed.

There should be a committee on nutritional status which should **meet** and **deliberate** over effective policy decisions, monitor the implementation of schemes, and review nutritional status across States.

The government should involve all the stakeholders and contribute towards ending malnutrition and anaemia.

## **POVERTY AND RELATED ISSUES**

### **30. A poverty trend in search of an explanation**

**Source:** The post is based on an article "A poverty trend in search of an explanation" published in the "The Hindu" on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 Poverty and Hunger

**Relevance:** Measurement of Poverty



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**News:** Recently, two recent studies, separately, from the **International Monetary Fund** and the **World Bank** (henceforth **Fund-Bank**) estimated the consumption spending, and thereby poverty in India.

### **Importance of measurement of the progress with respect to the reduction of poverty**

It is crucial to an assessment of the state of the economy of India, which harbor the world's largest number of poor people.

### **Definition of extreme poverty**

As per the World Bank, "extreme poverty" can be defined as **per capita consumption** of less than \$1.90 per day.

### **Past Measurement**

The last official estimate of poverty was undertaken by the Planning Commission for the year 2011-12.

### **What are the challenges?**

India has not had a **household consumption expenditure survey** for a subsequent year which forms the ideal basis for poverty estimation.

### **Findings of NSSO's consumption expenditure survey 2017-18**

As per survey 2017-19, the **real consumption expenditure** had **fallen** since 2011-12.

The survey 2017-18 was **rejected** by the **union government** as defective. In addition, a leading expert stated that a decline in consumption is not possible when income (GDP) has grown.

### **Findings of the Fund-Bank Studies**

Two recent studies from the **International Monetary Fund** and the **World Bank** estimated the poverty based on **consumption spending**, and thereby **poverty**. Both studies stated that there has been an **accelerated decline** in poverty in India, since 2011-12

### **Argument in favour of the Fund-Bank Survey**

The decline in poverty has been due to **lower levels of inflation** since 2014. Thus, **real wage growth** has been faster. It enabled **greater consumption** and thus an accelerated decline in poverty.

### **Argument against the findings of Fund-bank survey**

The growth of the Indian economy has **slowed progressively** from 2017-18. The **demonetisation of 2016** has affected the **majority of workers** working in India.

As per the **Periodic Labour Force Survey**, the **unemployment rate** has been rising sharply since demonetisation. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine an accelerated decline in poverty during such a phase.

As per an assessment, the annual real wage growth for **non-agricultural labourers** was either negligible or negative during the period 2015-16 to 2019-20. Annual real wage growth was negative for construction workers. Thus, there has been very little real wage growth since 2015-2016

### **Way Forward**

There is a need for an explanation of the accelerated decline in poverty that they report.

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We need to understand the **drivers of poverty** to undertake any kind of **remedial action**.

There should be **independent public bodies** which can provide **reliable data** without any potential political interference.

In particular, a household consumption expenditure survey should be executed as soon as possible to find the trend in poverty in India in recent years.

### 31. NSS, CMIE are surveys not comparable. Studies should not relate them

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**NSS, CMIE are surveys not comparable. Studies should not relate them**” published in the “**Indian Express**” on **13<sup>th</sup> June 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Issues relating to poverty and hunger

**Relevance:** To know about the differences in NSS and CMIE surveys

**News:** Recently, policy advisors and researchers at the IMF and World Bank have also attempted to estimate headcount ratios under various assumptions.

#### About the recent poverty measurements by IMF and World Bank

**The IMF method:** It carried out the exercise using adjustments for private final consumption expenditure from the National Accounts Statistics and also using the expenditure incurred by the government under the public distribution system.

**The World Bank method:** It has tried to estimate headcount ratios using CMIE data from the consumer pyramids household survey from 2015 to 2019, relating it with the NSS consumer expenditure data from 2011 and data from other sources like the [National Family Health Survey](#), [PLFS](#), etc.

But the huge differences in the headcount ratios between the two studies add to the confusion in the already complicated measurement issues of poverty in India.

#### How does India calculate poverty estimations?

India uses the NSS consumption expenditure survey for the measurement of poverty. The results from it, carried out in 2017, are not available due to quality issues in the data collected.

India already has a measurement of multi-dimensional poverty that gives a better understanding of deprivation. The aspirational district programme extended to the block level and provides the direction and location where specific interventions are required.

#### Why does the NSS and CMIE surveys are not comparable?

**Sample designs are different:** For instance, NSS adopts multistage stratified sampling whereas CMIE uses rotational sampling.

CMIE's Consumer Pyramids Household Surveys (CPHS) have unequal sampling probabilities. For instance, households on the main streets have a higher likelihood of selection.

**Difference in definitions:** The basic definition of the household is different in the two surveys.

**Sample size and recall period:** NSS collects information on more than 345 unique items to arrive at consumption expenditure estimates whereas CMIE does so through 114 items.

NSS expenditure is based on a recall period of 30 days for food items and others over 365 days, the CPHS consumption expenditure is based on a recall period of the last four months.

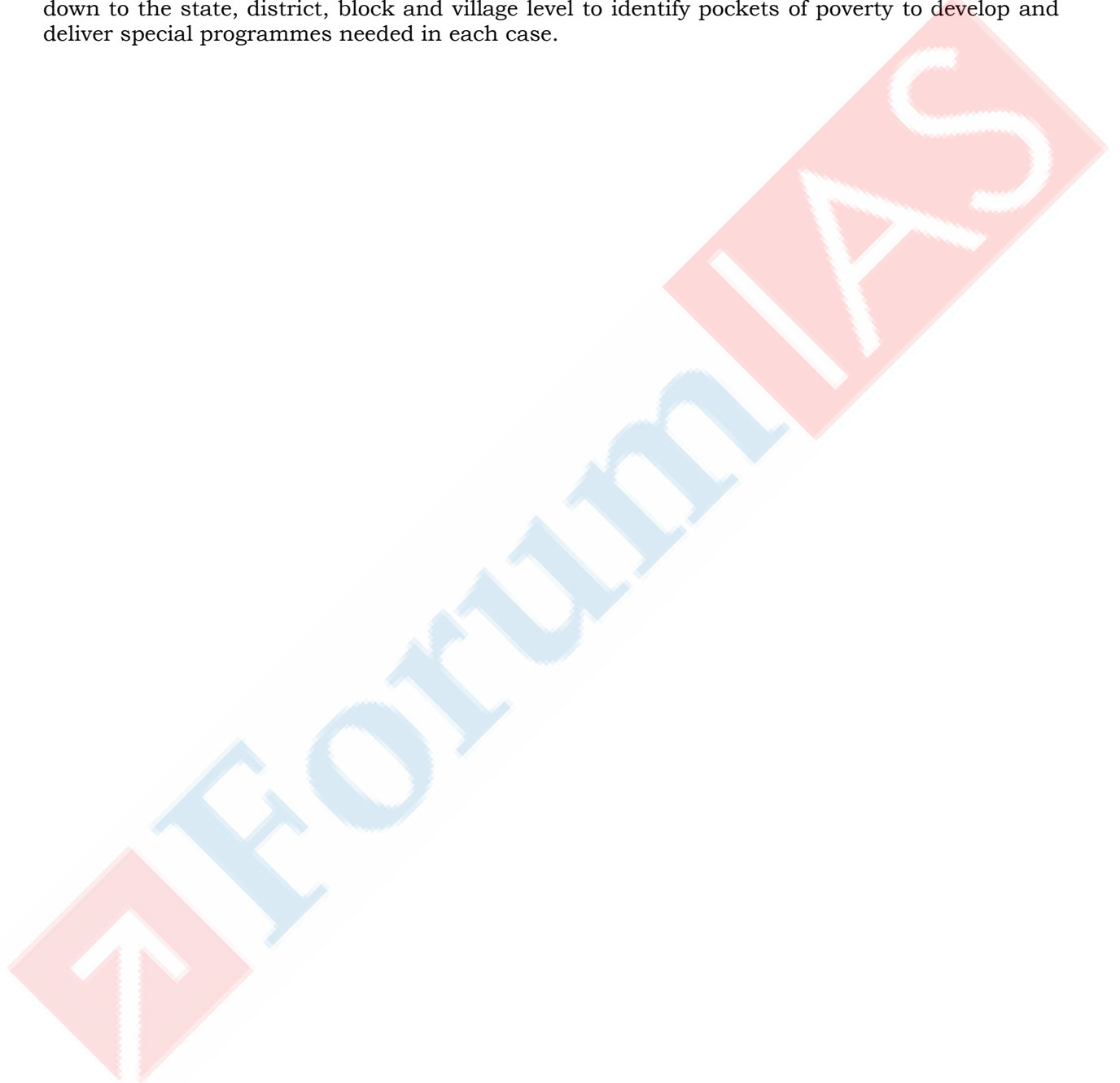
**Time difference:** The NSS survey data used is for the year 2011, and the CMIE survey from 2015 to 2019.

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**Change of weights:** Unlike the NSS, the CPHS does not conduct a listing exercise and instead uses projections of households and population growth to construct sampling weights.

What should be done to measure poverty?

Measurement of poverty at the national level does not serve any policy purpose. One has to go down to the state, district, block and village level to identify pockets of poverty to develop and deliver special programmes needed in each case.



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

GS3 – ENVIRONMENT – ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS, SURVEYS

### ENVIRONMENT PERFORMANCE INDEX (EPI) 2022

#### 1. India at bottom in EPI 2022 but environment survey confuses and stifles honest discussion on climate change

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**India at bottom in EPI 2022 but environment survey confuses and stifles honest discussion on climate change**” published in **The Indian Express** on **13th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Environment

**Relevance:** India’s last rank on the Environmental Performance Index (EPI), criticism by the govt and related issues

**News:** The **2022 Environmental Performance Index (EPI)** released on World Environment Day (June 5) has triggered much distress in India, as the country is ranked last (180th).

The government has issued a fierce rebuttal.

How do we make sense of this debate?

What are some problems with indexes?

Indexes are **inherently problematic**, especially when applied to something as multi-dimensional and complex as environmental performance.

**Subjectivity:** Index makers have to **make judgements** about what issues count, how they are best measured individually, and how much importance to give to each issue and indicator.

– **For example**, indicators may focus on current rates of increase or decrease in environmental pressures — as the EPI does for carbon dioxide emissions and tree cover gains — but understate the accumulated effect that relates to actual harm, thereby ignoring past effects.

What are the challenges in measuring climate change progress?

Climate change is a **global environmental problem**, and because its effects depend on the accumulation of greenhouse gases over time, measuring progress in a given country is challenging.

Climate change mitigation has to be measured against what it is reasonable and fair to expect from different countries, **taking into account their past emissions as well as national contexts**.

The problem, however, is that there has been an inconclusive 30-year debate on this question; any choice of benchmark involves major ethical choices.

What are some issues with the EPI 2022?

The index is severely compromised by how it incorporates action on climate change mitigation.

EPI is essentially **applying the same standard across vastly different socio-ecological contexts**. For example, the EPI leaves out arsenic in water, which is a major threat in Bangladesh. Arsenic is not counted by the EPI because it is not as widely prevalent as lead, which is included.

**High weight to climate change:** Giving climate change a high weight in the index (38%) – a questionable decision, given the development needs of poorer countries — means the issue of past emissions comes to the centre of the EPI.



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**Poor choice of benchmarks:** EPI relies heavily on the trend of greenhouse gas emissions by a country in the past decade as an indicator of progress.

– For climate change, 53% of the weight is allocated to these trends, and another 36% to whether the continuation of these trends brings a country close to zero emissions in 2050. They **assume that the world must reach net-zero emissions by 2050**, and so the appropriate benchmark is whether all countries are reducing emissions and reaching zero by 2050.

Thus,

**EPI's approach is contrary to widely accepted ethical principles**, especially the global political agreement on common-but-differentiated-responsibility (CBDR). It ignores the fact that countries have different responsibilities for past accumulations and are at different levels of emissions and energy use.

– **For example**, India's energy use and carbon dioxide emissions are about a tenth each of the US's. So, while it is reasonable to expect the US to decrease emissions rapidly, the contribution of a country like India should lie in becoming ever more carbon-efficient with its development, or increasing emissions but at a decreasing rate and as little as possible.

This approach is guaranteed to **make richer countries look good**, because they have accumulated emissions in the past, but these have started declining in the last decade.

### Way forward

EPI's flawed and biased approach distracts from a much-needed honest conversation about the environment in developing countries like India.

## GS3 – ENVIRONMENT – CLIMATE CHANGE

### **JUST ENERGY TRANSITION PARTNERSHIP (JETP)**

#### 2. [Welcome a G-7 package for an energy transition](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Welcome a G-7 package for an energy transition**” published in **Livemint** on **13th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Environment

**Relevance:** G7's climate deal with India

**News:** It's a win for India's diplomacy that the G7 group looks set to offer it a climate partnership deal. Unless it places an unfair burden on us, let's use the funds to decarbonize our economy faster.

#### What is the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP)?

Upon taking over the G-7 presidency for 2022, host Germany had promised to build on Glasgow's momentum.

**Approach:** The German approach includes building not just climate partnerships, but “climate and development” alliances beyond the G-7, though largely focused on G-20 members.

**Significance:** This is significant because this approach takes into account the societal and economic development of each partner and will not try to force-feed partners a standard solution.

The likely template will be the **Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP)** that France, Germany, the UK and US, along with the EU, signed with South Africa at last year's CoP-26.

That partnership—with special emphasis on the words “just” and “transition”—is about helping fund South Africa's decarbonization by replacing coal usage with clean energy.

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The agreement also recognizes that a **departure from coal cannot happen overnight**, and a big move away from carbon emissions would require options for the vast number of people employed by coal-based power plants.

At its core, the idea is to **assist green transitions by making finance available** from developed countries, multilateral institutions and groups of green investors.

[What is the climate deal being offered to India by G7?](#)

The US and Germany have proposed a **G-7 partnership with India** to support and fund the makeover of its energy mix from fossil fuels to carbon-neutral sources.

Such a deal is likely to be announced later this month at the G-7 summit in Schloss Elmau, Germany, should New Delhi and the seven agree to the JETP on the table.

India is a special invitee to this year's summit, along with Indonesia, South Africa, Senegal and Argentina.

**Constituents of the deal:** If reports of the offer are true, a critical portion of the pact will ask for **a)** reducing the number of coal-burning power plants under development, and **b)** gradual closure of our coal mines.

This could be a sticking point. It would also shine a light on some G-7 members that have made negligible efforts to reduce domestic demand for fossil fuels (such as the US).

[Way forward](#)

The JETP project can be seen as an effort towards Paris Agreement's promise of \$100 billion in annual funding for countries like India that had gone unfulfilled.

### GS3 – ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE – INDIA'S ENERGY SECTOR

#### **POWER SECTOR REFORMS**

##### 3. [Red marks in green power plans amid lack of reform in electricity pricing](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article **“Red marks in green power plans amid lack of reform in electricity pricing”** published in the **“Business Standard”** on **13<sup>th</sup> June 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

**Relevance:** To understand the need for power sector reforms.

**News:** Recently the Union Power Minister has asked states to set up steering committees at the level of chief secretaries to plan for the energy transition.

[Why there is a need for power sector reforms?](#)

Source: Business Standard

**No money spent on capital expenditure:** Capital expenditure among states is rising fast, but it is not rising in the energy or power sector. This is worrying since the demand for energy is rising across India and this expansion will need commensurate investments by state governments.

For instance, 20 large Indian states' aggregate capital expenditure growth in FY22 grew by 48%, but their energy spending is less than 10%.

**Note:** According to the recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission, the Centre has provided more fiscal room for states to borrow from the markets. The condition is the money has to be spent on power reforms.

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**Funds utilised for past debts:** The money given by the centre to revive the power sector is going to meet the past debt liabilities of the distribution companies. Because these are paying for old dues, the **return on equity** for these spendings is abysmal in each state.

For example, According to a CAG report, Jharkhand has total outstanding loans of over Rs 20,000 crore to its power generation and distribution companies.

**High energy subsidy burden:** A Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report on the states shows that

-In Telangana, of the total subsidy spent by the state each year, the share for discoms was almost 54%.

-Similarly, in Karnataka energy subsidies were Rs 8,647 crore in FY17, more than half of the total subsidies paid out by the states.

Further, **States have not taken any steps to rationalise power tariffs.**

**Read more:** [Power Ministry working on a scheme to liquidate the past dues of Discoms](#)

What should be done to improve the energy sector?

According to a research paper, more capital spending can take place in the energy sector only if **a) Power sector reforms** are linked to market-based pricing, **b) Replacing** the long-standing system of subsidies or free power to targeted user groups, **c) Improve the quality of the distribution networks:** This includes the provision of metering capacity, or installing substations for renewable energy to feed into the grids, **d) Focus on specific problems:** States such as **Jharkhand** and **West Bengal** need to spend money to encourage the population depending on coal mining and ancillary business to gravitate to other sectors.

**Read more:** [Nursing the ailing power discoms back to health](#)

GS3 – ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE – ELECTRIC VEHICLES

### **BIOMASS – CO-FIRING**

#### 4. [Biomass co-firing: Why India's target for coal power plants is challenging](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Biomass co-firing: Why India's target for coal power plants is challenging**” published in **Down To Earth** on **13th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc

**Relevance:** To understand the challenges associated with Biomass co-firing.

**News:** The unavailability of biomass pellets of agricultural residues is halting the implementation of co-firing [biomass](#) with coal in thermal power plants.

What is Biomass co-firing?

Biomass co-firing is the practice of substituting a part of the fuel with biomass at coal thermal plants. Coal and biomass are combusted together in boilers that have been designed to burn coal. For this purpose, the existing coal power plant has to be partly reconstructed and retrofitted.

What are the steps taken to improve Biomass co-firing?

According to the ‘National Mission on use of biomass for coal thermal power plants’ set up by the Union power ministry, around 95,000-96,000 tonnes of biomass pellets are required per day for co-firing.

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National Mission on use of Biomass in coal-based thermal power plants, also called SAMARTH (Sustainable Agrarian Mission on use of Agro-residue in Thermal Power Plants) has shared a list of 70-80 pellet manufacturers with the power plants.

To strengthen and regulate the supply chain, the manufacturers were also asked to be registered under SAMARTH.

Training for pellet manufacturers has been conducted by the National Power Training Institute all over the country.

What are the benefits of Biomass co-firing?

**Reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions:** Substituting 5-7% of coal with biomass in coal-based power plants can save 38 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

Biomass co-firing is an effective way to curb emissions from open burning of crop residue; it also decarbonises the process of electricity generation using coal.

**Read here: [Can biomass co-firing offer a viable solution to coal shortage and stubble burning?](#)**

What are the challenges faced in Biomass co-firing in India?

There is not much improvement in Biomass co-firing in India because,

**Low Pellet manufacturing capacity:** India's pellet manufacturing capacity is 7,000 tonnes per day at present despite a surplus of 228 million tonnes of agricultural residue available in the country.

**Higher price in the open market:** Pellet suppliers favour selling their product to industries such as textile, food processing, metal-based or in the open market at higher prices.

**Increased demand from industries in NCR:** Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas directed industries in Delhi-National Capital Region to switch to cleaner fuels by end of September 2022. Hence, the Biomass demand from industries escalated.

**Challenges in biomass pellet storing:** Only pellets with up to 14% moisture can be used for combustion along with coal. Storing biomass pellets for long durations at the plant sites is hard, since they absorb moisture from air quickly, rendering them useless for co-firing.

**Seasonal availability and unreliable supply** of biomass pellets.

**Must Read: [Scale of crop residue generation in India](#)**

What should be done to improve biomass for co-firing?

**a)** SAMARTH must map the existing pellet manufacturers and incentivise entrepreneurs to set up more pellet manufacturing plants, **b)** SAMARTH has to ensure the price of biomass pellets is capped and protected from fluctuations in market demand, **c)** Platforms need to be established to ensure farmers have an intrinsic role in this business model of pellet manufacturing and co-firing in power plants.

## **BATTERY SWAPPING AND RELATED ISSUES**

### **5. Swap the Battery And Get Going In Your EVs**

**Source:** This post is created based on the article “Swap the Battery And Get Going In Your EVs” published in **The Times of India** on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 – Infrastructure and energy**

**News:** NITI Aayog has recently released the draft battery swapping policy.

#### **What was the need of draft battery swapping policy?**

**First,** major auto manufacturers are agreed on the view that electric vehicles shall be the mainstay of future mobility in India.

**Second,** as per the reports by India Energy Storage Alliance projects Indian EV and EV battery markets shall grow at a CAGR of 36% and 30%, respectively, in the next four years.

**Third,** Niti Aayog estimates EV sales penetration in India at 80% for two-wheelers (2W) and three-wheelers (3W), 70% for commercial cars, 40% for buses, and 30% for private cars, by 2030.

**Fourth,** there is a policy predictability and political will to enact the EV movement in the country. Majority of the states have already come up with dedicated EV policies.

Thus, battery swapping has tremendous potential to create new economic opportunities for various stakeholders and the nation. It propagates the concept of Battery as a Service (BaaS).

#### **What are benefits associated with battery swapping?**

**First,** in India vehicles used in the services by e-commerce, food and grocery delivery companies will form a good number of EVs. Both companies and gig workers can't afford their vehicles to sit idle for 4-6 hours every day for routine charging. The battery swapping will cost effectively transforms batteries from a one-time capital expenditure to a recurring operating cost (pay per use).

**Second,** battery swapping will require a dense swapping station network across the city. This will trigger new ventures and enable small business owners like kirana stores and restaurants to get benefitted from this opportunity.

**Third,** battery swapping shall present OEMs with an opportunity to generate revenue steam for the vehicle's entire lifetime.

**Fourth,** battery swapping stations, requiring less than 20% of land area vis-à-vis charging stations.

**Fifth,** Most people owning an EV tend to charge their vehicles overnight after coming back from work. Battery swapping can help balance the load on the grid by spreading the vehicle charging hours across different times of the day.

**Sixth,** It will provide an opportunity to India to globalize the cost-efficient indigenous battery swapping technologies and take economic benefits.



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GS3 – INDIAN ECONOMY – ISSUES RELATED TO GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

### **REGIONAL IMBALANCES IN GROWTH AND DEV**

#### 6. Regional imbalance – Focus on equitable growth

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Regional imbalance – Focus on equitable growth**” published in **Business Standard** on **15th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

**Relevance:** To understand the issues associated with the regional imbalance in the Indian economy.

**News:** One of the biggest challenges for policymakers is to enable the post-pandemic economy to attain higher sustainable growth in the medium term. The task of attaining higher sustainable growth has become more challenging because of global headwinds and India’s own weaknesses such as **higher public debt**.

What are the positive situations of the Indian economy?

- India’s corporate and bank balance sheets have improved and can support growth.
- Large foreign exchange reserves are helping India in dealing with external pressure.

What is the status of regional imbalance in the Indian economy?

The recently released Annual Survey of Industries highlighted the **regional imbalance in the distribution of industries**. This has implications for job creation and quality of life in general. For example, about 16% of all factories considered in the survey were in Tamil Nadu, and states such as Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Bihar had under 2% share.

The reasons for such regional imbalance are **1) Locational advantages** such as coastal states importing raw materials and exporting the final product, **2) Better administration** in the state.

In the absence of corrective action, the gap is likely to grow over time with the concentration of productive assets. This will lead to increased social tensions.

How can India reduce the regional imbalances in the Indian economy?

India needs to contend with the formidable issues of **uneven distribution of growth and sustained regional imbalances**. Successive finance commissions have tried to reduce the regional imbalance.

**a) Promote manufacturing:** Only the manufacturing sector can provide large-scale employment and pull people out of the agriculture sector, **b) Ensure free movement of labour:** This will allow large states to export surplus labour to states which have more factories and offer employment opportunities. Further, the state government’s has to avoid local labour reservation laws, **c) Focus on exports:** India has to take advantage of its surplus labour to become a manufacturing hub and increase exports.

### UNEMPLOYMENT IN INDIA

#### 7. Trained but unemployed

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Trained but unemployed” published in the Business Standard on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Economic growth and development

**Relevance:** Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

**News:** In a recent interview, the **Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** said the government was spending ₹ 5,000 crore on skill development initiatives. Further, the government seeks to recruit one million people in 18 months

#### **Background**

The government announced **the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**, its **first skill development initiative** in 2015. It aimed to train as many people as possible and provide them with placements.

#### **2nd Iteration**

The government has shifted its focus to reskilling. It recognises the fast-changing need for skills in different sectors.

#### **3rd Iteration**

The government has changed the scheme from a **supply-driven programme** to a **demand-driven model**.

#### **Overall Achievements**

##### **Certification Record**

A combined analysis of three iterations shows that **certifications** varied from a low of 29.3% to 84.4% during this period.

Lakshadweep certified 79 of the 270 placed candidates. Rajasthan certified 9.26lakh of 11lakh candidates total enrolled candidates during this period.

Ten of the 36 states/UTs which includes, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, had a certification rate higher than the national average of 76.5%.

##### **Placement Records**

**Less than 10%:** – Lakshadweep did not place a single candidate. Three states, including Maharashtra, placed less than a tenth of the certified candidates.

**Between 10 and 30 per cent:** 22 states recorded placement rates in this range, which includes Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana

**placement rate of 30 per cent and above:** Eleven states and UTs, like Punjab placed 39.6% of the total certified candidates. Ladakh provided placement for 54.1% of the certified candidates.

##### **What are the issues?**

The record of the **flagship skill development programme**, which aims to enhance the **employment potential** of Indians, has been poor.

It has been able to enrol **14.2 million people** in the PMKVY since the start of the programme in 2015. However, the **performance** in terms of placements has not been remarkable which may be due to the pandemic and economic slowdown.

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Around, three-fourths of the total enrolled have been certified. Further, a little over a fifth or 2.4 million have found placements.

### Way Forward

The union government would still need to reorient its programme in order to improve its placement record.

### 8. On Centre's plan to recruit 10 lakh personnel in 18 months: Waiting for jobs

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**On Centre's plan to recruit 10 lakh personnel in 18 months: Waiting for jobs**” published in **The Indian Express** on **17th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Issues related to growth and development

**Relevance:** Unemployment in India

**News:** The Centre's decision to recruit personnel to fill vacancies is a nod to the festering unemployment issue

Moreover, for a nation that has had a significant demographic dividend finding productive employment for its youth was to be an imperative for India.

What is the situation wrt unemployment in India over the years?

In the last few years, unemployment has remained a major concern

– the leaked Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) in 2018 revealed that India's unemployment rate was the highest (6.07%) in four decades.

– The latest PLFS suggests that the overall unemployment rate is now at 4.2% in 2020-21, compared to 4.8% in 2019-20. Also, the labour force participation rate (LFPR) has inc to 41.6%, up from 40.1% in 2019-20.

But the PLFS data will not bring much cheer to the Government despite a decrease in unemployment, according to official data. This is because the decrease, says the PLFS, has also **coincided with the transfer of employment into lower productive and unpaid jobs** away from salaried employment.

The, **industrial jobs have decreased** with more employment in agricultural and farm-related jobs — a trend that accelerated following the lockdown and has not reversed since then. Unemployment rates among the educated (above secondary education — 9.1%) and t >he youth (age between 15-29 — 12.9%) have only declined marginally.

What is the way forward?

It is clear that the Government must tackle unemployment and, concomitantly, the quality of employment issue, on a war footing.

In this regard, India's announcement that the Government will be recruiting 10 lakh personnel within the next 18 months should be seen as a step in the right direction.

The bulk of the promised employment is to fill up vacancies.

The country cannot afford to squander more years in its race to reap the benefits of its demographic dividend, and the push to provide jobs for those seeking to enter the labour force, even if belated, will help ease matters for the medium term.

### 9. The jobs push

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**The jobs push**” published in **The Indian Express** on **16th June 22**, and the article “**A unique jobs conundrum**” published in **Business Standard** on **15th Jun 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Economic growth and Development

**Relevance:** Employment problems and related issues

**News:** The Centre recently announced plans to recruit 10 lakh people in ministries and departments over the next one-and-a-half years.

This might not be enough considering the scale of the unemployment problem that India is facing. Private sector’s contribution will be needed.

#### The underlying structure of India’s economy

The jobs problem in India is worsened by the underlying structure of the Indian economy.

The **rapidly growing services sector** tends not only to be **less employment intensive**, but is also more **geared towards absorbing the skilled sections** of the labour force.

And the **gig economy**, which does employ the unskilled, simply doesn’t create enough jobs for the millions entering the labour force each year.

#### What is the key challenge?

The challenge has been, and continues to be, the **inability to facilitate the creation of a labour intensive manufacturing sector** that is able to absorb the low and semi-skilled sections of the labour force.

#### Issues with the recruitment drive

The Centre recently announced plans to recruit 10 lakh people in ministries and departments over the next one-and-a-half years. This move suffers from some fundamental constraints —

**the size of government.** According to the report of the 7th Pay Commission, the total sanctioned strength of the central government fell from 41.76 lakh in 1994 to 38.9 lakh in 2014. In 2021, the strength of the central government stood at 34.5 lakh as per the Union budget. Moreover, between 2006 and 2014, the average recruitment in the central government was a little over one lakh each year.

– These numbers not only raise questions over the absorptive capacity of the state, but also imply that **government employment actually forms a small proportion of the formal labour force**, and an even smaller part of the total labour force.

In fact, the Pay Commission report had noted that “*the central government is at best a marginal source for employment generation.*” Thus, considering the scale of the challenge, this recruitment drive will not be enough.

Further, this expansion in public sector jobs **pose a challenge to the promise and goal of minimum government.**

Moreover, implicit in this move is also the acknowledgment that **not enough jobs are being created by the private sector**, which should be the principal driver of employment generation.

**The government does not have the wherewithal to recruit on this scale.** Taken together, the various recruiting agencies, such as the UPSC and the Railway Recruitment Board, hire just about 100,000 people a year. A National Recruitment Agency set up in 2020 was expected to subsume the role of multiple government recruiting agencies but is not yet functional.

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**Budgetary constraints:** The real danger of this mega-recruitment drive is that **capital expenditure may be curtailed** to make way for higher salary budgets.

### Way forward

Making the government the employer of first resort and the move towards Big Government marks a significant step back in terms of economic policymaking, and indirectly reflects the government's failure to meaningfully tackle the employment crisis.

With rising protectionism in trade policy and the great leap back to semi-autarky in industrial policy, India faces the danger of losing the gains of the past three decades.

### **PM'S HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

#### 10. **Needed: A PM's council for human development**

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**Needed: A PM's council for human development**" published in **Business Standard** on **15th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Economic Growth and Development

**Relevance:** A case for a PM's Human Development Council

**Context:** India's goal should be to be in the top 50 nations of the world by 2047 in human development and at least a rank below 100 by 2030. These need a prime minister-led human development council under the NITI Aayog.

The governing council/ National Development Council itself can be that body with exclusive meetings on human development at least twice a year. All chief ministers, concerned Union ministers and a few experts from these sectors must be a part of this council.

#### Why India needs a PM's Human Development Council?

Due to the following factors:

- **Providing opportunities to every citizen of India** to develop their fullest human potential is not only good for inclusive development; it is necessary for sustaining high rates of economic progress. Evidence from across the world substantiates this.
- Outcomes in the indicators of health, education, nutrition, clean water, sanitation, etc are all inter-related. They depend on a simultaneous improvement in all related sectors, with the **gram panchayat or an urban local body as a unit**.
- Unfortunately, **India neglected human development for decades** even though a few IITs and IIMs provided global class human capital for leadership.
  - The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the National Rural Health Mission increased the pace of improvement but it was not good enough to change India's 130 rank in the Human Development Index.
- The thrust on removing the asset deficits of deprived households, in the form of housing, toilets, electricity, cooking gas, among others provides an **opportunity for better outcomes in human development**.
- PM played a critical role in providing leadership to the chief ministers of all states in the fight against Covid and in the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan. It shows how the **partnership between the Centre, state, local governments and community organisations** like self-help groups and frontline workers **can achieve development outcomes**.



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- **Community connect** with the use of technology as a means has the power to **speed up infrastructure roll-out** for higher growth.
- There's a **need for partnerships between the federal government and the states and local governments** for need-based implementation of development schemes.

What indicators need to be monitored?

An illustrative list of 12 key indicators is given below:

- 1) Monitor stunting among infants.** Stunting (child too short for age) reflects chronic undernutrition during the most critical periods of growth and development in early life. It highlights the need for diverse food and timely health check-ups.
- 2) Wasting among infants** (low weight for height) indicates recent and severe weight loss. It happens due to inadequate quantity and quality of food or frequent or prolonged illnesses. These irreversibly affect the learning abilities of a child. Education suffers and illnesses begin.
- 3) Monitoring anaemia among women and children.** Anaemia reflects poor food diversity, besides prevalence of diseases. It also reflects the lack of timely access to primary health care.
- 4) Monitoring foundational literacy and numeracy** among all children under the Nipun Bharat programme.
- 5) Monitoring the status of youth in schools and skills programmes**
- 6) Monitoring the linking of households to health facilities** for holistic primary, secondary, and tertiary care with the Ayushman Digital Health Mission as a means.
- 7) Seventh, female work participation rate.** We need to monitor female employment in every *panchayat*. Women need opportunities for paid work.
- 8) Percentage of girls from deprived households in high schools and higher education needs constant monitoring.**
- 9) Funds, functions and functionaries with *panchayats* and urban local bodies** need active involvement of social capital of community organisations.
- 10) Access to credit** for all on the basis of individual micro credit plans.
- 11) Monitoring the life of the urban poor** to improve access to public services, education, health, nutrition, sanitation, housing and the like. Public campaigns to ensure access of services to urban poor are needed.
- 12) Monitoring market wages and availability of work** for men and women. It captures the essence of poverty of households and poverty of regions. The government will need to address inter-*panchayat* disparities by ranking them.

### **FOOD INFLATION AND RELATED ISSUES**

#### **11. Tackling the crisis of rising global food prices**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Tackling the crisis of rising global food prices” published in the “The Hindu” on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 Indian Economy; Issues in PDS, Buffer Stock and Buffer Stock

**Relevance:** Food Security, Agri-Exports

**News: Recently,** the government of India has banned wheat exports and imposed restrictions on the export of other food commodities.

#### **History of Food Price Crises**

Since the adoption of **Green Revolution technology** in the early 1960s, the world has faced **food price crises** three times in terms of nominal as well as the real prices: (1) **1973-76** Period, (2) 2008-11 Period, and (3) Since 2020.

**Few trends are important about these crises:** 1) They were not caused by any serious shortfall in agriculture production, but the factors outside agriculture 2) The interval between two consecutive price shocks has narrowed down considerably. 3) The severity of the shock is becoming stronger.

#### **Causes behind the recent spike**

It has been caused by **supply disruptions** due to COVID-19 and the ongoing **Russia-Ukraine war**.

The commodities that are traded more at the global level are more vulnerable to **global supply disruption**. **For example**, trade dependence for vegetable oil is around 38%, for wheat is 25%, among others. Therefore, the current food price spike first began in vegetable oils and then expanded to cereals.

Nowadays, food crops are being **diverted** for **biofuel generation**. For example, the proportion of vegetable oil used for biodiesel increased from 1% in 2003 to more than 15% in 2021.

Food prices hiked because of **an increase in the prices of fertilizer and other agrochemicals**.

The global prices are being transmitted to the domestic prices because the share of the agriculture sector in export and import is substantial.

#### **Measures Taken by India to moderate the transmission of global prices to the domestic market**

The government has adopted **trade policy** and **other instruments** to balance the interests of producers and consumers and to protect the economy against excessive volatility in international prices. **For example**, the government **liberalized** imports and imposed checks on exports to ensure adequate availability of the food items as the international prices have gone too high.

The government has used a **buffer stock of food staples** to maintain price stability, especially in the wake of global food crises.

#### **Is the present move of Wheat export restrictions damaging India’s image as a reliable exporter?**

In order to understand the image of a reliable and credible exporter, there is a need to differentiate between **disturbing normal export** and regulating exports exceeding the normal level.

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India's ban is not disrupting its **normal exports**. India was a very small exporter of wheat (Only 0.1% to 1% share in global wheat trade during 2015-16 to 2020-21). Therefore, despite the ban, the wheat exports this year will be much higher than the average wheat export from India in recent years.

In order to compensate for the present disruption, around **50 million tonnes** of wheat is required in the international market. India produced only double of it. Therefore, the absence of a ban could have led to a **severe wheat shortage** and **food security** in India.

### What should be done?

Just like the Green Revolution of the 1960s which lowered food prices, India requires **new breakthroughs** for large-scale adoption.

The spending on agriculture research and development (especially by the public sector and multilateral development agencies) should be increased.

The global agri-research system under the **Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)** should be rejuvenated

Diversion of land under **food crops** and **food output** for biofuel should be carefully calibrated.

The energy prices and disruptions in the movement of food across borders should be checked. In addition, climate change can be another source of supply shocks in the future. Therefore, it should be checked.

A **global buffer stock** of food should be established to ensure food prices and supply remain stable at the global level

## GS3 – INDIAN ECONOMY – INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND GROWTH

### IPR AND RELATED ISSUES

12. [Easing of IP restrictions on vaccines is welcome. But it will need to be accompanied by technology transfers](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Easing of IP restrictions on vaccines is welcome. But it will need to be accompanied by technology transfers**” published in **The Indian Express** on **18th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

**Relevance:** Waiver of IP restrictions on vaccines, vaccine equity

**Context:** Nearly two years after it was initiated by India and South Africa, a proposal to waive patents on Covid-19 vaccines has been approved by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

But, the waiver of IP rights will not amount to anything substantial if pharma companies in the Third World do not have the know-how to produce medicines and vaccines.

### Has the deal come out late?

Vaccine supply is no more the challenge it was at the beginning of this year. The argument that the deal has come too late is, therefore, correct to an extent.

### What really needs to be done?

The vaccines currently in use provide protection against the more severe forms of Covid. But it's also clear that these shots do not always guard against infection. The virus continues to pose new questions even though it appears to have become less virulent.

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Information flows must, therefore, be geared towards **developing second-generation preventives and therapeutics**.

– Easing intellectual property restrictions should be seen as the first step in this endeavour.

Waiver of IP rights will not amount to anything substantial if pharma companies in the Third World do not have the know-how to produce medicines and vaccines.

**Why technology transfer and partnerships are necessary?**

In India, for nearly five decades, the generic industry has reverse-engineered drugs to mass manufacture low-priced therapeutics. But vaccines present a different order of challenge:

– Manufacturers require not only patented knowledge, but also partnerships with the original innovator to develop these preventives. Such arrangements help vaccine manufacturers **mobilize technical skills and raw materials**.

Technology transfers led to some of the most effective interventions in the battle against the virus. **For instance:** The tie-up between pharma major AstraZeneca, Oxford University and the Serum Institute of India is a case in point.

**Way forward**

There was a global consensus, very early in the pandemic, that knowledge sharing would be critical in the battle against the pathogen.

However, this understanding did not translate into equitable distribution of the most potent shield against the virus.

The WTO decision, though belated, is a corrective. Much more will be needed in the coming months.

### 13. **Patently false: WTO debate on waiving vax IPR misses the point. Equitable access needs quick tech transfer**

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Patently false: WTO debate on waiving vax IPR misses the point. Equitable access needs quick tech transfer**” published in **The Times of India** on **14th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – issues relating to Intellectual Property Rights

**Relevance:** WTO debate on waiving vax IPR

**News:** The ongoing WTO ministerial conference in Geneva is discussing, among other things, a temporary waiver of intellectual property rights (IPR) on Covid vaccines.

The genesis was an earlier India-South Africa proposal in October 2020. Since then, many other countries have backed the idea.

Of course, as the draft says, India won't benefit on account of its status as a vaccine exporter. However, the underlying reason for the original proposal, **inequitable vaccine access** in a health emergency, remains.

Therefore, it's an issue that needs a solution.

**Issue of inequitable vaccine access**

In large areas of Africa, many are yet to be vaccinated. The core issue, therefore, is narrow access as manufacturing is largely confined to a handful of countries.

**What's the best way forward?**

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Evidence shows it's **not a temporary IPR waiver**. For example, US firm Moderna announced in 2020 it will not enforce IPR on its mRNA vaccine as long as Covid is active. **It didn't make a difference**.

The key to expanding vaccine manufacture is by **spreading technical know-how** currently available to a handful of firms.

– Technology transfer in 2020 from AstraZeneca to Serum allowed India to quickly ramp up vaccine production.

**Finding a way to facilitate technology transfer**, along with a **financing mechanism**, will be of help to Africa. Moreover, this channel can be later used to make other vaccines when Covid recedes.

### **TELECOM SECTOR IN INDIA**

#### **14. With only 3 serious telecom operators, administrative allocation of spectrum space should take the place of auctions**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “With only 3 serious telecom operations, administrative allocation of spectrum space should take the place of auctions” published in the Indian Express on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 Infrastructure, Communications

**Relevance:** Telecom Sector

**News:** In January, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) announced a rescue package for some telecom companies (telcos).

#### **What were the rescue packages?**

The government dispensed with the requirement of **performance bank guarantees** required earlier than security. It increased the **tenure of spectrum** holding from 20 to 30 years, allowed for the surrender of the **unutilised** or **underutilized** spectrum after 10 years, and most importantly removed the **levy of spectrum usage charges**.

In addition, the government acquired a 35% stake in Vi in lieu of the **spectrum** and **licensee fee dues** that the operator vowed to it

In addition, Airtel got a respite from the government on account of easier and longer payment terms.

#### **Evolution of the Indian Telecom Sector**

In 1994, there was a **public sector monopoly** in the telecom sector. The public sector operators served the elite.

In the following years, the combined forces of **technology** and **deregulation** helped break the shackles of public sector dominance.

A few years ago, India had a **hyper-competitive telecom market**. Indian telecom operators provided the lowest tariff in the world.

However, at present, the telecom sector is facing lack of market competition due to the presence of a virtual duopoly.

#### **Why was there a need for a rescue package?**



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The private sector that embraced **cutting-edge technology** has established its market **dominance** in the Indian Telecom market. They have done so through the market rather than administrative fiat.

If there is **no third telecom player** in the Indian market, subscribers would be at the mercy of a **virtual duopoly**. In reality, **BSNL** has largely become redundant to promote competition in the telecom sector.

A **competitive telecom** sector is fundamental to realizing India's digital ambitions. **Monopolized markets** are vulnerable to **cartelization**.

At least three telecom operators can provide **serious competition** in all aspects of network quality, package availability, and service innovation.

Monopolies have no incentive to innovate. Competition will guarantee that operators invest in network infrastructure upgradation and offer consumers a wide range of innovative service options.

The imminent 5G networks demand **massive investment** and **sophistication of operations**. It can be achieved through a level playing field.

### Other challenges

There has been ill-conceived and botched-up **First Come First Serve (FCFS) method** for **administrative spectrum assignment**.

The government's revenue generation was seen only through the lens of **spectrum sold** through auctions. The government did not see that it lost revenue as many of the spectrums remained **unsold** due to high reserve prices.

At present, the government will find it difficult to induce competition because neither **deregulation** nor **technology** can boost competition.

There is an ongoing debate between the **regulator, TRAI**, and the **Digital Communications Commission (DCC)** on whether the 5G spectrum should be assigned to companies like TCS, Amazon, and Google, among others, for their private enterprise business. Telcos and the DCC opposed this as this would impact both the **business model** of operators and the **discovered price** in an auction.

### The Way Forward

Therefore, the government needs to **redesign policy** to induce competition. Preserving numbers, alone, is not sufficient to **induce competition in the telecom sector**.

In addition to preventing the exit of Vi from the market, the government needs to bring **structural changes** to embed competition within the sector. For example, revisiting the **spectrum assignment regime**.

The administrative assignments of spectrum can be considered once again. All spectrum can be assigned at **reasonable prices** and in the process, a grand bargain can be struck with telecom operators.

In a **dynamic market** such as telecom, operators have always faced and will continue to meet **market uncertainty**. In 2014, the Over the Top (OTT) players damaged the business model of telecom licensees by making all calls and messaging virtually free.

The government's revenue collections could be higher if all spectrum is **assigned** (reduced risk of spectrum being unsold) instead of being **auctioned**. In addition, the government would have more **tax revenue** in a competitive telecom sector.

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At present, the **public sector operator (BSNL)** does not have capability to run its 5G business. Therefore, it needs to be privatised

### **RIGHT TO REPAIR**

#### 15. Upholding the right to repair

**Source:** This post is created based on the article “Upholding the right to repair” published in The Hindu on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 – industries and industrial policies**

**News:** The U.S. state of New York recently passed the Fair Repair Act. It has also ignited the debate in India on providing right to repair to the consumers.

The US’s Fair Repair Act requires manufacturers to supply repair information, tools, and parts to independent repair shops and not just their own stores or partners.

It will provide the repair shops a level playing field with the company’s store and also provide them with the security from intellectual property (IP) rights violations.

#### **What are the issues in ensuring Right to repair?**

At present following issues are faced in the process of repair by third parties:

Manufacturers claim that the quality and functioning of **the product might be adversely affected if they allow repairs by consumers and third parties**. This claim is correct due to absence of repair instructions and genuine parts.

Manufacturers incorporate **warranty clauses** which lapse when the product is repaired by a third party.

Often, **manufacturers reduce the durability of the product**. It compels consumers to either repurchase the product or get it repaired at exorbitant prices fixed by the manufacturers.

#### **What rights can be provided to the consumers or repairers?**

**A blanket waiver of warranty should be avoided** when the product is repaired by a third party. To protect the quality of the product, clause can be incorporated for use of company-recommended spare parts and certified repair shops.

Manufacturers can sign a **non-disclosure agreement** to protect the IP with the certified repairers/businesses.

**A repair certification/licence** can be allotted to those who pass certain criteria and skill tests. It will provide employment and skills to the certified persons to handle the repair manual.

#### **What legal changes are required to ensure right to repair?**

The ‘right to repair’ can be said to be implicit in **Section 2(9) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019**. However, it is not being followed. Thus, explicit insertion of a ‘right to repair’ clause is required in the act.

The **product liability clause under Section 84** can be amended. It should be expanded to impose product liability concerning various reparability parameters of the product.

France requires manufacturers to display a **reparability index on** their products which consists of five parameters. This helps consumers understand if the products are repairable, difficult to repair or not repairable at all. India can also follow this practice.

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**EU's guidelines on Ecodesign** for Energy-Related Products and Energy Information Regulations, 2021. Guidelines mandate manufacturers to provide spare parts for up to 10 years to avoid premature obsolescence.

### GS3 – INTERNAL SECURITY – VARIOUS SECURITY FORCES AND THEIR MANDATE

#### **AGNIPATH SCHEME**

##### 16. **The flawed rationale behind Agnipath**

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**The flawed rationale behind Agnipath**” published in the **Business Standard** on **18<sup>th</sup> June 2022**; and “**Agnipath, a fire that could singe India**” published in the “**The Hindu**” on **18<sup>th</sup> June 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Various security forces and their Mandate

**Relevance:** Agnipath Scheme

**News:** Recently, the government launched the Agnipath scheme. It has sparked off vehement protests from aspirants to defence services.

#### **Nature of Indian Defence Forces**

India has always had a complete volunteer **defence force**. Indeed, there is **fierce competition** to join as the riots indicate.

There are strong economic reasons for such a high competition. There is **economic security**, and **social status** for service personnel.

#### **What were the driving force behind such a move?**

The armed forces are facing **long-delayed modernisation**. For example, the Indian Air Force have 30 squadrons of fighter jets against the needed 42 squadrons, the Indian Navy have 130 ships against the need of 200-ship; and the Indian Army is already short of 1,00,000 soldiers.

**Financial motivations:** The financial burden of the **defence personnel salary** and pension has increased. It has substantially increased the budgetary expenditure on defence pensions. The savings in the pensions bill would be directed towards the **modernisation of defence forces**.

At present, the Indian economy is incapable of supporting the needs of the India **armed forces**.

India has been facing an active **military threat** from **two adversaries**, China and Pakistan.

There are **internal security challenges** in Kashmir and the northeastern States of India.

#### **Arguments against the scheme**

The life is hard and dangerous in the Indian Armed Forces. Further, if you take away the **pensions** and the **healthcare**. It will reduce the soldier's status to low level posts in many **private sector organisations**. In fact, **many listed companies** pay more to temporary workers on assembly lines.

The scheme seems to reduce the ranks of the **unemployed** and serve as an adjunct to the **MGNREGA Act**. The numbers make that **argument absurd**.

Various countries have scrapped conscriptions. For example, France scrapped conscription in 1996, The US scrapped conscription after Vietnam.

It's hard to meet the security needs through purely **voluntary recruitment** without attractive economic alternatives.

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The **short-term recruitment policy** has neither been theoretically modelled nor tried out as a pilot project.

It will have adverse effect on the **professional capabilities** of the armed forces is certain.

This will lead to further increasing the tail when the armed forces are already boasting of a poor **teeth-to-tail ratio**.

The **Indian Air Force** and the **Indian Navy** employ their **airmen** and **sailors** in very specialised roles. This requires **technical skills**, and a **high degree of training** and experience. The short-term contractual soldier will find it difficult to fulfil the requirement.

In the past, the government defended the **class-based recruitment** by asserting that due to this the Army has “**performed exceedingly well**” and “changing to **All India class composition** will affect the functioning of the PBG [President’s Bodyguard] Presidential and the seniority structure of the regiment”. This is because soldiers draw their motivation from their social identity. The Government’s proposal for all-**India all-class recruitment** under Agnipath proposal lacks transparency in the reasoning.

There will be major problems in **training, integrating** and **deploying** soldiers with different levels of experience and motivations.

The 25% criterion for retaining short-term contracted soldiers could result in unhealthy competition, as it can lead to **rivalries** and **jealousies** amongst winners and losers.

There would be **legal challenges** as the Government has kept the contract at four years to deny the Agniveer gratuity and it is not counting the contractual period towards regular service. It could lead to **political agitation for longer tenures and pensions** to be picked up by the Opposition parties.

### 17. [Baptism by fire: Army pension needs pruning. But Agnipath protests show future soldiers’ anxiety needs better responses](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Baptism by fire: Army pension needs pruning. But Agnipath protests show future soldiers’ anxiety needs better responses**” published in **The Times of India** on **17th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

**Relevance:** To understand the challenges associated with the Agnipath Scheme.

**News:** Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved an attractive recruitment scheme for Indian youth to serve in the Armed Forces called AGNIPATH. Violent protests erupted in parts of India ever since the launch of the scheme.

**Must read:** [Cabinet clears Agnipath Scheme](#)

**Need:** The US in FY-2018 set aside 10% of the defence department’s total expenses for pension. In the UK, the pension outgo in FY-2019 was 14% of the total defence spending.

According to a parliamentary committee report in 2020, there are 3.2 million defence pensioners, with about 55,000 added annually. In 2010-11, pension outgo was 19% of total defence expenditure. The fallout of pension’s rising share is a corresponding decrease in expenditure to buy new equipment.

**Must read:** [Agnipath Scheme: Need, Benefits and Challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

[What are the challenges associated with the Agnipath Scheme?](#)



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**Lack of motivation:** Post-announcement assurances of job preferences in paramilitary or police, or bank loans for potential entrepreneurs are inadequate to satisfy youth to be an Agniveer.

**Losing long-term job options:** According to CMIE's April 2022 jobs data, unemployment was 50% for the 15-19 age group, and 38.7% for the 20-24 cohort. The scheme will increase the unemployment figures.

**Read more:** [Education Ministry to recognize in-service training received by Agniveers as credits for graduation](#)

What should be done?

a) The government needs to quickly design a more effective package to help demobilised Agniveers' transition to civilian life, b) **Follow best practices:** In the US, it takes 20 years of service to be eligible for a pension. This helps the US to keep pension costs down. India can follow such practices.

### 18. [Agnipath will lead to a leaner military, savings in pensions. But there are challenges beyond the bold step forward.](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the following articles - "**Agnipath will lead to a leaner military, savings in pensions. But there are challenges beyond the bold step forward**" published in the **Indian Express** on **15<sup>th</sup> June 2022**;

"**A reform called Agnipath will ensure youthful and tech-savvy profile of armed forces while reducing burden of pensions and gratuities**" published in the **Indian Express** on **15<sup>th</sup> June 2022**;

"**Jawans, Josh & Jobs**" published in the **Times of India** on **15<sup>th</sup> June 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Various Security Forces and their Mandate

**Relevance:** Indian Armed Forces

**News:** Recently, the Government of India has announced the **Agnipath Scheme for recruitment of soldiers, the majority of whom will serve for four years.**

#### What is the Agnipath scheme

It will lead to recruitment of **non-officer personnel** to the armed forces, who will be called as **the Agniveer**.

They will be hired on **contract** in the age group of 17.5 to 21 years old and will serve for four years.

At the end of their service, they will get Rs 11.71 lakh through the **Seva Nidhi package** in which their contribution of 30% of the monthly salary will be matched by an **equal amount** by the government.

25% of the Agniveers in each batch, will be selected for **regular cadre** to serve for another minimum of 15 years.

They will get a **life insurance** cover of Rs 48 lakh, **ex-gratia payment** of Rs 44 lakh in case of death, and payment for the remainder of the **four years of service** in case of death.

#### What will be the process of recruitment?

The recruitment will be **All India All Class (AIAC)**. It will not be restricted by ethnicity or caste unlike the regiments introduced by the British colonisers.

They will be recruited from recognised **technical institutes** like the Industrial Training Institutes through a **centralised online system** with specialised rallies and **campus interviews**.



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### What was the need of such a reform?

At present, the “**colour service**” of 17 years have led to an **ageing army**. More than 60% of men are above 30 years of age. Today, the number of sepoys has fallen below 40%. Therefore, it will lead to **regular intake** and ensure availability of **youthful, patriotic, physically fit and highly-motivated youth**.

In fact, all major militaries in the world are **undergoing reform**. There is a trend towards **reduction** in the number of **personnel** and emphasis on increasing **capital expenditure** on modern weapons and equipment.

**Defence salary** and **pension bills** account for roughly half of the **annual defence budget**. It imposes **overall budgetary constraint** and compromises the availability of funds for military **modernisation**.

### Argument Against

The policy will lead to hiring without the promise of **lifelong benefits**, including the **shortened training**.

It will result in **demobilised young soldiers** who may pose a violent threat to society. It will be difficult to absorb them in the economy because India does not create adequate employment opportunities in India.

The new recruitment plan can strain existing **training resources** and produce a quality problem.

The mix of **long-term** and **short-term soldiers** will skew in favour of the latter and affect battle readiness.

### Argument in favour

In many **modern armed forces** around the world, the **service period** ranges from 2 to 8 years. Therefore, the Agniveers will bring down the **average age by 4-5 years**.

The shorter duration service does not compromise on training, morale and commitment. For example, the **Israeli army**, the **US** and the **UK Army** have shorter duration contracts.

The training for **Agniveers** will be **comparable** to the timeframe in many world-class **armed forces**.

In case of demobilisation, the demobilized soldiers will be in their 30s. They will have better skill-sets and motivation. Therefore, they will not pose a threat to society.

### Way Forward

The new reform can only be assessed in the coming years. The government will need to have a plan to **anticipate** and **address** the problems that lie beyond the **bold step forward**.

GS3 – INDIAN ECONOMY – ISSUES RELATED TO GROWTH AND DEV

### ESG FUNDS, RATINGS AND RELATED ISSUES

#### 19. Let's pin down the elusive 'E' of ESG transition finance

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Let's pin down the elusive 'E' of ESG transition finance” published in the Live Mint on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Environment

**Relevance:** Environmental Finance

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**News:** Weather events are frequently impacting lives. India has given national commitment to net zero carbon emissions. Therefore, India should focus on **Sustainable climate funding initiatives** that broadly comprise the 'E' of **ESG transition finance**.

### Possible Interventions for transition towards sustainable development in India

#### In General

The **3 'R'**: recycle, re-use and reduce are crucial to combat climate challenges effectively.

#### Sectoral interventions

(1) **Heavy industries** like iron and steel can help reduce **carbon dioxide** exhaust by adoption of smaller '**scrap-based steel process plants**' (recycling) located near urban centres, instead of working on **integrated steel plants** which are highly polluting in nature.

Further, **deep decarbonization steel technologies** can be developed on a commercial scale. This requires appropriate technology investments.

(2) **Business** and **corporate social responsibility (CSR)** can promote **greener technologies** as well as afforestation of habitats and revival of lost water bodies across India.

(3) In the power sector, there are possibilities for **round-the-clock renewable energy (RTC RE)** supply as corporates demand for their sustainable operations. It requires **better power storage technologies** and **energy generators**. Further, power distribution companies (DIS+COMS) can support **electric vehicle (EV)** technology.

(4) In the construction industry, **rain water harvesting (RWH)** systems can be mandatory for building plan approvals. It will reverse groundwater depletion and prevent urban flooding.

#### Efforts Made So Far in Transition Finance

Various forms of renewable power, including **utility-scale solar power**, have been financed through a **pool of bank/financial institution loans, bonds** and **private equity**.

The revamped **Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR) framework** for the listed corporates, and the **ESG assessment scores** introduced by credit rating agencies, are steps in the right direction.

Some European banks like **BNP Paribas** have come out with **climate analytics** and **alignment studies** which guides for a **carbon transition finance** roadmap towards net zero.

Recently, interim **decarbonization percentage targets** were set. It envisions raising the share of finance available to RE in overall power generation capacity, reducing **upstream exposure** to oil, and increasing the **financing** share of EVs in the automobile market by 2025.

#### Way Forward

The government can adopt **3 'C' approach** to push the laggards of **India Inc**, including **financiers** to fall in line for hastening a **green transition**. This requires, first **coax**, then **convince** and eventually **coerce**, similar to dismantling of LPG subsidies for well-off users in India.

Indian banks should devise their **own specific strategies** as most banks haven't yet framed comprehensive climate funding policies.

Indian corporates and financiers should act upon **transition finance** before **climate action regulations** start hitting them hard.

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India Inc., financiers and regulatory stakeholders should come up with a workable **'whole-of-industry investment and financing' approach** to facilitate a sustainable economy, similar to the **'whole-of-government' approach**.

The policy streamlining is needed for the growth of **wind** and **roof-top solar systems** and other renewables.

There is a need for development of robust **transition finance mechanisms** across various industry segments.

### GS3 – SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

#### **5G AND RELATED ISSUES**

#### 20. [5G Impact: Traffic To Teaching, Factories To Farming](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article **"5G Impact: Traffic To Teaching, Factories To Farming"** published in **The Times of India** on **16th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nanotechnology, biotechnology

**Relevance:** To understand the benefits of 5G technology.

**News:** The government has announced the rollout of the transformational 5G services. This will bring about a revolutionary change in communication with benefits spanning various sectors.

What is 5G technology?

**Read here:** [5G technology](#)

What are the benefits of 5G technology?

**Education:** **a)** With the **enhanced mobile broadband (eMBB)** feature of 5G, the full potential of digital education can be unleashed, **b)** Expanding on PM eVidya, it can deliver high-quality educational content through mobile applications to every student in the country, **c)** 5G will also provide a major impetus to digital universities, **d)** Vocational training programmes, delivered in the **'phygital' mode**, can improve the employability of youth and women by providing hands-on experience and reducing on-job training time.

**Healthcare:** **a)** **Ultra-reliable low-latency communication (URLLC)** feature of 5G will enable user-friendly point-of-care diagnostics and the creation of much-needed connected ambulances, **b)** 5G will also significantly improve access to world-class medical advice, resulting in better follow-up care, **c)** A hospital-run private 5G network will enable even a handful of doctors and nursing staff to provide quality care to hundreds by monitoring their vitals while simultaneously maintaining electronic health records.

**NextGen banking:** **a)** Both eMBB and URLLC features will play significant roles in financial inclusion, **b)** India has already become a world leader with the **Unified Payment Interface (UPI)**. With the help of Geospatial Information Systems, India can reach the next level of simple, seamless and secure payments such as **'one-tap payment'** and **'cashierless store' models**, **c)** The payments bank model can be expanded through incremental steps towards a completely mobile formal banking system. This will enable citizens to securely access various bank facilities through a virtual branch experience, thereby enhancing the banking population of India.

**Read more:** [5G technology in India – importance, challenges and solutions](#)

**Transportation and mobility:** **a)** A network of EVs and charging stations can be created, optimising the availability of the charging infrastructure, and thereby enhancing the cost-

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effectiveness of EVs' ecosystem, **b)** The **massive machinetype communication (mMTC)** feature of 5G can help in integrating initiatives across transit systems, like FASTag for toll and entry tax. This can not only improve efficiency within the transportation sector but also reduce our carbon footprints.

**c)** Using the mMTC and URLLC features, India can reduce the long waiting times and inventory congestion in ports. The deployment of machine vision with software-enabled automatic-guided vehicles can help in better port-space management, **d)** Real-time automated monitoring of public spaces and traffic using city-owned private 5G networks will improve public safety and congestion in India's metro cities.

**Agriculture:** Farms can be equipped with a diverse range of sensors to continuously monitor the factors impacting the health of crops. Even small farmers with little virtual training can improve irrigation efficiency as well as crop yields through 5G.

**Manufacturing and Industry:** 5G private networks will be the cornerstone of industry 4.0. These networks connect an array of IoT (Internet of Things) sensors and devices and automate the scheduling of various processes based on intelligent algorithms.

Such networks can improve efficiency by an estimated 2-4 times while reducing carbon emissions. However, these gains are not limited to the manufacturing sector alone. Any industry that is able to digitise and schedule processes will be able to leverage many benefits of 5G.

**Renewable energy:** energy farms (especially wind and solar) already deploy numerous sensors, but because they are in remote regions, there is a delay in response. With 5G, their response time and efficiency can be radically improved.

**Governance and public safety:** **a)** Service delivery and citizen-engagement efforts can be improved with faster and safer digital identity verification. This will in turn enable faster implementation of direct benefit transfers and other such schemes. **b)** Deployment of IoT-based systems on similar networks, using the network function virtualisation feature of 5G, will improve the efficiency of projects under the Smart Cities Mission.

**Read more:** ["5G Technology" roll-out in India](#)

### GS3 – INDIAN ECONOMY – CRYPTOCURRENCY AND RELATED ISSUES

#### **REGULATION OF CRYPTOCURRENCIES**

##### 21. [On regulating Cryptocurrencies: Bubble in the air](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**Bubble in the air**" published in **The Hindu** on **18th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Economy – Money and Banking

**Relevance:** Regulation of Cryptocurrencies

**News:** Crash in the Crypto market is yet another signal that retail investors are better off investing in this speculative asset class.

Moreover, it also highlights the need for regulation of Cryptocurrencies, without which the retail investors will have no protection from scams.

#### **Crash in the Crypto market**

Bitcoin, the most popular cryptocurrency, has lost over two-thirds of its value since its peak in November last year and has wiped out many retail investors.

Other cryptocurrencies have witnessed even larger losses, with some (Luna) plunging to zero.

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### Why Cryptocurrencies became widely popular?

Cryptocurrencies were initially touted to be **alternatives to fiat currencies**.

Since the supply of a lot of cryptocurrencies is limited by design, investing in them seemed like a **good way to protect one's wealth from inflation fuelled by central banks**.

But as it became obvious that cryptocurrencies have had very little acceptance as money, crypto-enthusiasts began to argue a slightly different case.

Cryptocurrencies were now touted as **an independent asset class** like gold and silver that could serve as an **effective hedge in times of crisis**.

The crash in the crypto market has put to rest the argument that crypto, as an asset class, is as good a hedge as precious metals.

**Easy monetary policy** adopted by central banks has also kept cryptocurrencies rallying despite concerns about their fundamental or intrinsic value.

Easy money from central banks fuelled the rise of a **get-rich-quick industry** that depended on selling to a greater fool.

Just as Internet stocks and tulip bulbs were the hallmarks of liquidity-fuelled bubbles in the past, cryptocurrencies are the leading symbol of the current bubble in markets.

### Way forward

Governments and their central banks have been largely unwilling to recognise cryptocurrencies as a legitimate investment asset.

– They are also unlikely to recognise private cryptocurrencies as they infringe on the state's fiscal and monetary authority.

Yet, to protect retail investors, a proper regulatory framework may help in protecting them from outright scams.

## CRYPTO MARKET CRASH AND RELATED ISSUES

### 22. The reasons behind the crashing crypto market

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**The reasons behind the crashing crypto market**" published in **The Hindu** on **17th June 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Information and Tech

**Relevance:** Cryptocurrency and related issues

**News:** Bitcoin and many other cryptocurrencies have been crashing since they hit an all-time high late last year. Bitcoin has lost more than two-thirds of its value since it hit a peak of around \$69,000 in November last year.

Ethereum, another cryptocurrency popular among investors, has lost almost 80% from its peak.

As a result, the overall market capitalisation of cryptocurrencies has dropped under \$1 trillion for the first time since January 2021.

### Why are cryptocurrencies crashing?

It may not be possible to pinpoint the exact reasons why investors are fleeing cryptocurrencies at the moment.



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Most analysts believe that the **fall in the price of cryptocurrencies is in line with the fall in prices of stocks and other assets** as Central banks such as the U.S. Fed Reserve tighten monetary policy to fight price rise.

– As central banks withdraw liquidity from the market, there's less money chasing assets, which in turn causes the prices of assets to drop.

Others believe that the crash could also mark the **popping of the bubble** that has driven the prices of cryptocurrencies to stratospheric levels.

Sceptics have long argued that the price of cryptocurrencies seems driven more by speculative fervour fuelled by easy monetary policy than by any fundamental factors.

### How do governments view cryptocurrencies?

Some sceptics have also argued that even though private cryptocurrencies can rise to the status of alternatives to fiat currencies over time, **governments and central banks may not allow this to happen.**

Many countries have taken several steps to **discourage the widespread use of cryptocurrencies.**

– While countries such as China and Russia have opted to impose **outright bans** on cryptocurrencies, others such as India have tried to **tax and regulate** them heavily.

**Do cryptocurrencies hold value?** Cryptocurrency enthusiasts argue that cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin have always been subject to extreme price swings, and that the **current crash is a good time to buy these virtual currencies** at a tremendous bargain.

It should be noted that, unlike fiat currencies issued by central banks, the **supply of various cryptocurrencies is limited by design.** By holding their wealth in cryptocurrencies that either maintain their value or even appreciate in value over time, investors can protect themselves against the debasement of their wealth by central banks.

## GS3 – INDIAN ECONOMY – MONETARY POLICY

### INFLATION AND RELATED ISSUES

#### 23. Oil prices are not the real policy challenge for countries like ours

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Oil prices are not the real policy challenge for countries like ours” published in the Live Mint on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 Indian Economy; Issues and challenges pertaining to growth and development

**Relevance:** Monetary Policy, Inflation Targeting

**News:** The US Federal Reserve has raised its federal funds rate by another 75 basis points to tame inflation. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has also raised its policy rate, including an **inter-meeting rate** hike.

#### **Inflation Forecasts**

Recently, India's inflation forecast has been revised from 4.5% to 6.7% in a span of a few months.

#### **What are the reasons for inflation forecast revision?**

A **major geopolitical conflict** that broke out in early 2022 has led to upending of the inflation forecasts globally. Therefore, the RBI was also compelled to take this into account for the inflation forecast.

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Criticisms that RBI has been remiss in meeting its inflation target and treating the upper bound as its central inflation target miss the point of ours.

### Why is the RBI being criticized?

RBI has set the **upper bound** as the **central inflation target**. It is being criticized for **prioritizing growth** over its inflation mandate in the last few years which has led to the present inflationary pressure situation.

### Why is the RBI's criticism not correct?

(A) In the last few years, the Indian economy has faced successive shocks in the last few years. There were

(1) The balance sheets of the financial and non-financial sector had to be repaired substantially over the last decade after the **credit excesses** of the previous boom.

(2) There was a collapse of a large non-banking financial company and housing finance companies.

(3) Thereafter, India has also faced the brunt of the pandemic or the lockdown induced economic slowdown.

(B) It has to be understood that the RBI was not prioritizing growth so much as it was ensuring **macro stability**.

### What is the appropriateness of an inflation-targeting regime?

Monetary policy is a **short-run aggregate demand management tool**. It is not the right instrument to address **supply-side induced inflation**. The central banks have a limited role and effectiveness in dealing with supply-side inflation

The central bank can be blamed for **not suppressing demand** and **economic growth** because **demand compression** is a valid policy option until **supply-side problems** are not fixed. It will alleviate pressure on supply and cools down prices.

The monetary policy has **asymmetric effectiveness**. It cannot generate **inflation** by itself (unless aided by fiscal stimulus and other real factors). But it can be effective in taming inflation. This is because there is no cap on how far rates can rise.

### What are the other challenges?

The US Fed is raising interest rates. It endangers macroeconomic and financial stability in emerging economies.

The US Fed is doing **monetary tightening** after a long period of **extraordinary accommodation**.

### Way Forward

At present, the central banks must focus on broader macro and financial stability, of which inflation is one part

In the current global context, the RBI's monetary policy normalization is important to ensure **macro and financial stability**, orderly conditions in **capital markets** and normal evolution of the **external value of the currency**. It will ensure financing a considerably large current account deficit without disruption.