

**9 PM**

**Compilation**

**4<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**

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# General Studies Paper – 1

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## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of July, (First Week) 2022

### General Studies - 1

#### 1. [Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Maulana Azad show how to deal with hurt religious sentiments](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Maulana Azad show how to deal with hurt religious sentiments” published in The Indian Express on 7th Jul 22.

**Syllabus:** GS1 – Society

**Relevance:** Blasphemy and associated issues

**News:** Muslims find blasphemy an abominable act for which the offender must part with his life. This is a popular narrative but has hardly any Quranic validation and is not consistent with what the Prophet did in his lifetime.

Two widely respected public intellectuals and religious scholars of India, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958) found that the **punishment for blasphemy was not in conformity with the teachings of Islam.**

Their judicious views on blasphemy are invested with the potential to solve the vexed issue.

What are the views of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on blasphemy? The issue of blasphemy repeatedly surfaced in 19th and 20th-century India, and Sir Syed and Azad, known proponents of contrary political ideologies, tried to acquaint Muslims with credible Islamic laws dealing with the matter.

They urged Muslims not to be carried away by emotions. Instead, they said, **a compellingly argued reply to the profanity-filled books or remarks** would be more effective.

– Further, the Quran **did not specify corporal punishment** for such a deplorable act.

One must not take vengeance on behalf of the Almighty or his messenger.

For Sir Syed, blasphemy does not call for violent and loud protest and requires nothing short of a **rational rejoinder**. It means one **responds to books with books, words with words**. Banning or burning books offers no solution (“*kitab ka jawab kitab hai kitab jalana nahi*”).

**Example:** In 1873, Bombay was rocked by a violent clash between Muslims and Parsis, following the publication of the translation of a Persian book allegedly full of disparaging remarks about the Prophet.

Sir Syed responded to the situation by **writing an editorial in his bilingual newspaper**, the Aligarh Institute Gazette, and spelt out what caused communalism in India.

Sir Syed wrote: “*One must not try to settle the issue by himself. The nasty books aimed at denouncing or despising other religions must not find their way; the government must enact stringent laws, and these texts are to be settled with the provisions of the sedition laws.*”

When **Swami Shradhanand’s (1856-1926) book was published**, Maulana Azad, strongly insisted that Muslims should not try to punish the guilty without seeking remedies offered by the Constitution.

Way forward

Sir Syed and Azad’s judicious views on blasphemy are invested with the potential to solve the vexed issue that frequently surfaces in countries where many Muslims live. In India, they are of particular importance.

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2. [India's monsoon faces climate change. Earth needs a 'soft path for water' now](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “India’s monsoon faces climate change. Earth needs a ‘soft path for water’ now” published in The Times of India on 9th July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 1 Salient features of World’s Physical Geography; Distribution of Key Natural Resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian sub-continent);

**Relevance:** Water Availability; Monsoon

**News:** In recent periods, research was released examining the intersection between our global water challenges and other challenges, including climate change, ecosystem impacts, and the failure to provide safe water for all humans.

### **How does climate change (CC) impact water availability?**

Climate change is happening around the world, and some of its most significant impacts will be on water resources. For example, it has altered California’s water availability.

The demand for water will be increased worldwide due to rising temperatures.

Further extreme events, like **floods** and **droughts**, are already becoming more severe.

There is evidence that CC will impact snow and ice around the world, including in the Himalayas. This will affect the water availability.

### **Will climate change impact India’s monsoon as well?**

Scientists are concerned that climate change is making monsoons more erratic. It is affecting the timing and severity of the Indian monsoon.

The monsoon is an integral part of **refreshing India’s water reservoirs**. Therefore, any impact will also alter the water availability in India.

### **Implications of the water challenges**

It will impact peace and security because it would lead to water conflicts worldwide. The number of water conflicts now appears to be increasing.

Historically, the conflicts were restricted between nations but in recent years, the ‘**subnational conflicts**’ has become prominent. For example, the tension over the **Kaveri River in India** or between ethnic groups in Africa over access to water and grazing lands.

The ‘**water poverty**’ or failing to meet the basic needs for everyone to have safe water and sanitation, leads to a lot of problems in human development.

### **What are the causes of water challenges?**

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we followed the ‘**hard path for water**’, For example, building **physical infrastructure** and **overlooking water for ecosystems**.

There is the problem of ‘**Peak water**’, which means we are running up against limits in the water available to us. For instance: (1) the entire flow of the **Colorado river** is consumed in **the US**, and (2) there is a serious problem of **over-drafting of groundwater** in **India, California**, and the **Middle East**.

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

There is an alternative approach called ‘**soft path for water**’ to solve the water challenge. It does not require taking more water out of the natural environment but aims to provide **new water sources** like the reuse of treated wastewater for reuse and storm water capture.

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Further, it also requires more efficient use of water as well as protection of water for natural ecosystems.

**Peak water:** We should not reach peak limits. Water resources should be managed by adopting the soft path.

**Examples of sustainable water management transitions:** These practices should be driven locally and democratically by the communities.

**Singapore Case: It** has adopted water conservation, wastewater treatment and reuse and smart irrigation practices.

**California Case:** Farmers and households are attempting to use water efficiently.

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# General Studies Paper –2

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## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of July, (First Week) 2022

### General Studies - 2

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#### 1. [Breather for NGOs](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “Breather for NGOs” published in *The Indian Express* on 3rd Jul 22.

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

**Relevance:** Regulation of NGO sector and related issues

**News:** The Centre has recently amended the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) rules. These modifications are a welcome step after the escalation of restrictions on the NGO sector since 2015.

What are the modifications introduced?

The government **extended to September 30 the validity of FCRA entities** whose five-year permits would lapse between July 1 and September 30 and had applied or would apply for renewal in this period.

The home ministry has also **raised the limit that entities can receive from relatives abroad** from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 10 lakh without informing the government and has extended the disclosure period for donations above that from 30 to 90 days.

– The **time limit** for applying for FCRA registration or prior permission to receive donations has been **extended** from 30 days to 45 days.

– The requirement on declaring details of foreign donors every quarter has been reduced to once a year. And the stipulation that only 20% of foreign funds could be used for administrative purposes has been extended to 50%.

What are the issues with the changes introduced?

Although these relaxations will go some way towards easing the regulatory burden for NGOs, they **do not significantly improve the ease of operating environment for NGOs**, which are prey to arbitrary rules.

The relaxation of the donation threshold, for instance, from foreign “relatives” is **inadequate**, given the scale of funds that NGOs, especially rights-based ones, need to function efficiently.

Way forward

NGOs and civil society play an important role in a country like India in defending the interests of the poor, the hungry, and the disenfranchised.

Hence, rules that run contrary to the commitments to free speech and the defence of democratic rights are counter-productive for a country’s polity.

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### 2. [There Are Cracks In Brics & Trouble For India](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “There Are Cracks In Brics & Trouble For India” published in Times of India on 4th Jul 22.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – International Relations (IR) – Organizations and Groupings

**Relevance:** BRICS and related issues

**Context:** Amid the evolving geopolitical situation, the BRICS mechanism appears to be undergoing an identity crisis. There is a deepening contradiction at the heart of the grouping, which is likely to result in extremely difficult choices for Indian foreign policy.

What are the major pillars of BRICS?

Historically, the group’s agenda was not just economic, but also political. The addition of South Africa, the only African economy in the G20, to the BRICS in 2010 further underscored this.

Officially, BRICS cooperation has expanded to be premised on the three pillars: **a)** political and security, **b)** economic and financial, and **c)** cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

In practice, it is the **economy and finance pillar**, however, that has done the heavy lifting.

– This is most evident in the establishment of the **New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement**.

– In contrast, the **political and security pillar** has largely under-delivered. Of course, there have been annual meetings of Brics foreign ministers and security advisers since 2009. But those have generally been about reaffirming shared perspectives on global governance issues and coordinating positions on shared concerns.

What is the future outlook for BRICS?

**Beijing-Moscow recalibration**

– Beijing and Moscow appear to be keen to readjust the dynamic between the **economy and security pillars**. Each of the key points in Chinese President Xi Jinping’s speech at the summit underscored this.

– He said that China would like to work with BRICS partners to operationalize the **Global Security Initiative (GSI)**. This is an initiative that Xi outlined in April, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

– The principles that GSI espouses and comments by Chinese officials clearly indicate that it is framed in **opposition to what China believes is an increasingly coordinated effort at containment by the West**, led by the United States.

After the events of the last few months, it is little surprise that this effort has **Moscow’s support**.

**India’s dilemma**

In contrast to those two, the comments by the leaders of India, Brazil and South Africa suggested that the three countries largely continue to view BRICS from the **prism of development** as opposed to security.

In the long run, however, **India faces the possibility of isolation** in this regard. This situation could be exacerbated with the addition of new members.

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As a leading developing country, India cannot appear to be **unsupportive of the aspirations of developing countries**. At the same time, an expanded BRICS with an evidently anti-Western agenda, as envisioned by Xi and Putin, would likely dilute India's influence.

Further, it shall make India's multi-alignment strategy even more untenable.

### 3. [Technology is no panacea for custodial deaths](#)

**Source:** This post is created based on the article "Technology is no panacea for custodial deaths", published in The Hindu on 4th July, 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS Paper 2, Social Issues, Criminal Justice system and issues linked to a vulnerable section in India

**Context:** Technology has been proposed as a silver bullet against custodial deaths by many. However, these solutions are not as effective as they were intended to be.

A recent increase in the custodial deaths in Tamil Nadu has brought the issue of custodial deaths into the limelight.

Between 2001 and 2018, 1,727 persons died in police custody, but only 26 policemen were convicted for such deaths.

Although a huge time and money have been spent on training police personnel to embrace scientific methods of investigation, custodial deaths are still common.

Technological solutions have been suggested as a prevention measure against custodial deaths. Let's see how effective have been these solutions.

#### **What are the technological solutions?**

**Body cameras** could hold officers liable.

**Deception Detection Tests (DDTs)**, such as polygraph, narco-analysis, and brain mapping could detect if the person is hiding some truth.

Among the DDTs, the Brain Fingerprinting System (BFS) has proved helpful for solving crimes, identifying perpetrators, and exonerating innocent suspects.

Robots are being used increasingly for surveillance and bomb detection.

**Robotic interrogation:** Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) researcher Joseph Weizenbaum concluded that suspects might be more receptive to opening up to automated conversational counterparts than the police. Thus, many robotic interrogators are being favored for interrogating suspects.

**AVATAR system:** Researchers at the University of Arizona have created **automated interrogation technology** called The Automated Virtual Agent for Truth Assessments in Real-Time (AVATAR). The Canadian Border Services Agency tested AVATAR last year. The HCI system uses visual, auditory, near-infrared and other sensors to scrutinize a suspect's eye movements, voice, and other qualities throughout an interaction. The aggregation of information and its analysis by the system have been highly accurate.

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**AL and ML:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are emerging as tools for interrogations. ML can in real-time alert superiors when police are meting out inhumane treatment to suspects.

### What are the issues with technological solutions?

In 2010, the Supreme Court, in *Selvi v. the State of Karnataka*, made the evidence inadmissible as the state cannot perform narco analysis, polygraph, and brain-mapping tests, on an individual, without his consent. However, if consent has been acquired, BFS tests can be part of the evidence.

AI or robot interrogations can be subject to the risk of bias, misuse for surveillance, and targeting of individuals and communities.

Although technological solutions might provide comfort and transparency, they can never address the underlying issues that lead to custodial deaths.

### What can be done?

**Formulation of a multi-pronged strategy** by the decision-makers. Which covers legal enactments, technology, accountability, training, and community relations.

**Implementing the Law Commission of India's proposition in 2003 to change the Evidence Act** to place the onus of proof on the police for not having tortured suspects.

Implement the Supreme Court's judgment in the in **D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal (1997) case**. In this judgment, SC held that the use of third-degree methods by police is illegal and should not be used to extract the information from the accused.

Revive and Implement Draft bill on the Prevention of Torture, 2017.

#### 4. [Strains on India-Russia defence cooperation](#)

**Context: The status of India-Russia defense cooperation is under doubt, due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.**

**Syllabus topic: GS Paper 2, International Relations**

**Context: Amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, India-Russia defense cooperation is under threat.**

When the war started in Feb., the Indian armed forces had stocks of spares and supplies for eight to ten months. They expected that war would be over soon and supply from Russia will be resumed, however, it didn't happen. Now, **there are apprehensions about Russia's ability to adhere to the timelines for both spares and new deliveries.**

India is dependent on Russia in the area of air defense, rockets, missiles, and certain tanks.

Indian defence officials have stated that due to delays in timelines, there would not be any dent in the Army's operational preparedness along the borders, especially the Line of Actual Control. However, India is looking for certain alternative mitigation measures and identifying alternate sources from friendly foreign countries.

### Status of India-Russia defense cooperation

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The **defence trade between India and Russia has crossed \$15 billion since 2018**. It includes some big deals like the \$5.43 billion S-400 long-range air defense systems, construction of four additional stealth frigates in Russia and India, and AK-203 assault rifles among others.

Many other deals such as MiG-29 fighter jets, SU-30 MKI aircraft, and K-226T utility helicopters are under consideration as well.

### **How India-Russia payment system is working after the SWIFT ban?**

India and Russia have agreed to conduct payments through the Rupee-Rouble arrangement. This mechanism is being used for making small payments. However, work is on to resolve larger payments.

### 5. [Why is defection a non-issue for voters?](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Why is defection a non-issue for voters?” published in the “The Hindu” on 4th July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS2 Important Provisions of the Constitution of India; Functioning of the Legislature

**Relevance:** Anti-Defection Law

**News:** Recently, India has seen a political drama in **Maharashtra** in which 37 Shiv Sena legislators were involved in defection.

### **Anti-Defection Laws in India**

It is not new to Indian politics, and has been around for a long time. It is a routine exercise in Indian politics.

There have been several attempts to strengthen laws to curb this menace of defection in politics.

The bill for this menace was first introduced in the **4th Lok Sabha** in 1967. However, it became a law as the **Anti-Defection law** in 1984. Further, the act was amended in 2003 to strengthen the legislation.

### **What are the causes of such a high level of defection in India?**

Indian voters do not have concern about candidates defecting from one political party to another.

There is a **party-centred approach** in voting in India.

– For example, a large majority of Indian voters vote for the party and not for the candidate.

Further, such a voting pattern is prevalent amongst both uneducated and educated voters, amongst urban and rural voters and amongst voters with various degrees of media exposure.

Many **legislators** defect to other parties for **purely personal gains**.

– For example, there would be greater chances of win if elections are contested on the ticket of any “**popular**” political party. It is the party’s ticket and the popularity of its leader that helps them win the election.

Indian voters are divided on what **kind of representatives** they would prefer to vote for.

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– For example, 48% voters are happy to vote for an honest but inaccessible candidate, 24% voters are happy to vote for a candidate who is corrupt but accessible and 36% voters are ready to vote for a candidate with criminal background, but gets works done etc.

### Way Forward

If voters take into **consideration** the merits and demerits of candidates, then many **defectors** and **candidates** with questionable records would fail to make it into Parliament or the Assemblies of different States.

Voters should decide to **choose** the candidate rather than the party during elections. It would push the MLAs/etc. to do work instead of just switching to parties just for electoral gain.

There is a slight increase in **candidate-centred voting** amongst **Indian voters** during the last few years.

– As per the **Lokniti-CSDS's the National Elections Studies**, during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, 58% voters mentioned voting for the party while 33% said they voted for the candidate. However, findings of 2019 Lok Sabha elections, says, 52% voted for the party and 37% voters preferred voting for the candidate.

### 6. [After Ukraine, the new energy disorder](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**After Ukraine, the new energy disorder**” published in the **Indian Express** on **4<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Effects of the policies of developed and developing countries on India's interests

**Relevance:** New Energy Disorder, Impact of the Russia-Ukraine war

**News:** The Ukrainian crisis has radically altered the contours of the **global energy landscape**. It has created a tangle of relationships and issues for India.

#### What are the issues involved?

The petroleum market is tight and prices are ratcheting up. For example, Oil prices are close to \$120/bbl.

India is now a **major purchaser** of Russian crude. It is now **our largest provider** of crude oil surpassing Saudi Arabia and Iraq. India ramped up its imports from Russia because Russia offered price discounts and provided an opportunity as a measure of **good economics** and **energy security**.

Russia and China have signed a “**no limits**” **partnership**. Therefore, China expanded its purchase of Russian oil and gas. Russia has become the largest supplier of petroleum to China. There are doubts, it can act as a client state instead of being **politically autonomous**, if India's relations deteriorate on its border with China.

Our, India's **long-standing “friend”** (Russia) is now in the bad books of our other friends (the US and Europe) and in a deepening relationship with our **adversary** (China).

At present, there is **no executive authority** responsible for energy in India. There are ministries responsible for **components** of energy policy. There is **no formal mechanism** to align their separate approaches.

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### Way Forward

The Gulf Countries have a lot of importance in the reordered **post-Ukraine energy landscape**.

– For example, The US and several other European leaders are looking towards the Gulf for a promise of higher production to lower oil prices and to negotiate gas supply deals to offset the shortfall out of Russia.

Therefore, India should also engage with the **Gulf producers** for **supply security**.

The Gulf countries should stay outside both **orbits, neutral** and **opportunistic**, instead joining the Russia/China group, or moving back into the Western fold.

India should create a mechanism for the **development** and **execution** of an **integrated energy policy**.

The Niti Aayog is well-placed to provide the **intellectual basis** for designing and developing relevant new institutions. It can play an important role in preparing the road map for **developing institutional mechanisms** for facilitating a **“whole of the system approach”** to energy policy.

### [7. The WTO's leaky boat may be our best hope in a storm](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “The WTO's leaky boat may be our best hope in a storm” published in the Live Mint on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 International Organizations

**Relevance:** The Ukraine War and the Rules based International Order

**News:** In recent months, Russia's incursion into Ukraine's sovereign territory has led to new **arrangements in the geo-economic and geopolitical arena**.

#### **What are the new arrangements or consequences?**

The Western academics are arguing that the war spells the end of **a liberal world order regime** that was established since the fall of the Berlin Wall and break-up of the Soviet Union,

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has reactivated many fault-lines that lay dormant in the global economy.

There may be a renewed contestation between the West and poor nations, or even civil wars in **poverty-stricken nations** because the notion of trade in the US and EU is still rooted in an outdated economic orthodoxy.

#### **What are the reasons for such re-arrangement?**

(1) A report of the FAO and the UN's World Food Programme (WFP), titled **Hunger Hotspots**, predicts that around 20 countries will be facing a heightened **food availability crisis** over the next three months.

(2) Although the world was already facing a food emergency before **The Ukraine War**, due to the pandemic and climate change during 2020 and 2021. However, the **Russian aggression** has worsened the case and triggered a major **global food crisis**“.

(3) India and 29 other countries have banned wheat exports after the grain prices skyrocketed globally. India saw **wheat production falling** short of forecasts and total food grain stocks dipping

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### What are the challenges to India's wheat export ban decision?

Seven WTO members—including the US, Japan, the EU and UK, have raised concerns over India's export bans at the WTO's first agriculture meeting after MC12.

The **Western leadership** has undermined India's attempts to ensure food security for its citizens. This food security is done through **subsidies** at both the production and consumption stages at the WTO forum. For example, The US Congressmen want to register formal objections at the WTO against **India's trade-distorting agricultural policies**.

The formula being used to determine whether these subsidies are within permissible limits is based on outdated data.

All attempts made by India and other developing countries to seek a permanent solution have failed so far.

### Other related challenges

These advanced nations put **private profit** ahead of public health in times of global crisis.

For example, rich nations refused to relax **intellectual property rights (IPR)** for global vaccine distribution at the height of the pandemic when India and South Africa proposed such a **covid occasioned relaxation**.

### Way Forward

The WTO's role has become non-negotiable, given the severe food crisis confronting the planet. Therefore, the multilateral platforms like the World Trade Organization (WTO) hold out the best chance of confronting these challenges for the sake of developing countries.

At the **WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference, or MC12**, it agreed that India and the others will supply wheat to the WFP, while being allowed to meet their domestic food security needs.

At the MC12, the developing countries were allowed to produce and sell patented vaccines, both in the domestic and international markets

India should continue to defend India's decisions at **plurilateral meetings**, including in the media.

India' should create a **coalition of developing nations** on multilateral platforms in order to oppose the resistance..

### 8. [C Raja Mohan writes: With China's expanding influence, Asia is also seeking to diversify its security partnerships](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**C Raja Mohan writes: With China's expanding influence, Asia is also seeking to diversify its security partnerships**" published in **The Indian Express** on **5th Jul 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – International Relations

**Relevance:** Impact of Chinese expansionism on Asia's security relations

**News:** One of the many interesting features of last week's summit of NATO in Madrid was the significant **Indo-Pacific presence**.



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For the first time, the prime ministers of Australia, Japan, and New Zealand as well as the president of South Korea participated in a NATO summit.

The Russian and Chinese actions have helped to consolidate old alliances and give birth to new security coalitions in Asia.

How has NATO's view of Russia and China evolved?

### **Previously**

More than a decade ago, in 2010, when NATO agreed on a strategic doctrine, it was discussing it with its Russian partners. There was no reference to China in the 2010 strategic concept.

At that time, the West was trying to **deepen ties with Russia** and build expansive economic cooperation with China.

### **Present**

In the backdrop of the Ukraine war, NATO has declared Russia "*the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area*".

– NATO is determined to cope with the Russian threat.

The new focus on Russia has not meant ignoring the China problem. NATO has declared that China's "*stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security, and values.*"

How has the Russia-Ukraine conflict impacted NATO?

Russia's actions in Ukraine have re-energized NATO, with its members promising to do more for security and more countries in Europe joining it as new members.

– **Germany**, which has long sought good political and commercial relations with Russia, has agreed to raise its defense spending and do more for European security.

– **Sweden** and **Finland** have ended their historic neutrality and decided to join NATO.

– **The US** is doubling down on its military commitments to Europe.

Why smaller European states are inclined to join NATO?

Most Central European states don't want to rely purely on a European response to the Russian challenge.

They suspect France and Germany are more likely to accommodate Moscow at their expense than stand up to Russia.

For the Central Europeans, it is the US that offers a real balance against Russia.

This turning of European countries towards NATO is similar to India's own turn to the Quad, which was a direct consequence of Chinese actions on the disputed bilateral frontier.

Has Asian NATO started to take shape?

The new engagement with NATO does not mean that we now have "Asia in NATO". Nor is there any prospect of an "Asian NATO"— the creation of a pan-Asian military alliance.

Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand will not become formal members of the European military alliance.

Developing deeper institutional military ties to NATO is **only one element of the Asian strategy** to improve deterrence against Chinese aggression.

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**The creation of more sophisticated national military capabilities** has been the first priority of some of Beijing's neighbors.

**Resolving mutual differences and strengthening security cooperation** — for example between Japan and South Korea — has been another.

**Boosting bilateral alliances** with the US is yet another.

Way forward

Even as nations in the region reboot ties with the US, Asia is also seeking to **diversify its security partnerships**.

This has led to **greater Asian engagement with Europe** as well as the creation of new Indo-Pacific regional institutions – including the Quad, and the AUKUS.

Due to the expansionism of Russia and China, the **strategic integration of the Asian and European geopolitical theatres** has now begun.

### 9. [Vasudev Devadasan writes: The conflict between free speech and consent](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Vasudev Devadasan writes: The conflict between free speech and consent**” published in **The Indian Express** on **5th Jul 22**.

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

**Relevance:** Sharing of non-consensual intimate images

**News:** The Delhi High Court in **Mrs. X v Union of India** is confronted with a familiar problem. A woman whose nude photos were shared online without her consent approached the Court to block this content.

The case highlights the need for courts, law enforcement, and technology platforms to have a coordinated response to the sharing of non-consensual intimate images (NCII) online.

What are the legal provisions wrt NCII in India?

Publishing NCII is a **criminal offence** under the Information Technology Act 2000.

The **Intermediary Guidelines 2021** provide a partial solution. They empower victims to **complain directly to any website** that has allowed the uploading of non-consensual images or videos of a person in a state of nudity or engaging in a sexual act.

– This includes content that has been digitally altered to depict the person as such. The website must remove the content within 24 hours of receiving a complaint, or risk facing criminal charges.

What are the associated issues?

**Issue with intermediary guidelines:** The approach listed in these guidelines **relies on victims identifying and sharing every URL** hosting their intimate images.

– Further, the same images may be re-uploaded at different locations or by different user accounts in the future.

– While the Intermediary Guidelines do encourage large social media platforms to proactively remove certain types of content, the **focus is on child pornography and rape videos**.

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– Victims of NCII abuse have few options other than lodging complaints every time their content surfaces, forcing them to approach courts.

Efforts by tech companies to tackle spread of NCII

Meta recently built a tool to curtail the spread of NCII ([www.stopncii.org](http://www.stopncii.org)).

– The tool relies on a “**hashing**” technology to match known NCII against future uploads. The victim’s private images stay with them, with only the hash being added to a database to guard against future uploads.

Similar technology is already used against child-sex abuse material (CSAM) with promising results.

What are the concerns associated with use of image matching tech?

Image-matching technology could be used for **surveillance** or to simply remove unpopular (but not illegal) content from the internet.

– The CBI has already reportedly asked Microsoft to deploy its “**PhotoDNA**” tool (an image-matching software built to identify CSAM) for investigatory purposes.

The use of automated tools also raises **free speech concerns** that lawful content may accidentally be taken down. Automatic filters often ignore context. Content that may be illegal in one context may not be illegal in another.

Way forward

If well-designed and administered, other websites could eventually **use Meta’s NCII hash database** to identify illegal content they may be unwillingly hosting.

– Victims could report NCII abuse at a centralised location and have it taken down across a range of websites.

The government can also play a role in **facilitating a redressal mechanism**.

– For example, **Australia** has appointed an “**e-Safety Commissioner**”. He receives complaints against NCII and coordinates between complainants, websites, and individuals who posted the content – with the Commissioner empowered to issue “removal notices” against illegal content.

The government’s reported overhaul of the IT Act is an opportunity to develop a **coordinated response to NCII-abuse** that will provide victims meaningful redress without restricting online speech.

Going forward, courts may consider tasking a state functionary or independent body with verifying the URLs and coordinating with online platforms and internet service providers.

– If courts direct platforms to take down NCII, they should only do so where the NCII-content will be illegal in every foreseeable context.

### 10. [India needs to scale up direct nutrition interventions](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “India needs to scale up direct nutrition interventions” published in the “The Hindu” on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Social Sector; Health Sector; Poverty and Hunger;

**Relevance:** Hunger and Nutrition; POSHAN 2.0

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**News:** India's is going to celebrate 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence, therefore, it is important to see India's achievements on various fronts as well as areas where India has not performed well.

### India's Achievements

#### About Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition, or POSHAN Abhiyaan 2.0 (or National Nutrition Mission (NNM))

It aims to reduce malnutrition in women, children and adolescent girls. The MOWCD is the nodal Ministry to implement. It aligns with different ministries to work in tandem for the first 1,000 days in life.

It emphasizes on selected high **impact essential nutrition interventions**, combined with **nutrition-sensitive interventions**, which indirectly impact mother, infant and young child nutrition.

#### Key Indicators

As per the **NFHS-5 2019-21**, India has substantially improved in various indicators of women's empowerment as compared to the **NFHS-4 2015-16**. The substantial improvements are:

- (1) Antenatal service attendance (58.6 to 70.0%);
- (2) women having their own saving bank accounts (63.0 to 78.6%);
- (3) women owning mobile phones that they themselves use (45.9 % to 54.0%);
- (4) women married before 18 years of age (26.8 % to 23.3 %);
- (5) women with 10 or more years of schooling (35.7% to 41.0%), and
- (6) access to clean fuel for cooking (43.8 % to 68.6%).

#### Key areas still that still to be addressed even after seven decades of Independence (As per NFHS-5)

(1) There are gaps in **direct nutrition interventions**, like **preconception nutrition, maternal nutrition**, and **appropriate infant and child feeding** between NFHS4 and 5. For example,

(i) Child undernutrition remains high in the first three months. India has 20% to 30% undernutrition even in the first six months of life.

(ii) There has only been a marginal improvement in the practice of **exclusive breastfeeding (EBF)**. This has been despite the fact that there is a policy on infant and young child feeding, and also, there is a ban on sale of commercial milk for infant feeding.

(2) There are gaps in **other nutrition intervention**, like, **complementary feeding practices**, i.e., complementing semi-solid feeding with continuation of breast milk from six months onwards. This has been due to **lack of awareness** to start feeding at six to eight months etc.

#### What are the implications of poor nutrition?

It adversely impacts health, survival and diminishes the learning capacity, and leads to poor school performance.

In adulthood, it means reduced earnings and increased risks of chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity.

#### Way Forward

The government should create awareness at the right time with the right tools and techniques. For example, special care should be given in the first 1,000 days.

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The POSHAN 2.0 should be given a push like was done to Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan (SBA). For example, PM can use his 'Mann Ki Baat' programme to focus on the scheme.

The POSHAN 2.0 implementation agency should be overhauled to remove any flaws in its implementation.

The government should revisit the **Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)** which is the nodal system for nutrition programme.

The **supplementary nutrition** supplied under ICDS can be alternatively supplied through the PDS as **Take- Home Ration packets**. Further, the ICDS anganwadi workers can be freed to undertake timely counselling on appropriate maternal and child feeding practices.

The government should combine the human resource of ICDS and health sector from village to the district and State levels to delivery of services in the first 1000 days of life.

The government should create awareness on EBF. A **well-planned breastfeeding** counselling should be given to pregnant women during antenatal check-up prior to delivery. The government should promote the technique of **appropriate holding, latching and manually emptying** the breast for the optimal transfer of breast milk to a baby.

### 11. A chaotic world, the perils of multilateralism

**Source:** The post is based on an article "A chaotic world, the perils of multilateralism" published in the "The Hindu" on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

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

**Relevance:** Bilateralism and Multilateralism

**News:** Recently, a Quad summit, a BRICS summit and a G-7 summit were convened across the world. The world leaders exchanged ideas for seeking common ground on burning issues and recalibrating policy accordingly.

#### **What are the challenges to multilateral negotiations?**

Multilateral negotiations have become increasingly difficult in the present chaotic global. These organizations have failed to make good attempts for **collective bargaining**.

#### **BRICS**

The BRICS's joint statement did not indicate the beginning of a new relationship within BRICS. Its joint statements 2022 incorporated diverse statements rather than a real joint statement.

China attempted to hijack the grouping in its **14th virtual BRICS summit**. Surprisingly, the BRICS was not meant to be a political grouping when it was established.

Russia and China are **two permanent members** of the United Nations Security Council (UNSCs). However, India, South Africa and Brazil are aspiring to become permanent membership. **China strongly opposes any expansion** of the permanent membership of the UNSC.

The BRICS members like India and China have **border disputes**. For example, China is trying to change the Line of Actual Control (LAC). It has halted the process of disengagement from certain sectors after Galwan Dispute.

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The BRICS **failed to determine the dynamics of the future course in the Indo-Pacific**. For example, Both China and Russia do not favour even the change of nomenclature of the region from Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific.

Russia and China have come **close** to each other since the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. Now, Russia is **legally obliged** to take the Chinese side in any future showdown between India and China. Russia is engaged in the war and China has failed to disengage from areas occupied in 2020. Both try to support each other at present.

China is **unilaterally trying to expand the BRICS grouping**. It has brought **13 like-minded countries** for a high-level dialogue on global development in the recently concluded summit.

### The G7

In the G7 Summit 2022, the members were preoccupied with its increasing involvement in the war through supply of money, sophisticated weapons, etc. It failed to produce any results on other major issues like climate change etc.

### Way Forward

India should continue to participate in the grouping as the meeting provides the opportunity to interact with world leaders

Bilateral engagements may be much more productive at this point in history. India should work bilaterally with potential allies.

India can attain the status of a pole in the new world with steadfast friends and followers.

### 12. [Shanthie Mariet D'Souza writes: A balancing act — In re-establishing Indian presence in Afghanistan, timing and tact are crucial](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “A balancing act in re-establishing Indian presence in Afghanistan, timing, and tact are crucial” published in the Indian Express on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – International Relations; Bilateral Relations

**Relevance:** India-Afghanistan Relations

**News:** Recently, India has re-established its **diplomatic presence** in Afghanistan, after a strategic retreat from Kabul following the Taliban takeover in August 2021.

### **India's engagement with Afghanistan Since Taliban Takeover**

Even after the closure of its consulates and embassy, India has never abandoned Afghanistan.

India has continued to express concerns about the **humanitarian crisis** in the country and it has built **regional consensus** about the threat of terrorism

It has voiced its support for an **inclusive government**, and it has also provided **aid and assistance** to the people of Afghanistan. This has been in accordance to the **Agreement on Strategic Partnership (ASP)** 2011.

### **Recent efforts of India**

(1) India sent a small technical team to Kabul to deal with the humanitarian crisis following the earthquake in Paktika and Khost provinces.

(2) India handed over relief materials for earthquake victims, to the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) in Kabul.

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(2) In addition, India has also reopened its embassy in Afghanistan.

**Significance:** It is a signal that New Delhi is back to retrieve its **lost leverage** in Afghanistan since Taliban takeover.

The moves have the potency of securing many of **India's strategic interests** in the long-term strategy.

### Why has India changed its stand?

(1) There is a realisation that the Taliban regime is there to stay and would not be dislodged from power at least in the near-medium term. Therefore, India decided to build a working relationship.

(2) There is a belief that India should not complete detach, rather, it should engage to secure India's huge **strategic interests** in Afghanistan. India should win over the moderates in Taliban and dilute the agenda of the hardliners. It should do business with the **Islamic Emirate of the Taliban** instead of turning it **anti-India** as was done in 1996 when India shut its embassy for five long years.

(3) New Delhi should not wait for an **elusive international consensus** to engage with Taliban. The Western world is preoccupied with the Ukraine war. Further, Indian adversaries may use this time for their advantage and to **restart proxy warfare**.

### Way Forward

The Afghanistan earthquake provides a reason for India to revisit its **11-month-old policy**. Its if important for both sides to engage.

The Taliban has followed up with **two back-to-back statements** on strengthening its defence relationship with New Delhi. It has also offered to give back jobs to the former members of the **Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF)** who were trained in India.

However, while smoothening relationship with Taliban, India needs to **tread cautiously**. India should keep the **people of Afghanistan** and not the current regime, at the **centre** of its declared **Afghan policy**. It means, the **legitimacy and acceptance of the Taliban** by the Afghan people should be the fulcrum of any such engagement.

### For Taliban

Taliban should strive towards an **inclusive government** and frame a **comprehensive long-term policy** to engage with all the stakeholders to ensure that peace and stability return to Afghanistan.

### 13. [The problem with our university vision](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article "The problem with our university visions" published in the "The Hindu" on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 Social Sector; Education Sector

**Relevance:** Higher Education reforms

**News:** Recently, the global ranking systems such as the coveted QS World University Rankings were announced for the international rankings of higher education institutions (HEI).

### The NEP 2020 Vision

It has envisaged all HEIs to become multidisciplinary institutions by 2040.

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It aims to ensure that there is at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in or near every district by 2030. It means that **single-stream specialised institutions** will eventually be phased out.

### About the QS World University Rankings 2022

It has ranked HEIs on the following components: (i) academic reputation (40%), (ii) employer reputation (10%), (iii) faculty student ratio (20%), (iv) citations per faculty (20%), (v) international faculty ratio (5%) and (vi) international student ratio (5%).

### Performance of Indian HEIs in International Ranking

(1) Firstly, number of Indian institutes among the top 1,000 globally has risen to 27 from 22 last year

(2) The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, has moved up 31 places to emerge as the highest ranked Indian institute in the 2023 edition,

(3) The Institutes of Eminence (IOE) dominated in the top 500 in the QS World University Rankings comes as no surprise. They performed well because they are granted more academic and administrative autonomy. Further, public IOEs get additional funding.

### Issues of Concern

The **prominent multidisciplinary universities** such as JNU, Delhi University, the University of Hyderabad, and Jamia Millia Islamia have slipped in the QS World University Rankings.

However, **single-stream specialised HEIs** such as the Indian Institutes of Technology and IISc have performed better than their multidisciplinary counterparts. For example, 8 IITs are placed among the top 500 globally, in addition to IISc, Bangalore.

### Other Important issues in HEIs in India?

There is an unequal and unfair system in the Indian higher education system. The State-sponsored HEIs are provided step-motherly treatment. They are positioned poorly vis-à-vis centrally funded institutions.

The central HEIs institutions get **generous allocation** of financial resources from the Indian Government. However, the financial support provided by State governments to State HEIs is far from adequate. They barely manage to pay salaries and pensions. This has been despite the fact that the number of under-graduate students is largest in State public universities.

Therefore, **Centre** perform better than their **State-sponsored counterparts** on all academic performance indicators — faculty strength, modernised laboratories, building infrastructure, digitised libraries, etc. Therefore, the **academic and administrative infrastructure** of the State-level HEIs has not been strengthened. For example, faculty positions are not filled, quality of teaching and research in HEIs has worsened.

### Way Forward

For India to perform better on these rankings, we need to pay more attention to the State HEIs.

The Indian government should revisit the **NEP focus** on the multidisciplinary HEIs in the coming years because the specialised HEIs have performed well over multidisciplinary institutions in the QS World Rankings.

All HEIs should not be converted into multidisciplinary institutions. No study or data support the idea of transforming all the specialised institutions into multidisciplinary/multi-faculty universities.



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India should develop our higher education system while taking into account Indian conditions and market demands.

### 14. [As students gear up for university, the devil is in the NEP's details](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**As students gear up for university, the devil is in the NEP's details**” published in “**Indian Express**” on **6<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

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

**Relevance:** To understand the challenges associated with the National Education Policy.

**News:** Along with the rest of the world, India has seen the “massification” of higher education over the past two decades. The [National Education Policy 2020 \(NEP\)](#) is poised to transform Indian higher education. But, the sweeping changes the NEP brings might not likely to provide the desired outcomes.

**Read more:** [One year of National Education Policy – Explained, pointwise](#)

How does the NEP plans to transform Indian higher education?

The NEP's core objective for higher education is to make it “holistic and multidisciplinary education” (HME). The NEP ties the goal of HME to three specific reforms: **a)** A four-year undergraduate programme (FYUP); **b)** a “multiple exit/entry system” (MEES); and **c)** a nationwide [Academic Bank of Credit \(ABC\) system](#) for storing and transferring credits.

What are the challenges associated with the NEP?

**FYUP requires justification:** In Europe and the UK, the three-year format is preferred for HME. Given that the three-year format is used in reputed institutions abroad and was already established in India, the change to the FYUP as the universal norm for degrees in general education has the not explained the following,

**a)** Need to shift for three years to FYUP, **b)** challenges associated with the three-year program, and **c)** benefits for students in FYUP.

**MEES has no necessary relationship with the FYUP:** To reap the benefits of MEES, FYUP has to be modified accordingly. For instance, the first year of the FYUP must fulfill the requirements of a standalone certificate course. But it is **impossible to design a single curriculum** that does justice to four different courses.

Since the **existing syllabi are force-fitted into FYUP format**, the most likely outcomes are diluted long courses, lopsided short courses, or both.

**NEP does not address the root cause:** According to the latest NSSO report on education, two-thirds of those in the 18-24 age group who had enrolled in higher education institutions were currently not attending them. The three most common reasons given for not attending are financial constraints, economic activities and domestic activities.

NEP and its multiple exit and entry points will not address these issues. Instead, Multiple exit points will help in renaming drop-outs as certificate or diploma-holders. Short-term credentials will encourage families to withdraw their wards from education, especially women.

**NEP falls prey to global trends in higher education:** Modalities such as credit transfers originated in Europe and the OECD and were promoted by multilateral agreements like the Bologna Process, the Lisbon and Incheon Declarations.

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But all these are designed to solve the European problem of excess capacity in higher education and to expand the catchment area for institutions to ensure their viability.

On the other hand, problems of Indian education are radically different and demand context-sensitive solutions.

**Read more:** [Our National Education policy could yet rescue school students](#)

What should be done to improve HME?

The unprecedented widening of access to higher education in India has failed to reduce inequalities or promote mobility. A far more direct method would be to provide targeted scholarships for students with financial constraints.

### 15. [The rush to overhaul education](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**The rush to overhaul education**” published in **The Hindu** on **5th Jul 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Issues related to development of Education

**Relevance:** Concerns regarding education reforms initiated by the Andhra Govt

**News:** The Andhra Pradesh government’s hurried education reforms are a cause for worry.

The Andhra Education Department has been tasked with implementing a slew of government initiatives in sync with the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, this academic year, starting July 5.

What reforms are being initiated by the Andhra govt?

The Andhra School Education Department is focused on **conceptual learning** instead of rote learning.

Emphasis is being laid not on evaluating the students on a three-hour examination but on their **classroom participation, projects, communication skills, leadership skills** and **extracurricular activities**.

– Training teachers in English

– Mapping Classes 3-5 in primary schools in the government sector to high schools located nearby

– Re-apportion teaching staff

– Implement Section 12(1)(C) of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which mandates private, unaided schools to reserve 25% of seats in entry-level classes for children belonging to weaker sections; and bring select schools under the CBSE syllabus.

**Restructuring programme:** The proposal is to categorise educational institutions into satellite foundational schools comprising

– pre-primary 1 and pre-primary 2

– Foundation schools comprising Classes 1 and 2

– Foundation plus schools with Classes 1 to 5

– Pre-high schools with Classes 1 to 8

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- High schools with Classes 3 to 10, and
- High school plus with Classes 3 to 12.

What are the concerns being raised?

Educationists say there is too much to do and too little time.

They have raised serious concerns about the **“incoherence” of the initiatives**. They worry that **no homework was done** before these initiatives were introduced and that the **reforms lack sound footing**.

The Chief Minister’s **English medium project was set aside by the High Court** and the matter is sub-judice in the Supreme Court.

- Despite this, the State has embarked on training teachers in English. It has also started printing textbooks with lessons in both English and Telugu to facilitate the smooth transition of children to English as a medium of instruction. It also has plans to shift from the State Board to the CBSE in phases.

There is also **confusion about the school restructuring programme**. It is being argued that merging primary classes with high schools would violate the ‘neighbourhood school system’ endorsed by the RTE Act. This would result in a **higher school dropout rate**, especially of girls in remote tribal areas.

The earlier deadline of June 30 for completing the school-mapping exercise has been pushed to July 31. People worry that there will be **confusion if the merger exercise is carried out even as students attend classes in their old schools**.

There’s no clarity on the proposed re-apportionment of the teaching staff, the long-pending transfers, and promotions of teachers.

- Teachers are demanding the repeal of these orders saying they will be overburdened and the quality of education will suffer.

Way forward

Given the formidable challenges, it may take a few years at least for the government to achieve its lofty educational goals.

Its race against time is ill-advised; instead, it would serve everyone well if the process was gradual with all these concerns addressed.

### [16. CARs of foreign policy: Uzbekistan’s troubles are a reminder of Central Asian Republics’ importance to India](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article **“CARs of foreign policy: Uzbekistan’s troubles are a reminder of Central Asian Republics’ importance to India”** published in **The Times of India** on **5th Jul 22**.

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

**Relevance:** India’s foreign policy and related issues

**News:** Last week’s unrest in Uzbekistan’s autonomous region of **Karakalpakstan** that left at least 18 people dead and wounded another 243 should concern India.

Uzbekistan is a key Central Asian Republic that borders Afghanistan.

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What are the reasons behind the protest?

Protests in Karakalpakstan broke out over plans to revise the Uzbek constitution that would change the autonomous region's status and curtail its right to secede. Those plans have now been put on hold.



Source: Researchgate

How have the countries reacted to the situation?

Despite Karakalpakstan's close ties with Russia, **Moscow has backed Tashkent** saying the unrest was Uzbekistan's internal matter.

Why the unrest in CAR is problematic for the entire region?

Islamist extremism here received a second wind with the conflict in Syria. And though regional governments have been largely successful in containing extremist groups, the latter could still take advantage of any social, economic or political turmoil.

That would be bad news given Taliban's return in Afghanistan. **Security implications** stretch all the way to South Asia.

This is precisely why in November 2021 India hosted the **national security advisers of the five CARs** for its regional security dialogue on Afghanistan, and the Prime Minister held a virtual summit with the leaders of these nations earlier this year.

Way forward

India's outreach to the CARs must have a **strong economic component**.

With Uzbekistan, India in 2020 concluded agreements on 15 investment projects for \$3 billion and also extended a line of credit of \$448 million. Plus, both Amity and Sharda universities opened branches in Uzbekistan in 2018.

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Meanwhile, **Kazakhstan is a uranium giant** and **Turkmenistan has the world's fourth-largest gas reserves**. Together, they could fulfil India's energy needs and provide vital connectivity as part of the International North-South Transport Corridor.

But there is also competition in the form of China's growing influence in the region through its Belt and Road Initiative.

India should, therefore, **present itself as a long-term trustworthy partner for the CARs** by supporting regional stability, coordinating on security and actualising transparent, need-based investment projects.

### 17. [Handcuffing, a judicial tap, and the long arm of the law](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article "Handcuffing, a judicial tap, and the long arm of the law" published in the "The Hindu" on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

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

**Relevance:** Fundamental Rights; Handcuffing

**News:** Recently, the Karnataka High Court, in **Suprit Ishwar Divate vs The State of Karnataka**, passed a verdict in which Rs. 2 lakh compensation was awarded to an accused, for handcuffing.

He was handcuffed without recording the reasons in the police case diary.

#### **What are the principles of handcuffing?**

There can be **three different occasions** when a person can be legally handcuffed,

- (1) An accused on his arrest and before he is produced before the magistrate;
- (2) An under-trial prisoner during transit from jail to the court and back; and
- (3) A convict being transported from jail to the court and back.

If a person is under the **judicial custody** of the court, the court's permission is required for handcuffing except under emergent circumstances.

#### **Circumstances**

An accused need not be handcuffed on arrest, in **normal circumstances**. Further, the officers are allowed to resort to handcuffing only under **exceptional circumstances**.

In **Prem Shankar Shukla vs Delhi Administration (1980)**, the SC held that the norm should be that the security of an arrestee or a convict be increased to prevent him/her from escaping. However, the **handcuffing** can be allowed only when the escape of the arrestee or a convict cannot be prevented without the use of handcuffs.

In case of **handcuffing**, the arresting officer must record the reasons in the police diary.

Further, the court must inquire with the person arrested as to whether he had been handcuffed or not. It will be the duty of the court to do judicial/court scrutiny of the recorded reasons and then approve or reject the reason.

#### **On compensation**

There is a strict liability for violating the guaranteed basic and indefeasible rights of the citizens.

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If there is an **‘established infringement’** of the **fundamental right** (FR) guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

The constitutional courts are empowered to grant such relief **‘against the state or its servants in the purported exercise of their powers’**.

### **Who should pay such compensation?**

In the Supreme Court has ruled that in case of violation of the FR, the **state (and not the concerned officer) has to pay the compensation.**

This was on the ground that the police officers are not personally liable for such acts. They act in their official capacity.

### **Argument in favor of handcuffing**

It has been found there is a lack of manpower, in **police stations** or a **reserve police line** to provide **sufficient escort** to jail authorities while transporting the **under-trial prisoners to court.**

In addition, it is difficult at times to predict the conduct of an arrestee on the spot. For example, as per the **NCRB publication on ‘Crime in India- 2020’**, there were around 810 cases of prisoner escape from police custody in 2020. Most of them were not due to negligent police officers.

Therefore, handcuffs are generally done to prevent escape and not to dehumanise criminals.

### **What are the possible solutions?**

In case if malice is found behind the use of handcuffs, the department should **initiate disciplinary action** against the **errant officer** under service conduct rules, rather than to **order the payment of compensation.**

### **The Karnataka HC Judgment**

The blame of non-compliance cannot be shifted only to the police officer because there is an absence of the required infrastructure. It is the **state’s responsibility** to equip all police stations with adequate and necessary **police personnel** to discharge their obligations.

The State governments should review the mobility of the police. It should review the requirement of **additional manpower** and **technical gadgets**, such as body cameras.

The enforcement agencies and lower courts are duty bound to implement, in letter and spirit, the Supreme Court’s directives on handcuffing.

### 18. Rule of law, anyone?

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Rule of law, anyone?” published in the Business Standard on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS2 Basic Features of the Constitution of India

**Relevance:** The rule of law

**News:** In recent months, there have been various cases across the world, in which the violation of the rule of law has been seen. It means the rule of law does not work in all circumstances.

**A few examples will prove that point.**

**Global Level**

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(1) The US Supreme Court over-ruled a half-century-old law that made abortion a part of women's rights.

(2) Swedish PM said that their integration had failed because mainstream Swedish society and its immigrant citizens lived in "parallel societies". And there was a case of Muslim groups who rioted over alleged blasphemy by one politician,

(3) In 2018, former German chancellor Angela Merkel acknowledged that there were no-go zones, referred to Muslim ghettos in some cities, for the law enforcement agencies.

### India

In India, in some states, the vigilante groups take the laws, which do not allow cow slaughter or the transportation of bovine animals without permits, in their hand.

### What are the important conditions for working on the rule of law across the world?

**First**, there must be a very strong **group of interests** that must want the law legislated and enforced.

**Second**, the state itself must be powerful enough to be able to do so.

**Third**, when societies change, the law must be **flexible** enough to quickly change too. But when large communities live in "parallel" universes, this change will not happen fast enough.

**Fourth**, when different **social groups** exist and cannot agree on what the law should be, the rule of law cannot work. In this situation, these groups should come to **agreements** before making the laws.

### What are the challenges to the rule of law?

#### In general

The laws made through a process of **one-sided concessions** result in more bad blood between communities rather than peace and amity.

#### Global Example

The **Non-proliferation treaty** is not respected by various countries including India because it was a one-sided treaty.

### India

The founding fathers of the Indian Republic, made one sided concessions or non-reciprocal concessions. Therefore, the laws enshrined into the **Constitution** or the **Indian Penal Code** are dead letters. Every community does not agree upon various laws. Therefore, they don't cooperate in their implementation. For example, Hindus and Muslims don't agree on the cow slaughter ban etc.

#### Way Forward

The contentious laws work best when they are **negotiated** and **reciprocal** in nature.

There has to be **community-level negotiation** based on give and take, for laws to work. For example, If Hindus and Muslims agree that there will be no ban on cow slaughter, i.e., a concession by Hindus, then there has to be a significant **reciprocal concession** made by Muslims for any agreement to be honoured.

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The rule of law must be backed by all groups and communities based on reciprocity and give and take.

### 19. [The way to control tuberculosis](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “The way to control tuberculosis” published in the “The Hindu” on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

**Relevance:** Revised National TB Control Programme (RNTCP)

**News:** In recent years, WHO revised its target of TB elimination to 2035. Further, the Prime Minister also announced that India would eliminate TB by 2025.

#### **Threat posed by TB**

As per WHO, Tuberculosis is the worst among **endemic diseases**. It kills **1.5 million people** every year. It affects adults in their **most productive years**. As a result, it **impoverishes** the family and the nation.

India is the **TB capital of the world**. In a gross estimate, it kills some 1,400 persons every day in India.

#### **History of India's TB control measures**

In the 1950s and '60s, India was the global leader in **research** in **epidemiology, transmission** and **domiciliary** treatment of TB.

In 1962, the government adopted **the National TB Control Programme**. It was a **district-based initiative** which strived to control TB with public-private participation.

Later on, the Indian government adopted the WHO's **Revised National TB Control Programme (RNTCP)**

#### **What are the flaws in the RNTCP programme which is being implemented in India?**

The programme has been proved unsuccessful and the programme failed to control TB.

It has been developed with the help of a **theoretical construct** of **TB control**. It does not factor in the differences between the **TB epidemiology of poor** and **rich countries**.

In India, there is no prescribed method of monitoring the trajectory of TB control.

Till now, the Indian policy makers have assumed that **treating pulmonary TB patients** alone would control TB. However, it was an **epidemiologically fallacious** decision in India.

The programme has failed to **elicit people's partnership** in TB control. Without **people's informed participation**, there will be stigma and delay in seeking help to control TB.

#### **Way Forward**

Before the **National AIDS Control Organization** was established, the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** used to work on it. It set up an **AIDS Control Task Force** which had a unique method of monitoring the control trajectory, popularly called '**sentinel surveillance**'. India can adopt the same method today.



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India should design its **own comprehensive strategy** and point out the flaws in the **WHO-designed RNTCP**.

The government should focus on early diagnosis and treatment of the TB patients in order to curb TB through **'source reduction'**.

India should adopt its earlier **AIDS Control Programme**, in which public education was given high priority. For example, red ribbon clubs were established in schools and colleges.

In order to **control TB**, in addition to the **specific interventions**, the government should also work upon interventions such as the **'secular trend'**, for example, better housing, nutrition, education and income. Such 'secular trend' has reduced the burden of TB by 1% or 1.5% per year, globally.

The policy makers should first focus on a **high level of control** over the TB Cases rather than **elimination** (refers to **achieving zero frequency** of new cases). This is because India has a huge backlog of latent TB and it is not possible to eliminate TB in near future.

India should leverage **Trained State and District TB officers**, extensive network of **TB clinics** and an **army of community** and field workers.

### 20. [Greening better: NGT is a vital cog in environment regulation but it needs a performance review & better staffing](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **"Greening better: NGT is a vital cog in environment regulation but it needs a performance review & better staffing"** published in **"The Times of India"** on **6<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

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

**Relevance:** To understand the challenges faced by NGT.

**News:** Given the rampant ecological degradation and related localised grievances, an adjudicatory body(NGT) staffed with judicial and technical experts having significant powers offers a lot of promise. However, many of the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** orders are being appealed in Supreme Court and high courts.

What are the few recent instances?

A construction firm complained that it wasn't heard before NGT imposed a penalty of Rs 40 crore on it. In that case, the Supreme Court criticised the NGT for passing "mechanical and pre-drafted" orders.

Another SC bench expressed displeasure with NGT's tendency to set up expert committees. The bench noted that NGT's adjudicatory functions cannot be delegated in this manner.

**Read more:** [SC empowers green tribunal to initiate action on its own](#)

What are the challenges faced by NGT?

**Lack of political support:** Some of NGTs big-bang orders include de-registering 10-year-old diesel vehicles, bans on firecrackers, RO-water purifiers and sand-mining, etc. But these had minimal impact in the absence of political support.

**Staffing issues:** Against NGT Act's mandate to have 10-20 judicial and expert members each, NGT presently has seven judicial and six expert members. In 2019, these numbers were down to four and two respectively. This resulted in **increasing backlogs and hasty disposals**.

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**Judicial intervention:** Hasty disposals resulted in increasing stays against NGT orders from SC and HCs, especially in clearing or blocking projects. Thus eroding NGT's credibility.

**Challenges with virtual mode:** NGT was one of the pioneers of virtual hearings, but lawyers say the lack of physical interface has affected NGT's ability to make a more urgent cases before the bench.

Apart from that, NGT has also struck between the **"development vs environment" debate**.

**Read more:** [NITI Aayog study to track "Economic Impact of Green Verdicts"](#)

NGT must get the support it needs from the government but NGT must also do more to avoid backlogs and hasty disposals. This can be done by conducting a performance review of NGT & providing better staffing.

### 21. [Twitter's legal challenge to Centre's takedown orders flags issues of free speech](#)

Source: This post is based on the article "Twitter's legal challenge to Centre's takedown orders flags issues of free speech" published in The Indian Express on 7th Jul 22.

Syllabus: GS2 – Govt policies and interventions

Relevance: Digital India, Free speech

**News:** As the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MEITY) conducts a week-long celebration to mark eight years of the Digital India program, Twitter has filed a writ petition in the Karnataka High Court against it.

It is representative of a **Faustian bargain of digitization** that promises financial and social benefits when we give up our civil and political rights.

Digital connectivity has increased manifold in India over the years. But, is mere connectivity enough to fulfill the democratic promises of the Constitution?

Why has Twitter gone to court?

Twitter has been prompted to go to court to protect the integrity of its platform, rather than in arrogant defiance against the laws of India.

– As per parliamentary data, the **number of such orders has risen** from 471 in 2014 to 9,849 in 2020 representing a 1991 percent increase (Unstarred Question 1788).

What are the issues involved?

**A comprehensive qualitative assessment of such orders is prevented by official secrecy.** The need for disclosure emerges directly from a joint reading of the [Shreya Singhal](#) and [Anuradha Bhasin judgments](#).

– Through a voluntary mechanism, Twitter sporadically uploads the specific web addresses included in blocking orders to the **Lumen Database**, a project that houses legal complaints and requests for the removal of content. This is a transparency practice not followed by any other social media company operating in India.

From a citizens' rights perspective, however, the need to **rely on a voluntary mechanism is a cause for concern**. It is also unsustainable, as it may eventually come under threat.

Another persisting issue has been the **failure to provide a prior show-cause notice and opportunity to the actual users** whose web content is blocked.

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– Take the case of Tanul Thakur, a journalist who in his free time made a satirical website to parody the social evil of dowry. His website was **blocked without any notice** provided to him, and the blocking order itself was never provided. Even after approaching the Delhi High Court, MEITY only provided the order to him and his lawyers.

– Another instance is when Sushant Singh, an actor, author, and presenter, was blocked without any order being served on him. He had to approach the Bombay High Court for redress.

There are **regulatory proposals to increase government control** over the internet. In a recently concluded public consultation to amend the Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 injuries to free expression and privacy are being reinforced.

– A draft of the amendments proposes the **appointment of a Grievance Appellate Committee (GAC)** as a government body that would hear appeals against the decisions of social media platforms to remove or not remove content.

– The draft amendments state that the GAC will be a government-appointed body, but do not state whether this body will grant a right of hearing to content creators or even publish its orders.

What are the concerns with GAC?

**Firstly**, the executive-constituted committee will make the central government (instead of, ideally, an independent judicial or a regulatory body) the arbiter of permissible speech on the internet.

– It would incentivise social media platforms to suppress any speech that may not be palatable to the government, public officials, or those who can exert political pressure.

**Secondly**, it will empower the government to censor speech on grounds not stated under Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000 or Article 19(2) of the Constitution.

– Hence, the government may even bypass the need to issue blocking orders, and instead, decide to crowdsource censorship.

### 22. Unleashing the ropeways

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Unleashing the ropeways**” published in **Business Standard** on **6th Jul 22**.

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

**Relevance:** Govt’s vision of Ropeways as transportation solutions

**News:** Union Finance minister made a pointed reference in her Budget speech about ropeways, not merely as tourist attractions, but also as transportation solutions.

It is noteworthy that the government’s vision of “ropeways as transportation solutions” covers congested urban areas and river-crossings too.

What did Union Finance Minister say about ropeways in her budget speech?

The minister stated that –

– Parvatmala, or the National Ropeways Development Programme, is a preferred ecologically sustainable alternative to conventional roads in difficult hilly areas.

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- It will be taken up in PPP (public-private partnership) mode. The aim is to improve connectivity and convenience for commuters, besides promoting tourism.
- This may also cover congested urban areas, where a conventional mass transit system is not feasible. Contracts for eight ropeway projects for a length of 60 km will be awarded in 2022-23.

What are examples of some ropeway projects across the globe?

### **Colombia**

- On urban connectivity, getting acclaim internationally is **Colombia's largest public works project** — the new mass transit cable car service in the capital city of Bogota.
- It connects high points of two of the city's low-income neighbourhoods. It is able to transport 3,600 passengers per hour and benefits 700,000 residents who are now able to make a trip in 10 minutes that earlier took 60-90 minutes.

### **India**

- India has its iconic project across the **Brahmaputra river**. In the summer of 2020, a 1.8 km ropeway was commissioned, making it the longest river ropeway in the country.
- Thousands of people commute every day between Guwahati and North Guwahati. The ropeway enables travel in 10 minutes — a journey that otherwise takes 45 minutes by ferry, or over an hour by road.

What are different types of ropeways?

Passenger ropeways are classified according to their operational characteristics. The more common forms are aerial tramways, gondolas, funiculars, and chair lifts.

Advantages of ropeways

As a transportation alternative, they present clear advantages, with reference to specific terrains.

- **a)** lower land acquisition costs, **b)** environmentally friendly and **c)** contrary to popular belief, can handle volumes. A robust ropeway can carry up to 10,000 passengers an hour — the equivalent of 200 busloads, **d)** Ropeways can handle steep gradients, **e)** Optimal use of land – In urban settings, ropeways need only narrow-based vertical supports at intervals. This leaves the rest of the ground free.

Which ministry has been tasked with dev of ropeways?

The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)** has been made responsible for the development of ropeways and alternative mobility solutions.

It thus now has the responsibility for crafting a regulatory regime for the sector, including issues related to choice of technology, safety and operational guidelines.

Within MoRTH, an in-house subsidiary, the **National Highways Logistics Management Ltd (NHLML)**, has been assigned to undertake all the work related to the development of ropeways.

How the safety issues are being handled?

The Union home ministry issued an **advisory to all states** in April in the wake of a ropeway accident that happened in Deoghar district of Jharkhand.

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The ministry has stressed the **need to have detailed standard operating procedures** and a contingency plan on ropeway operations to prevent the occurrence of any such incidents in future.

Internationally, the ropeways industry is dominated by EU companies, which account for 90% of the industry worldwide. The EU has specific **safety legislation** in place.

Way forward

It is expected that with an emphasis on “Atmanirbharta”, India’s existing ropeway manufacturers and developers will now get an opportunity to scale up and emerge as key players in a global context.

### 23. Across democracies, supreme courts’ legitimacy, autonomy are under question

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Across democracies, supreme courts’ legitimacy, autonomy are under question**” published in “**Indian Express**” on **7<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary.

**Relevance:** To understand the declining legitimacy of the Supreme Court.

**News:** Recently, the US Senator declared that the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) has “burned whatever legitimacy they still have”. The New York Times has referred to “the Supreme Court’s declining institutional credibility [that] has wounded the nation’s confidence in the judge as an impartial guardian of the law”

But the question of the “declining legitimacy of a Supreme Court” is a concern of all democrats, even in India.

What are the challenges faced by Supreme Courts worldwide?

The centrality of all these issues is the **court’s autonomy**. For example,

-In Poland, the present government tries to undermine the supreme court’s independence. This resulted in the European Union warning the Polish government that its membership of the EU was at risk.

-In the US, the recent array of decisions has severely eroded the court’s legitimacy. These include, **a)** Overturning the 50-year-old judgment of Roe versus Wade on the right to abortions, **b)** The affirmation of gun rights deriving from the Second Amendment, **c)** limiting the power of the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce greenhouse gases across states.

**Read more:** [Supreme Court recognises sex work as a ‘profession](#)

How can the Supreme Court address the question of legitimacy?

On this question of “legitimacy”, there are three important aspects. These include **1)** The court’s role in enforcing the core principle of “limited government”, **2)** The court’s recognition, and endorsement of the fundamental distinction between “rule of law” and “rule by law”, and **3)** The court’s role as the promoter of “constitutional morality”.

**Enforcing limited government:** The executive controls the machinery of government and often tends to misuse it, particularly in situations when they dominate the other institutions of the state. The court must clip the executive’s wings. The court’s must speak on behalf of the rights of the ordinary citizen.

The court’s sometimes misread their role as implementers of government policy, but they are not.

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**The distinction between “rule of law” and “rule by law”:** According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “The rule of law is supposed to lift law above politics. The idea is that the law should stand above every powerful person and agency in the land. Rule by law, in contrast, connotes the instrumental use of the law as a tool of political power. It means that the state uses law to control its citizens but tries never to allow law to be used to control the state”.

Authoritarian regimes hide behind rule by law. Those regimes also seek to control the appointment of judges. By controlling the judiciary, regimes are able to shift the dispute from the domain of politics to the chambers of the courts. This must end.

**Court as a custodian of constitutional morality:** Whenever democracy spreads and colonises aspects of social and political life, the court must immediately enter the playing field and regulate this spread. The court must remind politics of what is permitted and what is proscribed.

**Read more:** [The Supreme Court’s Judgment on GST – Explained, pointwise](#)

Supreme courts **need to be vigilant about the threats to their “legitimacy”**. They need to stand some distance above political dynamics so that they can reflect on their privileged position and their sacred responsibility.

### 24. [Words from Bandung to relive in Bali and Delhi](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Words from Bandung to relive in Bali and Delhi” published in the “The Hindu” on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 International Relations; Bilateral Relations, Multilateral Organization

**Relevance:** Rule based International Order;

**News:** In the last month, **the BRICS Summit**, **the G-7 summit**, and **the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit** were held. The Indian Prime Minister attended the BRICS summit and the G-7 Summit. India was not a part of the NATO summit.

**What are the emerging issues in the statements of these plurilateral/ multilateral meetings?**

#### **The BRICS Beijing Declaration**

Both Mr. Xi and Mr. Putin mostly targeted the unilateral economic sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union on Russia.

The BRICS **economic initiatives** are poised to challenge the **western-led sanctions** against Russia. For example:

(1) The New Development Bank (NDB) has approved about 17 loans for Russian energy and infrastructure projects,

(2) The **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)**, and a **BRICS Payments Task Force (BPTF)** aims to coordinate between their central banks for an **alternative** to the **SWIFT payments system**.

(3) Mr. Putin also proposed building a **global reserve currency** based on a “basket of currencies” and trading in local currencies.

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### The G-7 Summit Statement

In a number of statements, the members targeted **Russia's war in Ukraine** and China's economic aggression.

The grouping also released the “**Resilient Democracies**” and “**Clean and Just Transitions towards Climate Neutrality**” outreach document, on which India and other invitees signed. However, invitees were not allowed to mention their stand on the Ukraine issue.

### The NATO meeting

In its number statements, NATO members had committed themselves to take more actions against “**Russian aggression**”. They called **China's action** a form of “**systemic competition**”, which is a challenge to **NATO “interests, security and values”**.

Therefore, The **U.S.'s trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific military allies** sent out a clear message against a perceived **Russia-China alliance**.

Consequently, another Indo-Pacific coalition called the “**Partners in the Blue Pacific**” (PBP), was launched, in addition to last year's Australia-U.K.-U.S. (AUKUS).

### What are the Foreign Policy Challenges in front of India?

There is growing **deep polarisation** between the **Western Atlantic-Pacific axis** and the **Russia-China combine**, in the world.

India's Foreign Policy seems to have a **tightrope walk** on the Russian issue. For example:

(1) On one side, India has been working hard to **diversify** its defence purchases from Russia. Further, India's hostilities with **China** are at an all-time high. Therefore, India is also **strategically moving** towards the U.S. and Quad partners in the Indo-Pacific Region.

(2) On the other hand,

(a) India has chosen to neither **condone** Russia for its attacks on Ukraine, nor criticise it.

(b) Since the Western sanctions, India has increased import of **oil, fertilizer, cement** and **other commodities**, from Russia. This is being done using different means. For example, India is paying for the import, in the Chinese Yuan to circumvent sanctions.

### What should be the approach of India's foreign policy in the coming period?

India should seize the **moment for leadership** in a world that is becoming increasingly uncomfortable due to polarisation. In 1955, it was in such a similar moment that India took leadership that eventually led to the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**. “

For example, India is going to be the next President of the G-20. Therefore, it should work to ensure that the **G-20 stays together**. India should **reassure** those worried by the **brinkmanship** of the West on one side and Russia and China on the other.

India should bring together a **large pool of independently like-minded countries** who cannot afford hostilities, and want to avoid the possibility of a global war at all costs.

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### 25. A 'no' to pharma freebies, a 'yes' for public good

**Source:** The post is based on an article "A 'no' to pharma freebies, a 'yes' for public good" published in the "The Hindu" on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS2 Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

**Relevance:** Freebies in Pharma Sector

**News:** Recently, a bench of the Supreme Court has given a judgment on freebies given to doctors by the pharma companies.

#### **About the *M/s Apex Laboratories Pvt. Ltd. vs Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax, Large Tax Payer Unit-II Case*,**

The company was giving out freebies to doctors to create awareness about a health supplement it was manufacturing, which was called **Zincovit**.

#### **The Judgment**

The court held that the act of pharmaceutical companies giving freebies to doctors is clearly '**prohibited by the law**'.

Earlier, it was prohibited under **the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002** framed under the Medical Council Act, 1956.

However, at present, the law has been repealed and substituted by **the National Medical Commission Act, 2019**.

Further, the freebies cannot be claimed as a deduction under Section 37(1) of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

#### **Importance of the judgment**

At present, the pharma products have become out of reach for the common man due to **unethical** and **illegal practices** in the pharma sector. The judgment will go a long way to check it.

The pharmaceutical companies have misused a **legislative gap**. They have actively perpetuated the **commission** of an **offence** of giving **freebies** to doctors to promote their brands.

The court laid emphasis on the **fiduciary relationship** between doctor and patient. The patients consider the **doctor's prescription** as the final word on medication. Therefore, it shouldn't be manipulated by the lure of freebies. It drives up the prices of the medicines.

The judgment referred to a report issued by **the United States Department of Health and Human Services Office**. The report mentioned that the patients could save in **out-of-pocket payments** if they buy **generic equivalent drugs** instead of branded ones.

#### **What are the other Issues in the Pharma sector?**

Most of the medicines are sold at the **Maximum Retail Price**, or **MRP** in pharmacist shops.

Although India has **the Drug Price Control Order and Drugs and Cosmetics Act**. The agency hardly takes any action to keep the sale price of medicines under **control**, and keep the profit margins within a prescribed limit.

#### **Way Forward**

The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare** also highlighted the same issues in its 45th report, dated August 4, 2010.



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Therefore, the parliament should amend law in order to compel the **drug manufacturer** to sell their pharma products at the **verified genuine cost**. This should also factor in a **reasonable profit margin** for each product. There must be a **uniform rate** throughout the country.

Further, classified **life-saving drugs** should be sold at cost only or even at subsidised rates.

The government can use financial tools such as **income-tax provisions** for disallowing such expenditure etc.

### 26. [Hate crime, punishment](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Hate crime, punishment” published in the “The Hindu” on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

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

**Relevance:** Fundamental Right to freedom of speech and expression vs Hate Speech

**News:** In recent, **Umesh Kolhe**, a chemist working in Amravati, Maharashtra, and **Kanhaiya Lal**, a tailor working in Udaipur, Rajasthan were knifed to death in retaliation for their sharing of a post in support of controversial comments on the Prophet.

#### **What are the problems with hate speech?**

Although India laws clearly define the **reasonableness of the right to exercise** the freedom of expression in India. However, the Indian laws do not clearly define hate speech, which are directed at communities and intended to fan communal hatred.

In the age of **online media** and **messaging**, hate speech incidents have become a significant problem.

#### **Legal Regime**

There are provisions in the law that can be interpreted as allowing for **criminalising offences** that are related to hate speech, in particular those that are likely to incite violence.

#### **Way Forward**

The **Law Commission of India** has recommended **adding specific provisions** in the **Indian Penal Code** to tackle hate speech.

The Union and the State governments should **reassure** citizens on the need for communal amity and it should reassure that the purveyors of hate speech and those indulging in violence in retaliation will be prosecuted.

The governments must reorient themselves to the **rule of law**. They should strictly adhere to **constitutional values** like the secular fabric of the country must be preserved at all costs.

Justice and the application of the **rule of law** should not only be seen to be done. It should be applied in a **fair manner** without prejudice for or against specific communities.

The Union and State governments should not use the enforcement authorities to inflict **collective punishment** on communities for the **individual acts of transgression**.

All the political parties including those in power and in opposition, must refrain from fanning communal hatred.

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### [27. Weaponization of IPC to set police on journalists cuts across parties — and clamps down on press freedom](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Weaponization of IPC to set police on journalists cuts across parties – and clamps down on press freedom” published in the Indian Express on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Important provisions of the constitution of India

**Relevance:** Fundamental Rights

**News:** Recently, Mohammed Zubair, co-founder of Alt News, and Rohit Ranjan, Zee News anchor were arrested by Delhi Police and Chhattisgarh Police, respectively, in different circumstances and specific contexts.

#### **What were the causes?**

Zubair was arrested for a 2018 tweet that shared a clip from a 1980s’ film by **Hrishikesh Mukherjee**, weeks after he flagged controversial remarks that were made on the Prophet, in his TV debate.

He was arrested under **Sections 153 (A) and 295 (A)**, for promoting enmity between different groups, and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings among the community.

**Rohit Ranjan** was arrested for his show which ran a misleading video of Rahul Gandhi, for which the channel later apologised.

#### **Argument against such arrest**

The arrest amounts to endangering **due process** and violations of the rights and freedoms of speech and expression.

The Constitution of India guarantees freedom to ask questions to the state, express opposition or **dissent**.

There are allegations of **weaponization** of the sections of IPC. For example, misuse of IPC’s Section 124A in Ravi’s case or Sections 153 and 295 against Zubair and Ranjan in the ongoing case.

On the world stage, India speaks of “**vibrant democracy**” and commits to “protecting the freedom of expression and opinion online and offline”.

#### **Way Forward**

The ruling parties as well as the opposition parties need to look at their failure to protect free speech.

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28. [Mental health issues of LGBTQIA++ community: A community and a health issue of concern](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**A community and a health issue of concern**”

published in “**The Hindu**” on **8<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

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

**Relevance:** To understand the mental health issues of LGBTQIA++ community.

**News:** Recently Pride month (June) has been celebrated successfully. However, India’s class, caste and regionally diverse LGBTQIA++ communities remain at risk of life-long mental illnesses and challenges.

What is the status of mental illnesses among LGBTQIA++ communities?

This relentless dissonance and alienation can result in internalised homophobia, often leading to anxiety, loneliness and substance use. For instance, LGBTQIA++ youth are likely to suffer 1.75 times more anxiety and depression than the rest of society. On the other hand, the transgender community is even more vulnerable as its members suffer 2.4 times higher anxiety and depression.

**Read more:** [Madras High Court guidelines for mainstreaming LGBTQIA+ community](#)

What is the reason for increasing mental illnesses among LGBTQIA++ communities?

**Dissonance and stigma:** This is caused by life-long dissonance, deep-rooted stigma, discrimination and often abuse, that the community experiences. This often leads to extreme distress and poor self-worth, resulting in self-hate and suffering.

**Less discussions:** Sexual orientation and gender identity are rarely discussed in Indian social, educational or familial environments. Even done, these discussions are stigmatising in nature.

**Marginalisation:** Society marginalises LGBTQIA++ people throughout life, no matter how accomplished they may be.

**Inadequate access to health services:** A large majority of the psychiatrists in India still consider diverse sexual orientations and gender identities as a disorder and practice ‘correctional therapy’.

A private study also found that numerous trans and gay men preferred to pay and seek help in the private sector rather than access government health care due to harassment and stigma.

**Read more:** [End discrimination, frame specific policies for LGBTQ+ workers: ILO](#)

What should be done to improve the mental health of LGBTQIA++?

**Destigmatise diverse gender and sexual identities:** India needs **comprehensive long-term solutions** that make queer mental health a priority and **address community needs**. This can be done by ensuring every aspect of mental health work in India must include aspects of queer mental health issues, especially in schools and universities.

**Community building:** facilitate the LGBTQIA++ community’s engagement with all stakeholders, including educational institutions, communities, health-care providers, mental health professionals, police personnel and families who are often a key source of mental health stress.

Further, India needs to create supportive, safe and educative spaces, access points for health care and information on mental health

**Read more:** [India’s 1st LGBT+ workplace equality index launched](#)

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Without addressing both the preventive and support aspects of the mental health of LGBTQIA++ people India will compound an already neglected problem of mental illness that will be hard to handle in the future.

### [29. Which is the 'real' Shiv Sena? Answer lies with the Constitution and Supreme Court](#)

**Source:** This post is created based on the article **“Which is the ‘real’ Shiv Sena? Answer lies with the Constitution and Supreme Court”** published in **Indian Express** on **9<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS Paper 2- Indian Polity – Electoral Issues

**News:** Recently, a tussle in Maharashtra within the Shiv Sena for the control of the party, its election symbol, and the name is ongoing. It has brought into the limelight the legal and constitutional frameworks that manage such situations.

#### **Legal and Constitutional frameworks**

**Article 324 of the Constitution:** Election Commission is vested with the responsibilities of superintendence, direction, and control of elections.

**The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order 1968** deals with the matters like allotment of symbols in Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies and recognition of political parties.

**Paragraph 15 of this Order** empowers the election Commission to recognize the party formed by a splinter or rival groups, based upon the available facts and circumstances of the case.

#### **Issue of party symbol and recognition of factions**

The party symbols hold significant importance for political parties. Many voters, who cannot read, form an association with the symbols of parties.

**Sadiq Ali v the Election Commission of India (1972):** The case involved 2 factions of Indian National Congress (INC). One led by Jagjivan Ram i.e. INC (J), another led by C Subramaniam i.e. INC (O).

The Election Commission rules in favor of INC (J) being the recognised political party. The Supreme Court also relied on the data presented to the Commission by INC factions and found that a substantial majority of the members of the Congress in both its legislative wing as well as the organisational wing supported the Congress (J). Thus, SC also concurred with the decision of the Election Commission, with the following observations made by Justice H R Khanna.

Paragraph 15, gives the Commission power to settle such disputes pertaining to symbols between factions of a party. It is entirely legal because this power accrues from Article 324 that creates the Commission and vests in it the power of superintendence over elections.

### [30. The clock is ticking on the issue of energy poverty](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article **“The clock is ticking on the issue of energy poverty”** published in the **Indian Express** on **9<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 International Organization; GS 3 Indian Economy issues and Challenges to growth, development, etc.

**Relevance:** Global Energy Governance; Energy Poverty, etc.

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**News:** In the recently **concluded G-7 Summit**, the Prime Minister of India Modi reminded the leaders of the richest economies in the world that all the energy-poor countries should also be able to access energy as much as the rich global north.

The PM raised the bigger issue of **global energy governance at G7 because all world energy systems** are still tightly controlled by the **Atlantic countries**. The American dollar runs the global energy landscape.

The western countries build and push all **global energy narratives** in order to serve their own economic and **geopolitical interests**. For example, the International Energy Agency (IEA) serves the interests of the rich and developed countries.

### **What is the status of energy poverty globally?**

The Latin American, Asian, and African regions account for around three billion energy-poor people.

In South Asia alone, over one billion people are struggling with extremely limited access to energy, despite the LPG and the LED revolutions in India.

### **What could be the implications of energy curbs imposed by western nations?**

India and many other developed countries have been purchasing discounted Russian oil amid the increasing crude oil prices. But, the G-7 countries want to further **tighten** the sanctions or **completely curb** the flow of Russian oil in the **global supply system**. It would have many implications:

First, Russia accounts for 12.6% of the world's oil production. It could lead to even higher oil prices. Sri Lanka-like energy shocks may disrupt the nations due to these factors.

Second, a ban could also strengthen the **emergence of a parallel international oil market** led by Russia and, allegedly, supported by China.

Third, unlike rich countries, most energy deficit countries in the developing world cannot tackle a slump in growth; rise in inflation and unemployment rate, and social unrest. For example, India's oil import bill soared to \$119 billion in the FY2021-22.

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

**Energy access** should not be the **privilege** of the rich only. A **poor family** also has the same rights on energy.

The G-7 should explore some other ways to **tighten** the sanctions on Russia instead of weaponizing oil.

Undoubtedly, the world needs a **truly global intergovernmental organization** dedicated to just energy transition, energy access and justice, and energy and climate. For this, India and China should take the lead. Other large countries like Indonesia, South Africa, and Turkey could also be invited to brainstorm for initiating such a body.

Powerful platforms like the **G-20** and **the BRICS** need to focus more on energy access, poverty, and security.

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# General Studies Paper –3

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## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of July, (First Week) 2022

### 1. [Explained: How Kerala has struggled to identify buffer zones around its protected forests](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Explained: How Kerala has struggled to identify buffer zones around its protected forests**” published in **The Indian Express** on **4th Jul 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Environment

**Relevance:** Environmental regulation

**News:** For over a month now, Kerala farmers living along the Western Ghats have been protesting a **June 3 directive** of the Supreme Court for setting up buffer or eco-sensitive zones (ESZ) for all protected forests in the country.

What is the Supreme Court order?

The SC in its order has said national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and such protected forests must have an ESZ of **minimum 1-km from their boundaries**.

The court said the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Environment on 9 February 2011, which have either banned or regulated a bunch of activities within the ESZ, should be strictly adhered to.

- The banned activities are mining, running of saw mills, polluting industries, commercial use of fire woods, mega hydel-power projects and manufacturing of hazardous objects.
- Mining would be allowed only for local use, the guidelines said.
- The regulated or restricted activities in the ESZ are felling of trees (only with permission from authorities), establishment of hotels and resorts as per approved master plan, drastic change in agricultural systems, etc.
- The permissible activities are ongoing agricultural and horticulture practices, rain water harvesting, organic farming and adoption of green technology for all activities.

What are the implications for Kerala?

The Kerala government does not have a clear picture about how the life and livelihood of people would be impacted by the declaring of the ESZ.

The opposition has said the verdict would **affect one lakh families**, 2.50 lakh acres of **agricultural land** and two dozen **townships**. Farmers are concerned as inclusion of human settlements with ESZ would hit their **life and economic activities**.

#### **ESZ idea and its evolution**

It was in 2002 that the national board of wildlife adopted a **national wildlife conservation strategy** that looked at a buffer zone for activities outside the sanctuaries and national parks. The board backed a **10-km buffer zone**.

A month later, in February, the wildlife board adopted the conservation strategy, and the Centre directed all states to list out such areas. Some states raised concern over applicability of 10 km range.

In 2005, the wildlife board **re-examined the issue** and decided that the delineation of the ESZ would have to be site specific and relate to regulation, rather than prohibition, of specific activities.

Several reminders were sent to states to submit the ESZ proposals. But many, including Kerala, did not respond.

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Acting on a PIL, the **SC intervened in December 2006** and directed all states to submit their proposals for declaration of ESZs.

In 2010, the Supreme Court, while considering a separate case related to construction of a park near Okhla bird sanctuary, **directed the Centre to formulate guidelines for declaring ESZ.**

An expert committee set up by the Union government to frame the guidelines to facilitate the states and UTs for declaration of ESZs identified parameters for the same.

Subsequently in February 2011, the ministry directed all states to list out ESZ, within 10 km from the boundaries of the protected forests and furnish proposals for their notation as ESZ, under the Environment Protection Act 1986.

### 2. [Don't count hybrids out of the race to go greener](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**Don't count hybrids out of the race to go greener**” published in **Livemint** on **4th Jul 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Energy and Infrastructure

**Relevance:** Electric vehicles and related issues, transition to clean energy

**Context:** Maruti Suzuki's chairman recently said that hybrid technology, natural gas and biofuels offer a better path towards a cleaner future than fully-electric cars.

Globally, many electric models have hit the streets. Even in India, MG Motors, Hyundai and Tata Motors offer vehicles that liberate users from petrol or diesel refills.

However, both India's and the world's largest carmakers, Maruti and Toyota, have stayed in the slow lane.

Does it mean that hybrid technology might be the way forward?

What are the issues with EV ecosystem in the country?

**Problems with infra:** India's government favors a rapid EV transition, which requires an ecosystem to recharge or swap batteries.

– **Home set-ups for overnight charging** can't be installed for everyone. Also, long-distance travel makes roadside options a must.

– Further, **charging stations** must attain a critical mass of reach for 'network effects' to kick in, multiplying its utility as it expands.

Without a more robust private-public effort, EV sales may not pick up speed.

**High prices of EVs:** Given the premium pricing of EVs, there are two other sticky issues that also need to be tackled. **a)** their eco-friendly credentials in a country that runs largely on coal-fired energy remain unclear. And this summer's wet-bulb heat and power shortfalls raised doubts about the Indian grid's pace of carbon reduction. **b)** confidence in their safety was shaken by reports of battery fires.

**Geopolitical issues:** The **Ukraine war** has made battery-making inputs costlier, and, with both Russia and China key players in this value chain, geopolitical factors beyond India's control could continue to get in the way of cost reduction.



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Way forward

Regulators and engineers should work together to credibly **minimize the “thermal runaway” risk of EV power-packs** before a small likelihood gets a chance to turn into a big deterrent.

Though an electric recharge can cost as little as one-tenth of a petrol refill for the same distance driven, the **on-road prices of EVs also need to decrease** vis-a-vis fuel equivalents for bulk buyers to be lured.

Should cars powered by hybrid tech make leaps on fuel efficiency, they could impress buyers with a palpable impact on carbon emissions. Indian policy envisions EVs as the future, but let's not count hybrids out of the race for cleaner mobility

### 3. [Wake-up call – on Landslides in Manipur](#)

**Source:** This post is created based on the article **“Wake-up call – on Landslides in Manipur”**, published in **The Hindu** on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2022.

**Syllabus** Topic: GS Paper 3- Disaster Management

**News:** One of the severest natural disasters in Manipur happened recently. The incident led to the death of around 37 people.

#### **What has happened?**

A landslide accident happened in Manipur, leading to deaths and many people trapped below the debris.

The disaster compounded due to the accumulation of debris on the pathway of Ijei River. It could result in inundation of low-lying areas if the “dam”-like structure is breached.

The place, where this disaster occurred, is a railway construction site in a landslide-prone area. This should stir a review of the project for development planners and government officials in the State.

The Environment Ministry has acknowledged that the disasters were “anthropogenically” induced, caused by:

1. Modification of slopes for construction,
2. Fragile lithography,
3. Widening of roads,
4. Quarrying for construction materials,
5. Complex geological structures and heavy rainfall

The area was identified as susceptible areas in the State through the National Landslide Susceptibility Mapping project. Still, it was not taken seriously before selecting the site.

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

The state government must evaluate whether sufficient soil and stability tests were done before choosing the site for railway construction. Researchers have confirmed that the area falls under very high, high, or moderate hazard zones.

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An early warning system for landslides is still being developed and refined by the Geological Survey of India. Early implementation of the system could help reduce the scale of such disasters, once deployed across vulnerable States.

Although States in the Northeast are accelerating connectivity projects to uplift a relatively economically backward region, they should consider the ecological challenges seriously.

#### 4. [We need an urgent national plan on electrical safety](#)

**Source:** This post is created based on the article **“We need an urgent national plan on electrical safety”**, published in **The Hindu** on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2022.

**Syllabus topic:** GS Paper 3, Infrastructure – Power sector

**News:** With the increasing access to electricity, the issue of electricity accidents must be addressed. National or State policies or programs do not provide targets or specific resource allocation for safety, at present.

Nearly all households have an electricity connection, as per reports. However, a small portion of the allocation to the electricity sector is spent on safety kits or training of staff.

As per the National Crime Records Bureau data, the rate of deaths (per lakh population) due to electric shocks and fires has steadily increased from 2,957 deaths and 0.36 deaths per lakh population in 1990 to 15,258 deaths and 1.13 deaths per lakh population in 2020.

Central Electricity Authority (CEA) data also suggest the same findings as above.

In many developed countries, the number of deaths has been reducing over the years and the deaths per lakh population is around 0.03 or lower.

Over 90% of the people who die due to electrical accidents are the general public. Thus, the safety of the general public must be the top priority.

#### **What are the major factors behind electricity shocks?**

6. Most fatalities occur at distribution networks (specifically 11 kV and Low-Tension systems) and Low-Tension consumer locations and therefore need higher attention.
7. Accidental contact with live conductors is the immediate cause of accidents.
8. Electrical faults, due to Poor design, construction, inadequate maintenance, etc. account for around 12% of the accidents.
9. There is no mechanism to ensure that safety regulations prepared by the CEA are followed. For example, distribution companies are expected to have safety officers and conduct periodic safety audits.
10. Revenue collection and fault repairs are given higher priorities by the companies.
11. Electrical inspectors are supposed to conduct inquiries on accidents, but they are heavily understaffed.
12. The focus of safety professionals is on industrial safety, and not on safety aspects of the rural public.
13. Many well-meaning grass-root organizations focus on ensuring ex gratia for accident victims, not on accident prevention.

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

Electricity safety can be handled only through coordinated action involving all stakeholders.

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The current safety regulatory mechanism can be strengthened through the following provisions:

- Better data collection,
- Introducing safety aspects in national programs,
- Strengthening safety institutions,
- Developing safety metrics for distribution companies,
- Involving the public and professionals in safety initiatives and
- Utilizing technological innovations

A national program to reduce electrical accidents in the distribution sector should be implemented, with sufficient resource allocation.

There should be sufficient resource allocation and robust monitoring and verification mechanism.

### 5. [Ashok Gulati and Ritika Juneja write: Why rice and wheat bans aren't the answer to inflation](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article "Why rice and wheat bans aren't the answer to inflation" published in the Indian Express on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS3 Indian Economy; Issues and Challenges pertaining to food security and PDS

**Relevance:** Food Inflation

**News:** Earlier, the government banned wheat exports to check the potential rise in prices in the face of low procurement. But now, there are reports that the government is mulling a ban on rice exports to tame inflation.

The wheat and rice exports ban was also done in 2007-08, in the wake of the global financial crisis.

#### **What are the other possible measures that the government of India might also undertake?**

There are chances of imposing **stocking limits** on traders for a host of commodities, **suspending futures trading** in food items, and there can even be conduct of **income tax raids** on traders of food.

#### **What are the issues in the export ban?**

All these extreme measures in the name of **taming inflation** only expose the **hollowness** and **lack of understanding** within the government about functioning of the **market economies** and the reason behind high inflation.

Export bans on food items is **irresponsible behaviour** at the global level. This can only be resorted in case of major calamity.

Abrupt export bans **inflict high costs** on poorer nations, and many millions fall below the poverty line as a result of such actions.

The recently concluded **WTO ministerial meeting** as well as the **G-7 meet** expressed concerns about food security in vulnerable nations.

**Let us take the case of rice first.**

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India exported **21 million metric tonnes (MMT)** of rice in 2021-22 (FY22) in a global market, i.e., about 41% of global exports of about 51.3 MMT. Such large volumes of rice exports brought down global prices of rice by about 23%, when all other cereal prices were going up substantially in global markets.

If India exports more than about 25% of the global trade in rice. It would have a dampening effect on global prices.

### What are the suggestions?

India needs to impose for “**optimal export tax**”, say, a 5-10% tax on rice exports, instead of a ban on rice exports, to recover the **large input subsidies** that India gives for rice cultivation.

The reasons being:

- (1) Such **agricultural subsidies** create an **artificial competitive advantage** for Indian rice in global markets.
- (2) The government should recover a part of the **subsidy** like urea, from rice exports by imposing an **optimal export tax**.

### Can imposition of optimal tax will help tame inflation at home?

No. India can't tame inflation because more than 95% of CPI inflation is due to items, other than wheat and rice. For example, inflation in vegetables contributed 14.4% to CPI inflation, which is more than three times the contribution of rice and wheat combined.

### Way Forward

The **Agri-trade policies** need to be more stable and predictable, rather than a result of knee-jerk reactions.

In **perishable commodities** like vegetables, India needs to build efficient value chains and link these to processing facilities. So that people can switch processed form of food in case of high prices of vegetables.

India needs to take our food processing industry at priority because India industry is way behind the curve compared to **several Southeast Asian nations**.

If India wants to be a **globally responsible player**, it should avoid sudden and abrupt bans.

### 6. [Govt's move to tax fuel export will impact policy change in energy sector](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Govt’ move to tax fuel export will impact policy change in energy sector” published in the Business Standard on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS3 Indian Economy; infrastructure; Energy Sector

**Relevance:** New Taxation on Fuel Export

**News:** Recently, the government has imposed **export taxes** on fuels, and a cess on domestic crude production.

### Background

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Lower domestic prices have incentivised refiners to export products at higher prices, resulting in domestic fuel shortages.

Before announcements, the fiscal deficit was tracking around Rs 2.2 trillion. It was above budget estimates due to higher subsidies and cuts in fuel excise duty.

### Objectives

As per the FM statement, the taxes will improve the supply of diesel and petrol in the domestic market. At present, the private refiners concentrate on serving Europe and Asia.

The new fuel taxes could improve the already worsened fiscal condition in this FY

### About the new taxation

The government slapped an export duty of Rs 6 a litre each on overseas sales of petrol and aviation turbine fuel.

The government has imposed **Rs. 13** a litre on **high-speed diesel**, translating into 10-23% of current crude prices.

In addition, exporters must declare that 50% of the exported quantity in each shipping bill will be supplied domestically in the fiscal.

There would be a cess of Rs 23,250 a tonne, or \$40 a barrel on domestic crude production.

The levies will be open-ended, and further, will be reviewed every fortnight.

### What are the issues in these measures?

This is turning into the unease of doing business in India, at least, as far as the energy sector is concerned. For example, for Indian explorers, refiners, and prospective marquee investors led by Saudi Aramco, Adnoc, Exxon, Total and Shell.

There are concerns whether the **new tax applies** to exports from special export zone (SEZ) facilities run by **private refiners**, such as Reliance and Nayara.

The imposition of increased export duties on petroleum products is expected to **impact export volumes** in the short term. At present, Oil products contributed 16% of India's total merchandise exports of \$422 billion in 2021-22.

The government wants the **foreign investors** to invest in India's energy sector because India is 85% dependent on foreign oil. India requires foreign technology and capital to tap into our production and exploration potential to stop ever-growing dependence on imports. However, the move **will discourage foreign investors**.

It will impact India's aim to increase India's petroleum exports to \$1 trillion by 2030.

Further, India's overseas oil dependence will increase to 90% in the next few years as it plans to double its refining capacity by 2030.

Such policy flip flops impact the overall image of the country in the medium to long-term.

### Way Forward

The measure should remain temporary, say for three to six months because it can scare new players and investors, if the new taxes remain there for a longer duration.

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India needs consistent, business-friendly policies and **investor-friendly policies**

The impact on investments would be limited because at present, the gross refining margins (**GRM**) are high which are unlikely to sustain for long. Further, most investment decisions assume more normalised GRM through the cycle.

Most private refineries are implementing capex towards crude-to-chemicals rather than crude-to-petroleum products.

### 7. [Enforcing the single-use plastic ban](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“Enforcing the single-use plastic ban”** published in **“The Hindu”** on **5<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Environmental pollution and degradation.

**Relevance:** To understand the challenges associated with the Single-use plastic ban.

**News:** India’s ban on select single-use plastic(SUPs) items came into effect from July 1, 2022.

Why does the government ban SUPs?

Unlike thicker and denser plastic material, single-use plastic objects being light and flexible are less amenable to being recycled.

About 99% of recycled plastic constitutes heavier plastics that are likely to be collected by ragpickers and plastic waste recyclers. Single use plastics do not provide an incentive enough for the effort needed to collect them and hence they lie around.

Hence, SUPs leach their toxins into the soil and cause environmental damage in both land and sea.

**Must read:** [Ban on Single-Use Plastic – Explained, pointwise](#)

How does the ban be implemented?

So far 32 States/UTs have reportedly constituted a dedicated Task Force to eliminate the use of single-use plastics. Of these 14 states/UTs and 12 Central Ministries had developed action plans describing how they would be enforcing this.

**Penal provisions:** According to the Environment Protection (EP) Act, violating the ban could invite “punitive action”. The EP Act says that violating the ban could invite five-year imprisonment and a fine of upto ₹1 lakh, or both. If the violations are repeated, it could mean additional fines of up to ₹5000 for each day.

There are different penalties for companies, organisations, and government departments under the EP Act.

**Read more:** [Explained: Why is single-use plastic being banned in India from July 1](#)

About the previous ban on plastics in India

At the 4th United Nations Environment Assembly in 2019, India piloted a resolution on addressing single-use plastic product pollution.

Before the amendments came into force, the **Plastic Waste Management Rules** only prohibited the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of carry bags and plastic sheets less than 50 microns in thickness in the country. There is a ban on sachets using plastic material used for storing, packing or selling gutkha, tobacco and pan masala.

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Since October 2021, there is a ban on the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of carry bags made of virgin or recycled plastic less than 75 microns.

**Note:** Plastic packaging waste is a major contributor to the much larger problem of plastic waste pollution. But this single-use plastic item is yet to be phased out.

**Read more:** [Single-use plastic ban: Reading the fine print reveals ominous loopholes](#)

What are the impacts of the ban?

The All India Plastic Manufacturers Association said that the ban would shutter 88,000 units in the plastic manufacturing business. These employ close to a million people and contribute to exports worth ₹25,000 crores.

Fast Moving Consumer Goods companies (FMCG) would be severely affected by the ban due to their dependence on plastic straws, and plates.

**Read more:** [India's ban on select single-use plastic items: A start but still a long way from blanket ban](#)

### 8. [About the Draft E-waste Management Rules, 2022: Right intent, confusing content](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Right intent, confusing content**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **5<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Environmental pollution and degradation.

**Relevance:** To understand the challenges associated with the Draft E-waste Management Rules, 2022.

**News:** This year marks a decade since the E-waste (Management and Handling) Rules came into effect in India. The Rules have been amended a few times since. The most recent amendment is the Draft E-waste Management Rules, 2022.

What are the salient provisions of Draft E-waste Management Rules, 2022?

**Read here:** [Draft Notification for Electronic Waste \(E-Waste\) Management](#)

What are the advantages of the draft E-waste rules?

The rules propose **a)** expanding the definition of e-waste, **b)** more clearly specifying the penalties for violation of rules, **c)** introducing an environmental compensation fund based on the ‘polluter pays’ principle, and **d)** recognising the informal waste workers.

**Read more:** [New opportunities for e-waste recyclers](#)

What are the challenges associated with the draft E-waste rules?

**First**, large-scale recycling of e-waste is still in its infancy in India. Most of the recycling of valuable material is carried out within the informal sector using inefficient and unsafe technologies. Considering this, the target to recycle 60% of the e-waste generated in 2022-23 appears too optimistic.

**Second**, the government has to focus on existing formal and informal players if it wants to create better recycling facilities. But the draft rules are **silent on regulating registered collectors, dismantlers, and producer** responsibility organisations.

**Third**, the informal sector accounts for a vast majority of e-waste processed in India. Most e-waste policy debates have centred around the integration of the informal sector into the formal systems.

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But the proposed regulations place the responsibility of such integration on the State governments without specifying what the incentives are for them to do this.

**Fourth**, based on European experience, the regulators face more difficulties in monitoring and enforcing recycling targets than the collection targets. But the present draft is **silent on whether the rules will apply to the aggregate weight of e-waste or to every component of an e-product**.

**Fifth**, the **Steering Committee** mentioned in the draft **lacks representation** in the Committee. For instance, there is no representation from science/academia and civil society organisations.

**Read more:** [Time's Running out-Is India ready to handle 34,600 tonnes of solar waste?](#)

Hence, the core changes it proposes within the EPR framework require careful deliberation with all the relevant stakeholders before the Rules are finalised.

### 9. [The long-term hurdles to India's export growth](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**The long-term hurdles to India's export growth**" published in **Business Standard** on **4th Jul 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Indian economy – Issues related to growth and development

**Relevance:** India's exports and related issues

**Context:** In FY21-22, Indian merchandise exports **jumped 43.18%** year-on-year, going up from \$291.81 billion to \$417.81 billion.

In this backdrop, the govt hopes that in the long term, exports can power India's economic growth.

But, despite last year's record performance, a close look at merchandise export trends of the past decade does not paint a very encouraging picture.

India's merchandise exports trends

India's merchandise exports stayed between \$280 billion and \$315 billion for a decade before its surge last year.

Even last year's record performance did not see much volume growth — it was **largely driven by higher prices/values**, according to a report by India Ratings.

India, unlike the Asian Tigers, has **never managed to be an export-driven economy**.

India's share in global merchandise trade has firmly **remained below 2%**.

What factors have primarily driven India's economic growth?

Since the economic reforms were initiated in 1991, **a)** private investment **b)** domestic consumption, and **c)** government spending — have primarily driven India's economic growth.

**e)** Merchandise exports have played only a supporting role.

**f)** Service exports — largely IT services — have been a redeeming factor in India's export story.

Why has India failed to become a global merchandise power?

It is largely because **India has not really become a hub for global manufacturing**.



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- Foreign manufacturers in India have **largely focused on the domestic market**, instead of treating it as a low-cost, high-quality manufacturing base for exports.
- Despite a realization among global companies that they need alternative hubs to reduce dependence on China, few of them have looked at India seriously.

Why India failed to become a global manufacturing powerhouse?

Three factors have played spoilsport to India becoming a global manufacturing power.

**One, – rapid changes in policy and the uncertainty** that investors have to face. Anyone putting millions to build a plant on the ground would like a stable policy regime, which has been missing for a decade now.

- Constant changes in tax rates, tweaking of rules and abrupt reversals following policy announcements have scared many investors.
- The changes in wheat, petroleum products and steel export policies or tariffs are recent examples.

**Second – the cost and difficulty of doing business on the ground.**

- This includes issues such as poor roads, higher cost of power, longer turnaround times at ports, dealing with local level officials, meeting myriad regulations at the state, district and city levels and other such problems.

These have often negated whatever cost benefits they have got from government incentives like the production-linked incentive scheme.

**Third – poor quality standards set by Indian regulators and the government** in almost every sector, and the even worse monitoring and implementation of these standards.

- In sectors ranging from pharmaceuticals and drugs to automobiles to food and cosmetics — **Indian manufacturers have a lower quality standard** to meet than their global counterparts.
- Worse, there is **little monitoring or penalty** even if these low standards are not adhered to. Product recalls are almost unknown in the country.

An Indian automaker or a generics drug company exports higher quality goods to other countries than it sells in the Indian market.

Way forward

The govt should focus on **removing hurdles that increase the cost of manufacturing or just doing business** in India.

At the same time, it should **set higher quality standards and monitor them stringently**. This is an essential condition if India's manufacturing needs to meet global standards.

That is the only way the country can become a major exporter of manufactured goods, not just software services.

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### 10. [The need for space sustainability](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“The need for space sustainability”** published in **“The Hindu”** on **5<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Awareness in the fields of Space.

**Relevance:** To understand the challenges associated with space sustainability.

**News:** The U.K. hosted the fourth summit for Space Sustainability in London in collaboration with the Secure World Foundation. During the summit, the UK launched a new ‘Plan for Space Sustainability’.

What are the challenges in achieving space sustainability?

**Orbital crowding** poses a big threat to space sustainability. This poses a direct threat to the operations and safety of a mission and is likely to cause legal and insurance-related conflicts.

**Space debris:** After the completion of a mission, an ‘end-of-life protocol’ requires space objects to be moved to the graveyard orbit or to a low altitude. Neither of the options is sustainable in the long run.

**Solar and magnetic storms:** These storms can potentially damage communication systems. Such space weather threats need to be addressed along with the efforts to identify the terrestrial carbon footprint of outer space missions.

**Note:** *Outer space is considered a shared natural resource. The United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in 2019 adopted a set of 21 voluntary, non-binding guidelines to ensure the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.*

**Read more:** [India and Outer Space: Issues & Challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

About the ‘Plan for Space Sustainability’

**Aim:**

-To set a global commercial framework for the insurability, licensing and regulation of commercial satellites.

-To reduce the cost for those who comply with the best sustainability standards and thus encourage a thriving ecosystem for the industry.

The plan also hopes to drive the sustainability factor internationally and provide an opportunity for the private sector to develop models that enhance operations’ safety and reduce debris footprint.

How does the plan propose to achieve space sustainability?

The U.K. calls for an **“Astro Carta” for space sustainability**, based on the Artemis Accords model for sustainable space exploration.

The plan proposes **a)** Active debris removal and in-orbit servicing, **b)** Encouraging space research and the development of technology to ensure the reuse and recycling of satellites at every stage.

Where does India stand on space sustainability?

India has always emphasised cost-effective and efficient missions with problem-solving applications. For example, India’s debris footprint is minuscule; India has 114 debris among the 25,182 pieces, of sizes larger than 10 cm, in the lower earth orbits. Apart from that, the recent activities of India on space sustainability are,

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1) **Project NETRA**: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has initiated 'Project NETRA' to monitor space debris, **2)** Earlier this year, India and the U.S. signed a new pact for monitoring space objects at the 2+2 dialogue, **3) Increased private participation**: With **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (In-SPACe)**, India expects an increased role of the private sector in India's space activities, and

**4) SPADEX**: ISRO is developing a docking experiment to provide in-orbit servicing named SPADEX. It looks at docking a satellite on an existing satellite, offering support in re-fuelling and other in-orbit services while enhancing the capability of a satellite. Hence, the SPADEX can increase the longevity of a mission and also provide a futuristic option to combine missions/experiments.

**Read more: [Indian Space Association \(ISpA\) – Explained, pointwise](#)**

What should be done to achieve space sustainability?

**1) A collective effort by all space players**, with the active role of the UN COPUOS or the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), is needed to set equitable standards for the ease of activities, **2)** Many of the measures for sustainability are resource-consuming and expensive for medium-and-small space programs. Hence, there is a need for **addressing the principles and rules that guide the activities** in outer space with better clarity, and **3) Encourage the private sector with a set of sustainability guidelines** to ensure optimum utilisation of resources and increase the safety and productivity of missions

**Read more: [Space Economy in India – Explained, pointwise](#)**

11. [Lingering notes: Cash seems to have a logic-defying appeal. Digitisation may eventually lessen that](#)

**Source**: The post is based on the article “**Lingering notes: Cash seems to have a logic-defying appeal. Digitisation may eventually lessen that**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **5<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus**: GS 3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, and growth.

**Relevance**: To understand India's increasing cash holding.

**News**: In the last two years, the volume of UPI transactions rose over threefold to 46 billion in 2021-22. But concurrently, Indians still hold a relatively large share of the cash.

**Read more: [RBI launches Digital payments index to track transactions](#)**

Why India's cash holding is significant, and what are the global trends?

RBI estimates the **annual currency requirement** based on the forecast economic growth rate, inflation rate and disposal of soiled notes, among other things.

Present India's cash holding is one of the highest in the world in relation to GDP. For instance, India's currency per capita of Rs 22,752 is about 13% of per capita GDP. Currency in Circulation (CiC) as a proportion of GDP has also grown from 8.7% in 2016-17 to 13.7% in 2021-22.

A paper by ADB on the trend over 2000-18 in 11 advanced economies showed that Japan, Singapore, South Korea and the US showed a rising trend in CiC to GDP ratio. However, Denmark, Norway and Sweden deviated from this trend.

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**Read more:** [e-Rupi limit hike to promote offline digital payment push](#)

What is the reason for increased cash holding in India?

1) Big shocks such as Covid or the 2008 financial crisis trigger risk aversion among individuals. A consequence is an increase in cash holding, 2) Since 2019, India's inflation trajectory has trended upwards. This may partly explain the increase in CiC to GDP ratio to the pre-demonetisation level.

**Read more:** [Report card of demonetization after one year](#)

What should be done to reduce cash holding?

RBI should increase its focus on the digital payments landscape. Its policies should continue to be transformative at the grassroots level. Progress in digital mode will eventually loosen the grip of physical currency in payments.

**Read more:** [Digital Rupee: Advantages and Challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

### 12. [Red signals for green laws](#)

**Source:** The post is based on article “Red signals for green laws” published in the Business Standard on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Ecology and Environment

**Relevance:** Environmental Protection Laws

**News:** Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has proposed to amend the environmental protection law; and air and water pollution laws.

#### **About the proposals**

The government wants to **decriminalize the provisions** to remove fear of imprisonment for “simple” violations, proposal to raise the penalty from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh, instead of the imprisonment for the first default (originally up to five years).

For a repeat offence the penalty would become more interpretational. It will be treated as equivalent to the damage caused.

If the defaulter fails to pay both the original and additional penalty, then imprisonment would follow.

The aggrieved parties can appeal to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) against the adjudicating officer's order.

The government would create **an environment protection fund** where the penalty imposed by adjudicating officers under the amended rules will be deposited.

The fund will be used for the benefit of affected parties.

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

The proposal's aim is to **dilute the penal provisions**. They would lead to loosening of the environment protection laws and establish a business-friendly regime.

India is facing ecological challenges. For example, the country is among the world's top **climate-induced disaster-hit countries**.

There are arguments to keep environmental protection laws as strict as possible.

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Traditionally, India has been adherent to the **principle of climate justice** and keeping **environment protection non-negotiable**.

### **What are the other government initiatives that seem to be great cause of concern?**

In 2014, the government allowed factories to be set up in eight critically polluted belts.

The mid-sized polluting industries were allowed to operate within 5 km of eco-sensitive areas instead of 10 km.

The effluent norms for thermal power plants were eased. Further, ecologically sensitive areas (ESA) were denotified and coastal regulation zones (CRZ) were loosened.

The amendments to the Forest Act were proposed which aims to enable safaris, zoos, mining and other non-forest use on forest land.

The government has strengthened its role in **environmental decision-making bodies**. For example, it has reduced the number of independent members on the National Board for Wildlife from 15 to three.

The government also tried to take a bigger role in the appointment of the chairman of the NGT. However, the decision was stayed by the Supreme Court.

### **Way Forward**

The balance between growth and environment sustainability should be maintained at all times.

### 13. A matter of import: On spectre of wider trade and current account deficits

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**A matter of import: On spectre of wider trade and current account deficits**” published in **The Hindu** on **5th Jul 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Indian Economy – Issues related to growth and development

**Relevance:** Boosting India’s exports

**News:** India’s monthly **merchandise trade deficit** hit a fresh record of \$25.6 billion in June, as per preliminary estimates released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry.

This is the third occasion in seven months and the second month in a row that the trade deficit has widened to all-time highs.

The trade deficit for Q1 adds up to a record \$70.25 billion, over two times higher than a year ago.

What is the situation wrt India’s exports and imports?

#### **Exports**

Four of India’s top 10 export items — engineering goods, cotton yarn, drugs and pharma and plastic products — contracted from a year ago.

Petroleum exports were up 98% from June 2021, but about \$0.7 billion lower than May 2022.

#### **Imports**

Even as exports growth slid, **imports surged** by over 51% to \$63.6 billion in June, crossing the \$60 billion mark for the fourth month in a row.

Coal imports, and petroleum inflows, drove nearly three-fourths of this surge.

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And although gold imports moderated from over \$6 billion that month to \$2.6 billion in June, they were still 169% higher than a year ago.

What are the associated concerns?

The tangible slowdown in exports, due to weaker global demand, is **unlikely to change much soon**, with recessions or sharp growth slowdowns expected in several developed markets.

**Domestic demand for imports** of oil, fertilizers, coal and even gold is largely inelastic, and elevated global prices for these will **continue to escalate the import bill** through this year.

The **weakening rupee will raise import costs** further. Analysts expect the rupee to scale the 82 to a dollar mark by the October to December quarter before recovering.

– Robust forex reserves notwithstanding, the persistent outflows of foreign capital from the financial markets have triggered concerns about the **balance of payments situation**.

The **current account deficit is expected to more than double** to around 3% of GDP this year from 1.2% in 2021-22.

**Coal imports, are further expected to keep hitting record highs** as the monsoon will affect domestic output.

Efforts by the govt

The Government has imposed a **windfall tax on crude oil production** that could help bridge concerns about the fiscal deficit.

It also **placed restrictions on petroleum products' exports** and **raised customs duties on gold imports** to 15% from 10.75%.

Policymakers must avoid missteps and domestic inefficiencies hurting exports must be reviewed urgently.

### 14. [The relentless march of FPIs to the exit gate](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article “**The relentless march of FPIs to the exit gate**” published in **The Hindu** on **5th Jul 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Indian Economy

**Relevance:** Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) exiting India, Impact of Russia-Ukraine war

**News:** FPIs have been on a selling spree in India. June 2022 witnessed the worst sell-off since March 2020 at ₹50,000 crore. This is the **second highest sell-off in a month** since 1993, after March 2020.

This comes on the back of May's sell-off figures of about ₹44,000 crore. June was also the ninth on the trot that FPIs sold more than they had purchased.

Their selling actions have triggered a **significant decline in benchmark indices**, resulting in a **drop in market capitalization** of companies.

What are FPIs?

Foreign portfolio investors are those that invest funds in markets outside their home turf.

Their investments typically include equities, bonds and mutual funds.

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They are generally **not active shareholders** and do not exert any control over the companies whose shares they hold.

The passive nature of their investment also allows them to enter or exit a stock at will and with ease.

What factors cause movement of the FPIs?

Promise of **attractive returns** on the back of economic growth draws investors, including FPIs into a country's markets.

FPIs also show keenness to **invest in bonds**. This happens when there is a favourable differential between the real interest rates on offer in the country they aim to invest in, and other markets, but more specifically, the U.S.

Why have FPIs been selling India holdings?

Due to the following factors, there has been a decline in confidence of robust economic performance of India. This has led to the FPIs exiting market investments over these past months.

**Uneven recovery:** Post-pandemic, recovery in the Indian economy has been uneven.

- The **second wave** of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 devastated lives and livelihoods.
- The economy stuttered again when a **third, albeit less severe, wave** saw the spread of the Omicron variant early this year.

Add to this the return of pent-up demand in economies worldwide as the pandemic subsided.

The **pace of recovery** caught suppliers off guard, contributing to supply-side shortages.

**Russia-Ukraine war:** As the industry was grappling with supply-side shortages challenge, came Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

- Sunflower and wheat supplies from these two nations were impacted, leading to a **rise in global prices** for these crops. As supplies in general tightened across the globe, commodity prices too rose and **overall inflation accelerated**.

**Uncertainty of the industrial recovery:** Industrial production has seen a bumpy ride without giving confidence of a full and final recovery from the pandemic.

- For example, the S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) slid to 53.9 in June — the lowest level in nine months — from 54.6 in the previous month.

**Consumption expenditure too has remained weak** in the subcontinent.

**U.S. Federal Reserve raised the benchmark interest rate** starting March this year, in its battle against surging inflation.

- When the differential between the interest rates in the U.S. and other markets narrow, and if such an occurrence is accompanied by the strengthening of the dollar, then the ability of investors to realise healthy returns is impacted. For returns are measured not only by the value appreciation of assets but also by exchange rate changes.

In such a situation, the FPIs tend to exit assets seen as 'risky' such as in emerging markets like India, Brazil or South Africa.

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What impact does an FPI sell-off have?

When FPIs sell their holdings and repatriate funds back to their home markets, the value of local currency depreciates.

– After all, they sell rupees in exchange for their home market currency. As supply of the rupee in the market rises, its value declines.

The most telling impact is on the cost of India's crude oil imports that contribute to 85% of its oil needs.

### 15. [Making sense of Assam floods: Why rivers turned violent in the 20th century and how climate change is making them more unpredictable](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Making sense of Assam floods: Why rivers turned violent in the 20th century and how climate change is making them more unpredictable**” published in “**Indian Express**” on **6th July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Disaster and disaster management.

**Relevance:** To understand the impacts of increasing floods in the northeast.

**News:** This year Assam floods disrupted normal life. The current cycle of flooding occurred in places that have not been flood-prone in recent years. This indicates that environmental factors unique to each locality are responsible for the floods.

**Read more:** [Here is what Assam can do to prevent floods](#)

What are the advantages of floods in the northeast?

Every year, the Brahmaputra and its tributaries transport billions of tonnes of sediment, mainly from the Eastern Himalayas. This raised the lowlands and regularly adjusted river beds.

Floods cause disruption and damage but they also generate a bounty of fish and rejuvenate flood-plain ecosystems all along the Brahmaputra, including in the Kaziranga.

The entire Assam landscape has been shaped over millions of years with the help of an active monsoonal environment and mighty rivers that carry sediments weathered from the still-rising Himalaya.

**Must read:** [\[Yojana October Summary\] The Himalayan Floods – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the environmental factors responsible for increased Assam floods?

Two coupled ocean-atmosphere phenomena combined to create high rainfall in the Bay of Bengal.

**a)** La Niña in the Pacific, and **b)** A negative dipole condition in the tropical Indian Ocean.

To add to that, a warmer atmosphere because of climate change can hold more moisture leading to intense bouts of rain.

All this made Parts of the Northeast to experience a month-and-a-half of rains in 10-12 days. But there is no standard pattern for the recurrence of mega, unpredictable floods. In the last century, they occurred in 1934, 1950, 1954, 1955, 1966, 1988 and 2004.

How human footprint intensified floods in the northeast?

From an estimated 11,000 people in 1901, Guwahati now is home to close to 1.1 million people. Almost all cities witnessed an increase in population. As the human footprint intensified on the floodplains, the landscape was increasingly “developed and engineered”.



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The engineered and planned landscape has affected the floodplains in two ways: **1)** It has undermined their ability to store and absorb water and **2)** Reduced floodplain capacity to transport sediment.

Human interventions to “tame” rivers and “stabilise” hydrologically dynamic landscapes and riverscapes by building **dams and reservoirs**. But the operation of dams and reservoirs has also devastated the floodplains.

**Read more: [Uttarakhand Floods: Respect Himalayan landscape if you want to preserve it, say experts](#)**

What should be done?

Northeast India has fragile geology, changing rainfall patterns, and high seismicity and also face the risk of landslides. Along with the rapid transformation in rainfall characteristics and flooding patterns demands **building people’s resilience**.

**Construction projects** that impede the movement of water and sediment across the floodplain **must be reconsidered**.

Climate-imposed exigencies demand **new paradigms of early-warning and response systems** and securing livelihoods and economies in the northeast.

### 16. [Indian aviation needs a strong and steady tailwind](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Indian aviation needs a strong and steady tailwind” published in the “The Hindu” on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 Infrastructure, Transport Sector

**Relevance:** Aviation Sector and Industry

**Context:** Since 1991, India has witnessed radical changes in various sectors including the airline sector like the no. of airlines has grown from Air India and Indian Airlines to many more. But still, the aviation sector has been struggling on various fronts.

#### **The Aviation Sector since 1991 Reforms**

The reforms opened up the aviation sector, ended the licence raj and the monopoly of Indian Airlines and Air India.

In 2003, the **concept of low-cost airlines** overcame the cost barrier and the common man could think of flying.

#### **Importance of Aviation Sector**

The **aviation sector** is integral to **economic growth**. It can make India **globally competitive**.

It is important for **balanced regional growth**. For example, Passenger airlines and air cargo overcome geography and connect remote areas which are alienated from the mainstream.

It can **boost tourism**, which is the **largest employment generator** in the unorganised sector. This will resolve the issues of poverty and unemployment in India.

Air cargo integrated with road, rail and port infrastructure is the backbone of a growing economy.

#### **Why has Indian aviation become ‘the sick man of India’?**

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There are **choking regulations**, tough entry barriers for new entrants, high fuel prices on account of sky-high taxes etc.

There are **inefficient public sector airports** which have monopoly in the airport segment. Due to this, there is **absence of robust competition**, and as a result, the airports are extortionist in nature.

There is an absence of **a long-term visionary strategic policy** not just for airlines but also for the entire gamut of sectors in aviation. The government resorts to frequent and knee-jerk actions.

India's **air cargo growth** is also languishing. For example, Hong Kong airport alone handles more cargo than all of India's over 100 airports put together.

India's aviation fuel taxes both at the State and central level are among the highest in the world.

India has **mega airports** which do not connect **rural** and **small towns** from the large metros. India's '**Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) initiative**', has failed to bring much **regional connectivity** due to barriers like prohibitive costs in India.

India's MRO segment is in a dismal state. High customs, other duties and tortuous rules make it difficult to bring in parts, to facilitate repair and overhaul, etc. Indian Airlines send their aircraft to major MROs abroad like in Dubai, Singapore or Germany.

Further, it is to be mentioned that India's **charter business** has remained stagnant.

There are thousands of **pilots** and **technicians** unemployed in India. And Indian airlines have to look for **foreign pilots** and **engineers**. This pushes up costs in the process.

India's **Aircraft Act, 1934** and **Aircraft Rules, 1937** has not kept pace with modern technology in aerospace. This has increased costs to the industry and ultimately affected passenger growth.

### Way Forward

India needs **entrepreneurs** in the aviation sector because they **have revolutionary ideas**. They are the driving force in **hi-tech companies**. They are disrupting many conventional businesses. Therefore, this force must spread to other areas including the aviation sector. The Indian government should leverage the '**Start-up India**' initiative.

India needs reforms in all areas of aviation, i.e., **air cargo, airports, aviation fuel taxes and Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO)**.

India's statutory regulatory authority, the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)** needs to be modernised, well-staffed, motivated and incentivised. It should be headed by **aviation professionals** rather than by bureaucrats from the Indian Administrative Service(IAS).

India has an **inexhaustible market**. The government should increase the figure of 4% who now fly to 50% in the next two decades.

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### 17. [Taking stock of five years of GST](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Taking stock of five years of GST**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **7<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, and growth.

**Relevance:** To understand the impacts of GST on inflation.

**News:** The Goods and Services Tax (GST) has completed five years in existence. It was said that GST would be a boon to the economy in terms of higher revenue buoyancy, lower inflation, higher revenue, higher growth, and so on. But five years after implementation India is still facing higher inflation levels.

**Must read:** [Five Years of GST: Achievements, Challenges and Way Ahead – Explained, pointwise](#)

What is the theoretical impact of GST on inflation?

**Firstly**, the revenue-neutral rate (RNR) is calculated so that it would not cause higher inflation. But revenue neutrality does not mean that prices would be maintained in the economy. This is because the weight of goods in the consumption basket and their contributions to indirect tax collections are not the same.

**Secondly**, the effect of GST on the prices of certain goods and services depends on the structure and design of taxation, such as the level of exemptions, the rate structure of GST, the weight of goods and services in the CPI basket, the tax base, the efficiency of the administrative machinery, and so on.

**Thirdly**, in a 2017 report, the RBI showed that about half of the groups of items that GST covers are not in the CPI basket. So, the effect of GST on prices was expected to be small.

**Finally**, prior to the GST implementation, it was expected that prices would go down because GST harmonises indirect tax rates and eliminates the cascading effect.

**Read more:** [GST: Five years stronger](#)

What is the actual impact of GST on inflation?

During the 12 months preceding GST implementation, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation was 3.66%, while it increased to 4.24% post-GST in the next 12 months. A similar pattern was observed in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. This is because,

**First, rise in the tax rate of some goods and services**, the inclusion of business activities that were not taxed earlier, or the market structure. This would result in higher prices since the firms would pass on the cost to the consumers.

**Second**, when market power increases, prices increase, and profit also increases. Further, taking advantage of market power, it is possible that most firms would have passed the taxes to end consumers, resulting in a cost-push inflationary impact of the GST.

GST is found to have a significant **positive impact on inflation of commodity groups** such as paan, tobacco and intoxicants, clothing and footwear, housing, and miscellaneous sectors (mainly consisting of services).

**Must Read:** [Goods and Services Tax at five: The new regime's journey so far](#)

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To be precise **GST implementation has resulted in a decrease in inflation of food items and raised inflation of non-food items** such as CPI, paan, tobacco and intoxicants, clothing and footwear, housing, miscellaneous, and non-exempted food and beverages.

What should be done to check the GST's inflationary impact?

It is witnessed profiteering in select segments after GST. To pre-empt this possibility, the government set up the National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA) to ensure companies did not use GST as an excuse to raise prices. NAA should monitor the prices of critical or essential goods and services to see the price impact of GST.

Similarly, the Competition Commission of India should observe anti-competitive producer behaviour that hurts consumers via excessive price increases. These measures may ensure that producers do not take advantage of the GST.

### 18. [India-EU: global dynamics](#)

**Source:** This post is based on the article "**India-EU: global dynamics**" published in **The Indian Express** on **7th Jul 22**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Environment

**Relevance:** Transition towards clean energy

**Context:** Both India and the EU are committed to climate change, and the recent progress in India-EU alliance opens prospects of a customised partnership and mutual growth.

Carbon neutrality and European Union

At the forefront of the commitment to net-zero is the European Union, which wants to be the **first carbon-neutral region in the world** by 2050.

It brought out the '**European Union Green Deal**' in July 2021 to focus on a new growth strategy. It aims to transform the EU society into a fair and wealthy one with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy.

What has the EU done to achieve carbon neutrality?

To attain carbon neutrality, the EU has set forth immediate targets and has brought out the '**Fit-for-55**' package, a communication of its 2030 climate targets.

– A provision in the policy plan is the introduction of **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)**, a carbon-pricing system proposed for imports into the EU. The CBAM suggests taxing the imported goods-based difference between carbon used in the production of domestic and imported goods.

– CBAM is proposed to be complementary to the EU Emission Trading Scheme (EUETS)

What are the concerns regarding CBAM?

Developing countries have raised their concern on the b pointing out its conflict with WTO and UNFCCC norms, and are afraid that it encourages protectionism.

Developing countries also flag the use of **revenue collected from CBAM**.

– According to the EU, revenue collected from CBAM will be a part of the EU's budget, the **NextGenerationEU**, a recent initiative launched to provide economic support to EU member countries impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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– Countries opposing the proposed revenue utilisation mechanism suggest that if CBAM is to be implemented, revenue collected from it should be used for cleaner technology adoption in developing countries.

Trade relationship b/w India and EU  
India and the EU share a healthy trade relationship.

The EU is India's **third-largest** trading partner, while India is EU's 11th largest trading partner.

Recently, there has been **increasing initiative from both sides to deepen engagement** with each other.

Talks on India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that were stalled a while ago have **picked up again** and are scheduled to take place in June. The target to finalise the Free Trade Agreement has been set for 2023-24.

Way forward

Both India and the EU are committed to climate change. Rather than taxing exports to EU as proposed in CBAM, India and EU can cooperate better by investing in cleaner and greener technologies in India and helping in cleaning up production in India.

Such a partnership will ensure that both India and the EU have their agendas of economic growth and sustainability fulfilled, a win-win situation for both entities.

### 19. [Improving the odds for 5G](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“Improving the odds for 5G”** published in **“Business Standard”** on **7<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

**Relevance:** To understand the way to improve the 5G spectrum.

**News:** Recently, the government announced 5G spectrum auctions and limited E-Band backhaul allocation. Two bands of 250 MHz of E-band spectrum (70-80 GHz) are to be assigned to each telco that wins the 5G spectrum. But this is confusing, as there are 10 GHz available.

What is a Spectrum Auction?

[Click Here to read about it](#)

What are the challenges with India's Spectrum allocation?

**Restricting capacity:** In other countries such as the US or the EU, policies are framed to enable usage of the full 10 GHz at a minimal cost. This provides flexible capacity for much higher output. But a self-imposed constraint by the government will restrict the capacity of telcos.

Even the spread of 4G small cells is constrained in India, thereby reducing efficiency and productivity.

**Discriminatory allocation of spectrum to non-telcos:** Private companies will apparently be allotted spectrum on preferential terms compared with telcos. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries.

**Note:** Wireless backhaul is the use of wireless communication systems to transport data between the internet and subnetworks. It can help an organization or mobile network to eliminate the need for physical cabling.

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**Limit India's 5G capability:** Limiting wireless backhaul or pricing it high will cripple 5G and even 4G. This is because wireless backhaul will not be deployed extensively if the cost is prohibitive.

Without extensive wireless backhaul, the access spectrum from auctions cannot be fully utilised because of limited direct fibre connectivity.

**Read more:** [Opportunities and challenges associated with the launch of 5G Spectrum in India](#)

What should be done?

**Enable telcos to use available resources:** This will increase productivity and efficiency.

**Follow the US, the EU, and the UK in E-band backhaul allocation:** These include non-exclusive nationwide licences, with mandatory coordination and link registration (usually through a geolocation database).

**Setting up and institutionalising processes:** Indian authorities need to focus on setting up and institutionalising processes such as non-exclusive licensing to telcos, and the mechanism of geolocation databases for backhaul spectrum for mandatory coordination and registration.

**Increase gigabit wireless links:** Policies need to be framed to help build and grow gigabit wireless links to reinvigorate the sector and recover the trajectory and contribution. For instance, India can replicate “Square Mile” concept in London.

**Read more:** [Analysing spectrum auction](#)

**“Square Mile” approach:** In 2017, London initiated a project for providing free public gigabit Wi-Fi throughout Square Mile. The design incorporated 4G small cells for better connectivity.

The backhaul uses a self-organising millimetre wave (mmWave) mesh as a “neutral host” that enables use by multiple operators. The mesh gives all service providers gigabit backhaul and access applications at 12Gbps with its 60GHz mmWave access and backhaul.

**Allocate spectrum equitably:** There are only three serious telecom operators in India. Hence, the spectrum can be allocated equitably to all three without auctions. The funds diverted to auctions could then be invested in networks, and collections from revenue sharing are likely to far exceed collections from auctions.

**Mandatory infrastructure sharing:** Operators should share infrastructure with one neutral host network, or two competing networks owned by different consortiums.

**Must read:** [5G Impact: Traffic To Teaching, Factories To Farming](#)

### 20. [Shahida, Aura & Stories Of Two Markets](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Shahida, Aira & Stories of Two markets” published in the Times of India on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Inclusive Growth

**Relevance:** Female Labour Force Participation

**News:** In recent times, a number of surveys from the government and from private organisations like CMIE were released about the women labour force participation rate.

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### What is the situation wrt women labour force participation rate in India?

Indian women's labour force participation is **one of the lowest** in the world.

Further, jobs done by most women are found to be in the informal sector.

### What are the issues in women's labor force participation?

Most of the women do work out of **compulsion**, not by **choice**. For example, Shahida worked by compulsion because her husband fell chronically ill and could work no more. So Shahida had to find work.

There is a widening gap in **women's work participation**. The reasons are complex.

The government cannot reduce these gaps through job reservations or tax incentives to employers for hiring women because the problem is deeper.

### Way Forward

#### (A) Role models

– **Story of Shahida, a 21-years old self-employed e-rickshaw driver who lives in eastern Uttar Pradesh.**

She received a day-long training to drive the e-rickshaw and change its tyres with the help of an NGO. Now she runs a e-rickshaw on rent.

– **Aura, a cancer survivor,**

She emigrated from Colombia to the US. She has a fulltime job, as a cleaner in a building at an educational facility. She also has social security like health insurance.

Further, on weekends, she cleans houses to supplement her income.

**(B)** There should be a change in **gender norms** that allow and expect a woman to **take charge of her life**

21. [Air pocket: Show cause to SpiceJet overdue. DGCA has to be more proactive on safety](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“Air pocket: Show cause to SpiceJet overdue.**

**DGCA has to be more proactive on safety”** published in **“The Times of India”** on **7<sup>th</sup> July 2022.**

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

**Relevance:** To understand aviation safety in India.

**News:** India's civil aviation regulator [Directorate General of Civil Aviation\(DGCA\)](#) issued a show-cause notice to SpiceJet after reviewing a series of incidents. DGCA has concluded that the airline had poor internal safety oversight and inadequate maintenance.

Consequently, there's been a degradation in safety margin. There have been at least seven instances reported since May. For example, the Delhi-Dubai flight had to be diverted to Karachi after a snag.

**Read more:** [Year End Review -2021- Ministry of Civil Aviation](#)

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About the air accidents in India

The Government informed Rajya Sabha that there have been investigations into 49 air accidents since 2016. The findings showed that the main reasons for accidents were **a)** A failure on the part of the cockpit crew to stick to standard operating procedures, **b)** Technical defects and **c)** Factors related to the weather and ATC.

In 2013-14, the **US Federal Aviation Authority** decided to **downgrade Indian civil aviation from category I to category II** after an audit brought out shortcomings in safety and maintenance. It had an adverse impact on the international plans of some Indian carriers.

**Read more:** [Understanding bird strikes and aviation safety](#)

How DGCA can improve aviation safety?

DGCA primarily deals with safety issues. DGCA's primary responsibility is to take timely action to make sure that Indian flyers are guaranteed safety standards that match the best. That requires being proactive when problems are at a nascent stage.

**Read more:** [Indian aviation needs a strong and steady tailwind](#)

### 22. Just Fine – On amending environmental laws

**Source:** This post is created based on the article “**Just Fine – On amending environmental laws**” published in **The Hindu** on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS Paper 3 – Indian Environment – Environment Degradation and Protection

**News:** Union Environment Ministry has proposed an amendment to the sections of key environmental legislation.

**Read:** [Government's Proposal to amend the environment laws and associated issues](#)

#### **What is the current legal framework, and what is the proposal to change?**

India's present environment regulatory framework ensures that natural resources are not exploited unnecessarily and polluters are punished.

The **present framework punish violators by imprisonment up to five years** or with a fine of up to one lakh rupees, or both. There is also a provision for the jail term to extend to up to 7 years in case of repeated violations. It deters or discourages the violators from harming the environment.

However, the proposed amendments are looking for **simple monetary fines** instead of imprisonment for simple violations. However, it retains imprisonment as punishment for the grave injury to the environment.

*(Read more in the article link given above)*

#### **Could fines act as a deterrent against pending cases?**

A monetary fine is not a unique proposal given in India. Research on environmental crime in the United States and Europe suggests that fining is the most common mode of punishment.

Indian courts took between 9-33 years to clear a backlog of cases for environmental violations. In 2018, close to 45,000 cases were pending for trial and in that very year, 35000 more cases were added.

Fines could theoretically help with faster redress. However, **large environmental fines will continue to be contested in courts**, adding to the prevailing practice of tardy justice.



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**The threat of imprisonment might have acted as a deterrent** in India, where the effectiveness of environmental regulation is under par.

### 23. Defending the rupee

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Defending the rupee**” published in the **Business Standard** on **8<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 Indian Economy;

**Relevance:** Macroeconomic Conditions; Stabilization of the Indian Rupee

**News:** The **Indian rupee** and the **currencies across** the world, including in the developed economies, are under pressure. The Indian rupee has depreciated by about 4.4%. Therefore, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has announced measures.

The RBI's foreign exchange reserves have come down by over \$37 billion since the beginning of the year. Therefore, the RBI aims to boost **foreign exchange inflows** to support the Indian Rupee.

#### **What are the reasons behind the RBI decision?**

The rupee is under pressure because of a variety of reasons. They are as below:

- (1) Higher commodity prices and increasing imports have pushed up demand for foreign currency.
- (2) In June 2022, the trade deficit expanded to \$25.6 billion. The current account deficit (CAD) is expected to cross 3 percent of gross domestic product this fiscal year.
- (3) India is witnessing **large outflows** on the **capital account**. The FPIs (Foreign Portfolio Investors) have been selling Indian assets on account of **rising risk aversion** in the global **financial system** as well as increasing **interest rates** in the US. **For example**, the FPIs have taken out over **\$30 billion** since the beginning of the year, from India.

#### **What are the measures that RBI is taking, to control the fall in currency value?**

Following are some of the measures announced by RBI:

Banks will be exempted from maintaining the CRR and SLR for incremental non-residential external and foreign currency non-resident bank deposits for a limited period.

Banks have been given more freedom in terms of offering interest rates on the above-mentioned deposits.

The rules for FPIs in the debt market have been relaxed. The Indian firms have been allowed to borrow abroad in more liberal terms.

#### **Why would the above steps have a limited impact?**

At present, there is a **global environment** for the **overall global risk aversion**.

The companies may not be willing to **borrow** abroad because of the pressure on the rupee.

The **overall policy direction** may end up increasing risks. It may not be a wise step to increase the foreign debt of short-term nature, in order to defend the currency.

The global environment is likely to **remain uncertain** for some time. Therefore, the RBI's move to defend the currency may become increasingly costly and perhaps unsustainable.

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### The Way Forward

The RBI has **ample reserves (\$593 billion)** to quell **excess volatility**. Therefore, it should allow the **rupee** to depreciate in an orderly way. It would benefit in the following ways:

- (1) It would protect the **tradable sectors**
- (2) It would also make **Indian assets** more attractive to foreign investors
- (3) It will help stabilize the **overall external account** and the **currency**.

Further, the RBI should address the inflation problem through monetary policy.

In addition to the above, the RBI should encourage firms to hedge foreign currency risks.

### 24. [Out on a wing – On Issues Faced by Indian Airlines](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Out on a wing” published in the Business Standard on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 Infrastructure, Transportation Sector

**Relevance:** issues in Indian Aviation industry

**News:** The **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)**, has issued a **show-cause notice** to SpiceJet airline for its “failure to establish safe, efficient and reliable” services.

In recent months, SpiceJet aircrafts have witnessed **eight malfunctions** in 18 days. Consequently, the aircrafts either had to turn back or land at their destination “with degraded safety margin”.

In addition to the above, the SpiceJet airline also suffered **three technical problems** in 24 hours, recently.

SpiceJet is not the only airline that is facing such problems. In Recent days, aircraft of Vistara, the Tata-Singapore Airline-owned carrier, suffered engine failure on landing in Delhi from Bangkok.

#### Is the DGCA’s move rationale?

As per some experts, **three technical glitches** do not amount to a crisis. On an average, 30 incidents of go-arounds, diversions, technical snags and medical emergencies occur in a day, but few of them have safety implications.

The DGCA took a **long time** to take action. Further, it has **restricted** itself to a **show-cause notice** that does not prevent the carrier from continuing operations.

#### What are the causes behind slipping safety standards?

This has happened because the **aircraft carriers** are following **challenging turnaround times**, i.e. one after another flight within a short period of time. This is being done to maximize profits after a pandemic-induced slowdown.

Further, the expansion of Indian domestic airlines for international operations is adding a burden upon them.

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### What should be done?

As per the Civil Aviation Minister, even the smallest error hindering safety should be investigated and course correction measures should be taken soon.

The DGCA should impose more **vigilance measures** and **stringent consequences** on airlines for such incidents, even if they do not result in casualties.

### 25. [Barring restaurants from levying service charge is unfair, reeks of discrimination](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Barring restaurants from levying service charge is unfair, reeks of discrimination” published in the Indian Express on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 Indian Economy, Government Industrial Policies

**Relevance:** Service Charges and Issues in the Hospitality Industry

**News:** In recent days, the **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** issued guidelines wherein it has barred hotels and restaurants from **levying service charges** on the food bills of the customers.

### What is the service charge?

A service charge is a charge linked to the sales of the restaurant, which is independent of wages. It isn't revenue for the restaurant since it is distributed among workers.

### What are the arguments for the continuance of the service charge?

The **SC (Supreme Court)**, **HCs (High Courts)**, the **National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission**, and the **Income Tax Appellate Tribunal** has upheld the **legality of levying of service charge** in various judicial pronouncements.

The different businesses have **different pricing models**.

**Service Charge** formalizes **equitable and fair distribution** among the restaurant's workforce. Restaurants have many people working in the background that do not interact with the customer. These workers have a **distinct disadvantage**, from an **earning perspective**, in comparison to workers who interact with customers (getting tips or other incentives).

Service charge induces **price transparency** to the customer as well as the **restaurant worker**. There are **different costs** for dine-in, takeaway, and delivery services for a particular restaurant. So, in addition to a **baseline menu price**, a uniform service charge adds transparency to the pricing system.

If the service charge is removed, the restaurants will have to increase the **menu prices**. Further, the **restaurant owners** will have to **renegotiate rental contracts** because of the **butterfly effect**. This is because, nowadays, other than the fixed rent, the restaurants also enter into “**revenue share**” clauses built into their **lease contracts**. Service charge is kept outside the mandate of shared revenues. But, if the service charge would be included in the menu, it will have to be shared, accordingly.

There has to be a **robust conversation around** service charges as it actually helps restaurant workers to earn their fair share and further, it also **optimizes operations** for a business owner.

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26. [Welfare of the urban poor cannot be an afterthought in economic growth plans](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Welfare of the urban poor cannot be an afterthought in economic growth plans**” published in the **Indian Express** on **8<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Inclusive Growth

**Relevance:** Urban Poor Wellbeing

**News:** In recent period, many migrants have come back to cities in search of work. They went back to their villages during the covid pandemic-induced lockdown.

### **What are the issues facing the urban poor?**

The **social protection-related registration** of informal workers has increased, but the nature of opportunities continues to be insecure.

At present, **mechanisation** is resulting in the greater displacement of people dependent on farms.

The trail of migrants in search of livelihoods is going to increase in the coming future. For example, half of India is expected to **urbanize by 2030** and at least half of that population would be such migrants.

There are challenges of access to **public services**, for migrants in urban areas. For example, healthcare costs have gone up, and the cost of essential commodities, other than free food grains, has also increased. Further, nearly half the urban population does have access to cheap food grains under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**.

Most migrants including **domestic help** received lower than the **minimum wages** in the urban areas.

India’s large cities are among the **most segregated**. This is in contrast to **B R Ambedkar’s** hope that urbanisation will break caste hierarchies.

### **What can make the lives of the urban poor better in the short to medium term?**

(1) There is a strong case for **elected leadership in urban local bodies (ULB)** at the **slum cluster level**. The **Article 243S (5)** of the Constitution allows the State Legislature(s) to make provision for the **Constitution of Committees** in addition to the **Ward Committees in a ULB.** Therefore, the government can establish such a committee at the level of **basti** or the **slum cluster**.

(2) In addition to the **portability** of names and **cards** to access grains, there is a need to identify the deprived households without access to the NFSA list. This can be done through a **participatory identification** of the poor through a community connect process. Further, **non-entitled beneficiaries of NFSA** should also be deleted.

(3) After the identification of the deprived households, the **special community connects campaigns should be started** to ensure access to **social welfare schemes**. For example, LPG connection, bank accounts, etc.

(4) The government should form **SHGs** of the deprived households under **the National Urban Livelihood Mission**. Access to credit for diversification of livelihoods should be promoted.

(5) The government needs to establish **Migration Support Centres**, for easing the arrival process of migrants to cities in search of work. Here, services for easy rental housing, etc. be provided.

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(6) There is a need for **skilling, upskilling, and re-skilling** poor households in ways that enable them to combine work with skill **up-gradation**. In addition, apprenticeships should be provided.

(7) The urban local bodies set up specially **designated teams** for the poor. They can increase property tax for it. To implement it, the ULB requires governance reforms and professionals with specialized skill sets.

(8) The government should leverage census towns and many rural growth clusters that were developed as part of the **Rurban Mission**. They can be developed as **robust growth centres**. Specific economic activity can be started at the clusters.

(9) Efforts should be made for **human development** through the improvement of schools, health facility expansion, etc. **The Atmanirbhar Health Infrastructure Yojana** has been launched, which has prioritized strengthening **urban health centers** and the creation of **frontline health teams**.

(10) There is a need to enforce **minimum wages**. For example, domestic help needs support for wages.

(11) Master Plans must factor in the **housing, wellbeing, and welfare needs** of the working class or the **urban poor**.

To make rapid economic progress, India needs to improve the **well-being** of the workforce that migrates to cities in the hope of a better life.

### [27. A plan that is much more than just planting trees](#)

**Source:** This post is created based on the article “A plan that is much more than just planting trees” published in The Hindu on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS Paper 3 – Environment – Degradation

**Context:** Forest Landscape Restoration can help in regaining ecological functionality and improving human welfare.

In today’s world, forests need to be celebrated more than ever before. Simultaneously, more forests need to be created and restored.

Deforestation and forest degradation contribute to around 12% of global greenhouse gas emissions. The total area occupied by primary forests in India has decreased by 3.6%.

Many efforts are ongoing for tree plantation, like under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Van Mahotsav. The history of Van Mahotsav goes back to July 1947, when it was first organized by the Punjabi botanist, M.S. Randhawa.

However, there is much debate about the efforts around tree planting.

Generally, governments rely on afforestation and reforestation for growing trees on non-treed land. Now, these strategies have evolved to forest landscape restoration.

### **What is Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR)?**

FLR is the process of **regaining ecological functionality and improving human welfare** on deforested or degraded forest landscapes.

It involves communities when the interventions are designed and executed for the up-gradation of landscapes.

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This process ensures the diversity of the native tree species during plantation. As diversity results in more efficient carbon-sequestering than monoculture tree plantations. Moreover, it is beneficial for the livelihood of local communities. For example, in Punjab, native tree species like Jhand (*Prosopis cineraria*), Desi Kikar (*Acacia nilotica*), and Pharwan are being planted. Most of these saplings have a high survival rate of 90%, which is very important for sustainable reforestation.

Nearly two billion hectares of degraded land in the world (and 140 million hectares in India) can be restored as forest land.

### **What are the benefits associated with Tree Plantation?**

#### **Environmental benefits**

Influencing the carbon cycle and mitigating the effects of climate change. Annually, forests absorb roughly 2.6 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide. It is 33% of the total CO<sub>2</sub> released due to fossil fuel burning.

Regulating the ecosystem.

#### **Community benefits**

Planting trees is deeply linked to the **'wholistic' well-being of all individuals, the community, and the planet.**

**First,** Forests function as a resource base for goods and services for local communities.

**Second,** Forests are beneficial for agrarian cultures. According to academics from the World Resources Institute, forest ecosystems enrich soil fertility and water availability, and enhance agricultural productivity.

**Third,** Tree planting prevents erosion and stems flooding.

**Fourth,** Sustainable forest crops reduce food insecurity. It empowers women and allows them to gain access to more nutritional diets and new income streams.

**Fifth,** Agroforestry lessens rural-to-urban migration by increasing resources and household income.

#### **Forest Restoration programs by India and the world**

The period of 2021-2030 has been declared as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

**Bonn Challenge:** Launched in 2011, with a global goal to restore 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. India joined it in 2015, with the pledge to restore 26 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by 2030.

**Green Skill Development Programme:** The program has been launched for the youth, looking for employment and livelihood in the forests and environment.

Telangana has initiated a large-scale tree planting program called 'Telanganaku Haritha Haram'.

### **What are the hurdles in Forest Restoration?**

Identification of areas for restoration,

A lack of importance accorded to research and scientific strategies in tree planting,

Conflicts of interest among Stakeholders, and financing

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### What should be done?

Forest landscape restoration must be implemented proactively.

The stakeholders including the community, champions, government, and landowners need to be involved in the process.

All reforestation efforts should consider the local socio-economic context and landscape history of a region.

Vulnerable forest-dependent communities should be included.

The example of the Punjab's Mansa district should be repeated everywhere in the country.

### 28. [Beating the heat](#)

**Source:** This post is created based on the article “**Beating the heat**” published in **The Hindu** on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**Syllabus:** GS Paper 3 – Environment – Climate Change

**Context:** Rising temperature is becoming a bigger problem with the days going by. Adapting to and mitigating this challenge is the need of the hour.

The planet's temperature is rising consistently. Furthermore, an analysis of public weather data suggests that **Monsoon temperatures are 0.3 °C higher than average summer temperatures** when compared from 1951-80. From 2012-2021, this anomaly rose to 0.4 °C. Whereas, **India's average temperature has risen 0.62 °C from 1901-2020**. However, it does not mean a uniform rise in temperature across seasons. Temperature is rising more during winter (January and February) and post-monsoon (October-December).

From 2015-2020, 2,137 people reportedly died due to heat stroke in northwest India. While, southern India had reported 2,444 deaths due to excessive environmental heat, with Andhra Pradesh accounting for over half the reported casualties.

The **urban heat island effect** is contributing to this stress. This phenomenon happens because of concrete surfaces, and dense populations tend to on average be hotter than rural habitations.

### What are steps taken by the government to handle heat stress?

Some states, led by Gujarat, have **Heat Action Plans** (HAP).

The National Disaster Management Authority is working with 23 out of 28 heat-prone States to develop HAPs. **HAPs stress changes in the built environment by:**

**First**, using material that keeps the indoors cooler

**Second**, having an early warning system about heatwaves

**Third**, improving health infrastructure to treat heat stroke patients.

### What should be done?

Governments should take steps to plan infrastructure and housing in ways that recognize the dangers of a warming environment.

India should include financial incentives for effective cooling plans, preferably via Budget outlays.

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### 29. Revving up in low gear: The paradoxes in India's transport sector

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Reviving up in low gear: The paradoxes in India's transport sector**” published in the **Business Standard** on **8<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 Infrastructure; Transportation Sector

**Relevance:** Transportation Sector; Logistics

**News:** The transport sector is growing leaps and bounds in terms of infrastructure, with huge investments. However, the sector is not producing enough sustainable revenue.

#### **Various measures are taken by the government to improve the transportation sector Indian Railways (IR)**

IR is investing close to 1% of GDP annually. It is a better investment than ever before. Introduction of “**semi-high speed**” **passenger trains, Vista dome coaches** on scenic routes, and other major programs are being taken up for upgrading railway stations.

#### **Airways**

In the recent past, it has been noticed that **no Indian airline** is making money. This will create further pressure on fares and therefore more losses

There have been a lot of “**incidents**” in the aircrafts which has raised concerns about safety.

Further, the staff of Indian airlines is facing **pay cuts**. In addition, the airline sector is also facing the wrath of **high oil prices** and **high taxes**.

#### **Railway Sector**

The **dedicated freight corridors** have made **slow progress**. There has been a massive overshoot in the initial cost estimates.

Annual railway investment is now as much as revenue. Almost none of the investment is from **operational surpluses**. The bulk will come as **budgetary support**. Therefore, it could translate into **mounting debt**.

#### **Roadways**

The government is aggressively promoting **expressways, inter-modal traffic nodes, and port linkages** to address India's perennial infrastructure deficit.

As per data, truck traffic is reported to have **speeded up** on the **new highways**. The introduction of GST has speeded up the process.

Its annual investment is about half what it is for the railways (or 0.5% of GDP).

There is an imbalance between **revenue** and **investment**, the latter being about nine **times earnings**.

The distance moved in a day by the average truck remains well below what it is elsewhere.

The investment is being done out of the **Budget**, and that too without taking into consideration the primary metric of **return on investments**.

#### **What are the issues in India's transport sector?**

It has been witnessing stagnant traffic trends vis-a-vis passenger traffic & freight traffic and poor or negative returns.



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Further, the sector demands unprecedented levels of investment in the coming future. But there is an imbalance between **revenue generation** and expenditure.

### What should be done?

The government has been **investing** in all **forms of transport**. The results of that investment would be visible in the **next two-three years** in the form of **transformational change** in the air, on highways and expressways, and on the railways.

Substantial **private funding** is required for the transport infrastructure.

Further, the **traffic growth** should justify the investment. Otherwise, the government's asset monetization program will not deliver the expected outcomes.

### 30. [Delayed payments for small firms stifle economic growth](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article "**Delayed payments for small firm stifle economic growth**" published in the **Indian Express** on **9<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development, and Employment; Inclusive Growth and issues arising from it.

**Relevance:** Issues linked to Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

**News:** In recent times, it has been reported that small business owners (MSMEs) are facing delays in payments from big companies and public sector units.

### Status of payments to MSMEs

As per data, payments worth Rs 6.3-10.7 lakh crore were delayed to MSMEs during 2020-21.

The average days for the delays of payment to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) were estimated to 194, 68 and 46 days respectively.

### What are the implications?

There is an erosion of value, for every day that payment is delayed. It locks in the capital that could have been deployed gainfully. The problem is being largely faced by cash-strapped and credit-starved MSMEs.

**Micro and small enterprises** borrow at **comparatively higher costs** and often operate in very competitive environments.

The delayed payment led to the foregoing of **business opportunities** due to lack of liquidity or disrupted cash flows. This is detrimental to the **specific firm or enterprise** as well as a deterrent to the **overall growth of MSMEs**. The firms face uncertainty in terms of **planning business cycles**.

The **other types of** costs incurred by such supplier firms include the **time spent, and the personnel costs** employed to **recover payments**.

The problem of delayed payments gives buyers an advantage that the economy cannot afford.

It increases the burden on the **MSMEs**. They are forced to work against the **smaller supplier firms**. Further, it also cripples economic activity for the vast majority of entrepreneurs in the country.

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### What are the challenges in resolving such challenges?

(1) Although, the government launched **the SAMADHAN platform**. But there are gaps in the implementation. There are close to **one lakh complaints** at present on the portal. But the disposal rate is low.

(2) In addition, there are market-based solutions like **TReDS, supply chain financing**, and **in-time credit** to ensure amicable supplier-buyer relations while easing cash flows for MSMEs. But the biggest impediment here is that they rest on two preconditions: (i) heightened formality of practices and (ii) **buyers' intent**.

### What should be done?

(1) The government should bring **regulatory interventions like** shifting the onus of timely payments onto the buyer firms. The **highest levels of government** should issue statements that such delays are not in the nation's interest.

(2) Efforts should be made to strengthen **associations** and **credit practices** of MSMEs. To quicken this, micro and small businesses need to coalesce and work towards gaining sustainable credit terms.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of July, (First Week) 2022

# General Studies Paper- 4

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## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of July, (First Week) 2022

### 1. [Don't Be a Boris](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Don't Be A Boris**” published in **The Times of India** on **8<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 4 Ethics – in Private and Public Relationships; Public/Civil Service Values and Ethics in Public Administration:

**Relevance:** The Boris Johnson Case

**News:** Recently, senior cabinet ministers in Britain resigned. Further, Boris Johnson also resigned as the leader of the Conservatives.

#### **About Boris Johnson**

He led his party to a landslide **parliamentary majority** in December 2019, biggest since 1987. He was also involved in Brexit.

#### **Issues**

He was involved in a scandal. Therefore, he was tumbled out of the PM's office with farcical regularity.

Since Brexit, the incomes aren't up and Britain isn't stronger.

#### **What are the morality lessons that should be learnt by other democracies?**

Even leaders with massive mandates need to be mindful of the fact that the office needs to **command** at least a measure of **respect** and **authority**.

The **political parties** must respond faster when they sense their leaders are proving to be a liability.

The world's elected leaders keep in mind that they shouldn't take the governed for granted.