

9 PM

Compilation

8th to 13th August, 2022

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General Studies Paper – 1

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General Studies - 1

1. [Water-wisdom for climate change](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Water-wisdom for climate change**” published in the **Business Standard** on **8th August 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 subcontinent)

News: During the monsoon season, it has been noticed that precious rainwater is going down the drain. It means we are wasting precious natural resources.

Some key facts about water

One, water is a key determinant of health security and economic growth in India.

Two, water wars are not inevitable but will happen if we do not manage our resources prudently.

Various Paradigms in the understanding of the water management practices in India.

Over the past decades, the country has learned critical lessons on water management and evolved a new paradigm.

(A) Till the late 1980s: Water management was largely confined to the issue of irrigation projects. Therefore, dams and canals were built to store and supply water over long distances.

However, big droughts occurred in the late 1980s, and big projects were found insufficient.

(B) Post-1980s Period: The **traditional technologies for rainwater harvesting** in ecological diverse regions of India were promoted. For example, the slogans like “**Rain is decentralized, so is the demand for water. So, capture the rain when and where it falls**”, were raised. Therefore, the state governments started launching massive programs to capture rainwater by building ponds, digging tanks, and setting up check-dams on streams.

(C) By the mid-2000s: It was understood that groundwater is not a “minor” resource, but **the “major source”** of water for both drinking and irrigation. Further, over 50% of agriculture was still rain-fed. Therefore, water conservation and rainwater harvesting were critical for productivity and well-being.

Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was linked with the rainwater harvesting efforts. Thereafter, rural water assets were constructed.

(D) In the 2010s; During this period, India witnessed a number of **urban droughts**. During this time, it was learnt that augmenting the water supply is just one part of the challenge.

(1) Pumping and piping water from long distances led to losses in distribution and rising electricity costs.

(3) Overuse of groundwater led to a decline in the groundwater level in urban areas.

(4) There were cases of **encroachment** of water bodies.

(5) More water supply meant more wastewater, and untreated wastewater released into rivers caused river and water pollution. This in turn destroys available water and increases the cost of cleaning up drinking water.

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(6) The urban residents were not even connected to underground sewerage. Therefore, they relied upon **on-site sewage “disposal” systems** like septic tanks or open drains

(7) The **sewage treatment infrastructure** was not sufficient to stop river pollution.

What should be done?

To ensure **affordable sanitation** and **treatment of wastewater** in cities, there is a need for the reengineering of **on-site systems**. It means waste to be collected from each household, transported, and treated in that area.

The **urban-industrial wastewater** and **sewage** must be treated, recycled, and reused. If it is treated for reuse, then it will prevent water loss and pollution of our rivers.

In addition, water use must be minimized and become much more efficient with every drop. For example, investing in **water-efficient irrigation**, household appliances, and changes in our diets.

India must invest in various **local water systems** to capture every drop of rain at local levels like the construction of ponds, tanks, and rainwater-harvesting structures.

Our **forests** and **green spaces** need to be protected. They will recharge our groundwater.

In our cities, the lakes and ponds should be protected as they would act as sponges that will allow us to harvest the **rain flood** and make sure it does not turn into wasted water. Further, the treated sewage and wastewater must be diverted to these sponges to recharge the groundwater in the cities and make us water-secure.

2. [Moving policy away from population control](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Moving policy away from population control**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **13th August 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 1** Population and Associated Issues, Poverty and Developmental issues, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Relevance: Demographic Transition of India

News: Recently, the United Nations released its **World Population Prospects (WPP), 2022**.

WPP’s Projections of Demographic Transition of India

India is at the **3rd stage of the demographic transition (DT)**. It is experiencing a slowing **population growth rate** due to constant **low mortality** and rapidly **declining fertility**. Its population growth is further expected to fall to 1% by 2025.

Read more: [The UN World Population Prospects Report and Population Issues in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the challenges in Demographic Transition?

Several States have not achieved a **low TFR**. This has been due to high illiteracy levels, rampant child marriage, high levels of under-five mortality rates, low workforce participation of women, and low contraceptive usage compared to other states.

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Male-dominant sex ratio: In 1951, the country had a sex ratio of 946 females per 1,000 males. It has come down to 943 females per 1,000 males in 2011. The major causes behind this decline are the preference for **sons** and **sex selection** (both pre-and post-natal)

Some communities face challenges like **marriage squeeze** due to an imbalance between the number of men and women available to marry in a specific society and eventual **bride purchase**.

India stands 101 out of 116 nations in the **Global Hunger Index**. Anaemia and stuntedness remain high despite ongoing the **Public Distribution System** and the **Midday Meals Scheme**.

Serious health risks: In 75 years, India's health problems have shifted from **communicable diseases** to **non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**. For example, India is home to over eight crore people with diabetes. In contrast, **India's health-care infrastructure** is highly inadequate and inefficient, India's **public health financing** is low which is among the **lowest percentages** in the world.

The share of India's elderly population is now increasing and is expected to be 12% by 2050.

Other issues in harnessing the demographic dividend: a) India's labour force is constrained by the absence of women from the workforce; i.e., only a fourth of women are employed, b) Poor quality of educational attainments and lack of the basic skills required for the modernised job market, c) India's one of the world's lowest employment rates is another enormous hurdle in reaping the 'demographic dividend'.

What should be done to harness demographic dividends?

There is a need to ameliorate the **status of women** in Indian society, and quality of life. Further, the government should also prioritize improvement in **sex ratio**.

The focus should not be on population control but on improving the quality of life of the Indians.

For the elderly population, **advanced investments** in the development of a robust social, financial and healthcare support system are the need of the hour.

There should be an **extensive investment in human capital like** education and health, care for older populations, suitable infrastructure creation, and conducive **social welfare schemes**.

Read more: [World Population Prospects\(WPP\) Report: UN population report explained: A look at the trends, projections and implication](#)

General Studies Paper – 2

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General Studies - 2

1. [India, democracy and the promised republic](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**India, democracy and the promised republic**” published in **The Hindu** on **8th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues **arising** out of their design and implementation.

Relevance: About the status of India on various parameters on its 75th anniversary.

News: Recently, a commentator has argued that India may not have succeeded in economic terms but has remained a democracy since its independence. But, democracy is not only about the protocols of governance but as much about the outcomes that it produces.

How India should be judged on its 75th anniversary?

On its 75th anniversary, India must be judged by the extent to which it has advanced human development.

This is because Jawaharlal Nehru in his message to the nation on August 15, 1947, mentions the aim of India “To bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, to the peasants and workers of India. To fight and end poverty and ignorance and disease. To build up a prosperous, democratic and progressive nation, and to create social, economic and political institutions that will ensure justice and fullness of life to every man and woman.”

What is the status of women on the 75th anniversary?

Gender-based inequality is rampant in India; within every social group, women are worse off than their men. Women are less nourished, less educated and have a representation in the institutions of governance far lower than their share of the population.

Women participate equally in the elections, but they are denied a place at the high table of governance. This reflects in the very low female labour force participation in India compared to the rest of the world.

It reinforces their secondary position in society by adding economic deprivation to the social restriction that discourages them from working outside the home.

Read more: [Preserving democracy in India](#)

What is the status of Regional differentiation on the 75th anniversary?

China does far better than India on development indicators pertaining to health and education, not to mention poverty. There are States in India which compare quite well with China on human development indicators.

The south and the west of India show greater development because they have witnessed the greater social transformation. The superior human development indicators of Kerala and Tamil Nadu have followed this social transformation. For instance, data released by NITI Aayog in 2021 show multi-dimensional poverty in Bihar to be over 50% while it is only a little more than 1% in Kerala.

Read more: [No inner-party democracy](#)

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What are the other challenges faced by India at present?

a) The freedom of expression of individuals is curtailed, **b)** India had not achieved sufficient progress in agriculture, **c)** India's middle classes have benefited greatly from the economic policies of the past 75 years, but have contributed relatively little to safeguard democracy.

Indians displayed an unusually strong commitment to civil liberties in 1977. It is necessary for India to create "social, economic and political" institutions that can facilitate social transformation. They can also arise from civil society.

2. [Chinese military vessel at Hambantota is a spectre that threatens the new equilibrium in India-Sri Lanka relations](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Chinese military vessel at Hambantota is a spectre that threatens the new equilibrium in India-Sri Lanka relations**" Published in the **Indian Express** on 8th August 2022.

Syllabus: GS 2 International Relations; Bilateral Relations

Relevance: India-Sri Lanka Relations

News: Recently, it came to the notice of the Indian government that a Chinese military vessel, the Yuan Wang 5, was scheduled to arrive at **Hambantota Port** on August 11. It had to stay over for a week. The Sri Lankan government attempted to show **it** off as a "**research vessel**" on an innocuous refuelling stop.

About the Chinese Vessel – China's Yuan Wang: This is a strategic platform that forms a part of the People's Liberation Army support force. It is used for surveillance.

India's Response to the vessel: Delhi has raised serious security concerns with respect to Sri Lanka's move, allowing Chinese vessels.

Sri Lanka's Response: After a tense week of negotiations between the two South Asian neighbours, Sri Lanka has "**deferred the arrival of Chinese vessels until further consultations are made on this matter**".

What are the possible threats to Indian interests?

This is the second time in 19 months that Colombo has tried to make light of **India's security concerns** on account of the Chinese presence in Sri Lanka. **For example**, In January 2021, the Sri Lankan government awarded **a renewable energy project** on three islands close to the Tamil Nadu Coastline, to a Chinese firm. However, Sri Lanka deferred the project after much diplomatic energy on India's part, and a commitment to developing the same project through a grant.

Sri Lanka and other **India's entire neighborhood** countries like the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan are facing a crisis. This may impact India adversely.

What can be its implications for India-Sri Lanka relations?

Sri Lanka cannot play a China vs India game on its soil without getting hurt itself.

India has been giving **massive assistance** to Sri Lanka in its time of economic crisis. Colombo may lose Delhi's goodwill if it continues to ignore **India's real security concerns** in the neighborhood.

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3. [The coming battle for Taiwan](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The coming battle for Taiwan**” published in the **Live Mint** on **8th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 International Relations

Relevance: Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific Region and India’s neighborhood

News: The recent visit of US Leader Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan has triggered geopolitical events in the Indo-Pacific Region, in the form of the current Taiwan crisis.

China wants to reunify the country, both to recover from two centuries of humiliation by Western powers and to finish the civil war that started nearly a hundred years ago.

Further, China believes that if it recovers Taiwan, then it will retake its rightful place as a global power.

What are the stages that China has passed through to reach its present status?

First Act: China has adopted Deng Xiaoping’s ‘**hide and bide**’ strategy and Hu Jintao’s ‘**peaceful rise**’. Thus, it remained peaceful, until it was powerful enough to move to the next stage.

Second Act: By 2010 Beijing assessed that it was powerful enough to assert itself in the international arena. Therefore, it started forcefully taking control of disputed territories, both land, and sea, on its own terms. It has used coercion and force to change the status quo along the Ryukyus, Spratlys, Paracels, the nine dashed lines in the South China Sea, and, the Himalayan frontiers with Bhutan, Nepal, and India. However, India has been successful in forceful resistance.

Third act: By 2020, **Hong Kong** was reunited. China destroyed its limited autonomy under “one country, two systems”. Thus, the only remaining Chinese target is **Taiwan**. **Macao** had already been taken.

The Fourth act: It will take place when China is reunified. It will then challenge and upstage the US as the world’s dominant power.

What are the possible resistances to Chinese policy?

There are always **two threats** that can cause destruction to a particular country, including, present China; 1) Internal folly and 2) External resistance.

Internal Folly: Great nations suffer more from self-inflicted wounds than anything done by the enemy. China has been suffering from one century of civil war and revolutionary excesses. For example, recent attacks on the private sector, the tech economy, the current zero-covid policy, etc. have damaged the Chinese economy.

External resistance: India’s resistance has added friction to the Chinese ambition in the Himalayas. **QUAD** and **AUKUS** have emerged. Nancy Pelosi’s visit is a manifestation of a bipartisan consensus in Washington that Beijing must be challenged.

What should be done?

For India

(1) Late K. Subrahmanyam pithily stated that India is better off on the side of the West in its contest with China because China’s desire and thy manner of pursuing its desire is wrong

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(2) Taiwan is not a major strategic concern for India. However, because it is the **single most important factor** that can consume Beijing's energies and delay its play for global power, it is in our interest that Taiwan keep China occupied. Therefore, to some extent, our interests converge with those of the US, Japan, Australia, and the Taiwanese people.

(3) Quad partners can extend material support, and India's moral support for Taiwan can be very important.

Global Geopolitics

As China may go to war. Therefore, international leaders should pursue good diplomacy, which involves buying time. A real invasion might begin with pre-emptive attacks against US military assets.

4. [CUET Defective](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**CUET Defective**" published in **The Times of India** on 8th **August** 2022.

Syllabus: **GS 2** Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human

Relevance:

News: Recently, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced that the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) exam will go on till August 28.

What are the reasons for such an extended exam period?

The announcement is attributed to "administrative/logistics/technical" reasons.

Proximate Causes

In CUET's second phase, a number of major technical glitches like server issues, snags in downloading papers and security protocol failures. Therefore, NTA cancelled exams at around 10% of the centres.

Ultimate Causes

The **under-preparation** of the NTA. Unlike JEE-Main, which has only two papers, CUET tests **54,000 unique subject combinations**. Therefore, CUET demands a more complex IT architecture and sturdier infra.

Consequences

The glitches and delays will have spill-over effects on the entire higher education cycle.

Psychological impact: For Class XII students, this year is being felt like a never-ending nightmare of exam dates. They will have to face a fresh round of uncertainty. They will get their admit cards close to exam dates, often leaving them scrambling to make difficult travel arrangements.

The Way Forward

NTA should invest in system upgrades. For example, the Kendriya Vidyalaya network can be used.

There are plans to hold **CUET twice** in the next academic year.

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The Union Ministry of Education must ensure accountability at NTA.

5. [Challenges faced by parliamentarians: A Disruption-mukt Parliament](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**A Disruption-mukt Parliament**” published in the **Indian Express** on **9th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, the conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Relevance: About the challenges faced by parliamentarians in conducting business.

News: In a deliberative democracy, Parliament works as a special purpose vehicle for the legislative scrutiny of bills, grievance redressal and debate on policies and related governance issues. The inability of Parliament to transact any business and the lack of serious deliberation must be a matter of grave concern for all.

What are the challenges faced by parliamentarians?

Firstly, for any parliamentarian, it is extremely disappointing to be unable to speak in the House. When this happens too often, their enthusiasm to speak reduces significantly.

Secondly, When it comes to bills, opposition members argue vehemently that better scrutiny of the bill. But a close look at the percentage of members attending the meetings of standing committees makes one doubt the sincerity behind their demands.

Thirdly, systems work effectively when wrongdoers are punished and rule-abiding people are rewarded. What happens currently is exactly the opposite, especially in the context of coverage of parliamentary proceedings in mainstream media.

Those who make a reasonably good speech — well argued and supported by statistics, examples or case studies — rarely get adequate attention.

Fourthly, Only the politics of pandemonium(Chaos) grabs headlines in the news.

Read more: [Rajya Sabha making the parliamentary process participatory and accountable](#)

What should be done?

Perhaps presiding officers can emulate the courts of law. Like in courts, the presiding officers can conduct what is called in-camera proceedings in their chambers, especially for Zero Hour and Question Hour.

In-camera conduct of Zero and Question Hours will be a smart way to prevent punishing those who observe discipline.

Read more: [Unsayable in the House – On issue of unparliamentary words](#)

As the Parliament of independent India enters the eighth decade of its history and prepares to enter a new, more well-equipped and modern Parliament House, it is the right time to think about systemic reforms.

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6. GDP And Our Judges

Source: The post is based on the article “GDP And Our Judges” published in **The Times of India** on **9th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 Functioning of the Indian Judiciary

Relevance: Judicial Review, Judicial Activism, and Judicial Overreach

News: Recently, A Supreme Court bench proposed to create **an expert committee** of Election Commission, Finance Commission, NITI Aayog, and RBI officials alongside political representatives. It will look into the economic impact of freebies doled out by governments.

What are the issues in the judicial interventions in the areas of economic growth, as per the article?

(1) **Climate of uncertainty:** The Judicial verdicts entail economic implications. An uncertain legal scenario is a great dampener for the private sector. The Covid pandemic has set back **economic growth**. Similarly, economic growth is being impacted by climate change. This has complicated **environmental decision-making** too.

(2) **Threat of criminality:** The bona fide decisions of the civil servants are being reopened in the courts. This will lead to delays in decision-making within the bureaucracy as civil servants are fearful of criminal charges. For example;

(a) In 2021, a two-judge SC bench directed CBI to inquire into the two-decade-old case of strategic disinvestment of Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL), where a preliminary inquiry was closed by CBI itself.

(b) Former SBI chairman Pratip Chaudhuri was arrested on a magistrate court's order, for an asset reconstruction case, long after retirement. Ironically, the right forum to hear that matter was NCLAT.

(3) Judiciary decisions that **override economic growth** or which reopen already settled matters are putting the **executive** and **judiciary** at cross-purposes. In fact, both organs have a larger public interest in mind.

(5) The government has **economic imperatives**. Political executives are equally concerned about both the economy and the environment. For example, the GOI has taken the lead in renewable energy, and electric vehicles, addressing climate change and meeting SDGs.

(6) The governments are accountable to citizens for providing them a good standard of living. Further, The Judiciary doesn't have the expertise in many matters.

(8) There are cases of **judicial overreach**, i.e., courts are acting somewhat arbitrarily against government decisions and decision-makers. For example;

(a) In 2019, the SC suspended the MOPA Airport project's Environmental Clearance (EC) despite the **Environment Assessment Committee** and **NGT** following due process and ruled in favour of an EC being awarded.

(b) In the **Goa Foundation vs Sesa Sterlite case**, the SC halted the iron ore mining. Four years have passed and a vast number of jobs have been lost.

How SC can get it right?

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- (1) The SC can take its own precedent and chart a **long-term road map and framework**. For example, in **the Shivashakti Sugars Limited vs Shree Renuka Sugar Limited verdict**, SC observed that the economic impact and effect of a decision ought to be kept in mind.
- (2) The Judges start looking into **economic impacts** or **cost-benefit analysis** while arriving at responsible and sustainable judgments.
- (3) By Institutionalization of dispute assessment. The SC can constitute an **independent committee of experts**, that can assist the court to help balance its final assessment by offering quantifiable analysis.
- (4) **Judicial interventions** having economic implications require further deliberation, external expertise, a new assessment framework, and a macro-perspective.
- (5) The courts must **stop criminalizing bona fide decisions** of the civil servants.

7. [What game theory tells us about China-Taiwan face-off](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**What game theory tells us about China-Taiwan face-off**” published in the **Live Mint** on 9th August 2022.

Syllabus: GS 2 International Relations

Relevance: India’s Indo-Pacific Strategy; and Global Geopolitics and Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific Region;

News: Recently, Chinese forces have encircled Taiwan by sea. They have blocked all global supplies to Taiwan by cutting off the entry of sea cargo.

History of China-Taiwan Conflict

China-Taiwan tension has long been in existence, right from the mid-20th century. It is an indirect game being played between China and the US (as the chief backer of Taiwan’s self-rule).

China wants to **integrate Taiwan’s governance** with its own. It prefers a peaceful reunification, but without giving up the use of force as an option to achieve that goal.

The Game Theory in International Relations

Game Theory is an important model which helps analyze the strategic interactions in international relations.

The basic elements of this Game:

- (1) There are some decision-makers who interact, called ‘**players**’. **For example**, in the context of the **China-Taiwan crisis**, these are the heads of both adversaries.
- (2) Players have a range of **possible actions** that they could take to secure benefit, and such actions are called ‘**strategies**’. For example, Chinese and Taiwanese head have their own strategies.
- (3) Once both sides of the game **choose** theirs, an outcome is realized wherein both receive ‘**payoffs**’, which may be thought of as the utility of their specific actions.
- (4) The decisions depend on the visible actions of others. Further, the decision-makers also pay attention to **alternate scenarios** of potential action taken by others.

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(5) There may be a '**dominant strategy**' or '**Nash equilibrium**' in the game. It refers to an action that is better no matter what the other country does, and a pair of opposing strategies are said to be at a Nash equilibrium.

Thus, the scenario in question could be depicted as a '**two-player, or two-strategy**' game.

However, strategies and decisions taken in the game are not based on a **perfect information scenario**. There is a lack of information on what others may do results in asymmetry.

The ongoing China-Taiwan tension is one such scenario that could be analyzed from a Game Theory perspective.

The policymakers of China, as well as Taiwan, have **little information** in the form of knowledge about each other's strategic choices.

The Game Theory helps identify the **possible best situations** in the China-Taiwan confrontation. However, there are multiple 'best' situations and the theory doesn't tell us which one would occur.

First consider a scenario in which there is a '**two-player, or two strategy game (China and Taiwan)**).

(1) If **China and Taiwan go to war**, both combatants would lose weapons, soldiers, and peace. However, the net payoff or advantage, in this case, might be far better for China

(2) Taiwan is a small country and has much tighter limitations on the weaponry and soldiers it can deploy. Therefore, **Taiwan might not respond to Chinese provocations and submit to Beijing**. Then it is advantageous for China. This explains why Beijing is showcasing its military strength by firing missiles and using other armed maneuvers to intimidate Taipei. China is expecting to obtain Taiwan's submission this way.

(3) If both countries choose the option of not going to war. This is the best solution for both. Both will sign a sort of **bilateral agreement** wherein Taiwan would have to adhere to a set of conditions. Although not mutually acceptable to them, it would lead to a suboptimal solution.

In the case of China and Taiwan, there would not be any '**dominant strategy**' or '**Nash equilibrium**'. Because both countries would try to adopt optimal strategies, keeping each other in consideration.

Second, alternative scenarios when **the US also enters into the game as the third player**. Here, the USA strategy cannot be predicted and so a clear payoff for it cannot easily be worked out.

In case the US also enters into the game, there may be a **dominant strategy** or **Nash equilibrium in the game**.

The China-Taiwan standoff has the possibility of solutions that could be worked out through peace deliberations, but for this to happen, the US should not enter into the game.

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8. [C Raja Mohan writes | India, Bangladesh, Pakistan: What east can teach west](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan: What East Can Teach West**” published in the **Indian Express** on 9th August 2022.

Syllabus: GS 2 International relations; Bilateral relations

Relevance: India’s Neighbourhood Policy; India-Bangladesh relation; and India-Pakistan relations

News: India is going to celebrate the **75th anniversary of Independence** and mark the partition of the Subcontinent. However, the news from India’s western frontier with Pakistan is rarely positive. There are in fact talks of a 100-year war between India and Pakistan on the Indian Subcontinent. In contrast, India and Bangladesh are celebrating “Swarna Adhyay” or “Golden moment”

What are the issues in the India-Pakistan Relations?

The persistence of cross-border terrorism, the conflict over Kashmir, the militarization of the frontier, little connectivity, poor trade relations, and no formal inter-governmental negotiations between the two countries.

History of reinventing the Indo-Bangladesh bilateral relations

Both India and Bangladesh have **reinvented** their **bilateral relationship** through their recent foreign policies.

(1) The resolution of the **land and maritime territorial disputes** transformed the bilateral relations between the two:

(a) In 2015, the Parliament of India approved the **settlement of the land boundary** between India and Bangladesh that had been pending for decades.

(b) Bangladesh had moved to the **Permanent Court of Arbitration** for the settlement of the maritime dispute between India and Bangladesh. The Indian government accepted the **award of the international arbitration** on settling the maritime boundary dispute between Delhi and Dhaka.

(2) **Cross-Border Terrorism:** Both are cooperating on **cross-border terrorism**, which helped build much-needed political trust between the two national security establishments.

(3) Both have **reopened the border** that was largely shut down after the 1965 war between India and Pakistan. **For example**, India opened the **Indian market** for Bangladeshi goods, and Dhaka allowed Indian goods to transit to India’s northeast. Further, transboundary bus services, reopening of railway lines, and the revitalization of waterways are restoring connectivity in the eastern subcontinent that was severed.

(4) **Bilateral trade volumes** have grown by leaps and bounds in recent years, touching nearly \$16 billion last year. For example, Bangladesh is one of India’s top export markets.

India and Bangladesh have also developed inter-connected power grids facilitating Dhaka’s purchase of power from India.

(5) **Geopolitical:** Bangladesh has discarded the temptation to balance India. Instead, It has embarked on a **cooperative** strategy with India, focusing on its economic growth and lifting itself in the regional and global hierarchy.

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Lessons to be learnt from India's eastern frontier with Bangladesh

(1) Pakistan and India should learn that it is indeed possible to transcend the bitter legacies of Partition and build a **mutually-beneficial relationship**. For example, Prime Ministers Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi have proclaimed a “**sonali adhyay**” or “**golden chapter**” in Indo-Bangladesh bilateral relations.

(2) There are a **number of benefits** that both countries are enjoying due to **smoothing of Indo-Bangladesh Relations**:

(a) The **north-eastern states** have realized the **immense benefits** of **deeper economic engagement** with Bangladesh. These states want to end the **geographic isolation** of the region, which can be done by deepening economic ties with Bangladesh.

(b) For India, the expansive partnership with Bangladesh has significantly eased its security challenges and laid the basis for **peace** and **prosperity** in the **eastern subcontinent**.

Challenges in learning from Indo-Bangladesh lessons in the India-Pakistan Relations

There were efforts by India to replicate these kinds of moves with Pakistan. But Islamabad and Rawalpindi have not been ready to accept even the **simplest of initiatives** on trade, connectivity, or transborder energy cooperation.

The Way Forward

Instead of focusing on the **western frontier**, India should focus on consolidating its “**golden moment**” in the **eastern frontier**. A lot of issues are still to be resolved in the east between Delhi and Dhaka. For example, protecting the rights of minorities, sharing the waters of more than 50 rivers, promoting cross-border investments facilitating trade and preventing illegal migration, etc. Otherwise, the issues can threaten to destabilise the growing strategic partnership.

The 75th anniversary of independence offers Delhi and Dhaka a special opportunity to elevate the ambition for their bilateral partnership.

9. [India got Swaraj in 1947. It must now strive for Suraj or good governance](#)

Source: This post is created based on the article “**India got Swaraj in 1947. It must now strive for Suraj or good governance**” published in **Indian Express** on **9th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS paper 2- Governance + GS Paper 1 – Indian history

News: It is 75 years since India got independent. Now is the time to look back and assess, the ancient values of India that have been left behind.

What are the ancient cultural ethos that present India needs to follow?

(1) Gandhi ji weaponized ahimsa or non-violence to resist the colonial tyranny of the British by making it one of the cornerstones of the freedom struggle. Many sacrificed their lives for these values. The mantra of ahimsa is rooted in the cultural and civilizational ethos of our great nation.

(2) Long-drawn freedom struggle of India teaches us the lessons of resilience and hope in difficult times. Neither invaders nor the colonizers could sever the cultural and civilizational continuity that bind us together.

(3) Cultural ethos of ancient India dearly held up the idea of equality, unity, and inclusivity.

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(4) India's ancient scriptures are filled with examples of the worship of the divine in the elements — rivers, mountains, holy plants, and trees. It encourages us to conserve nature.

What are the issues that need to be resolved?

Present India is suffering from issues like poverty, illiteracy, gender discrimination, corruption, and inequalities.

What should be done?

First, universal and affordable access to quality education and healthcare.

Second, improving rural infrastructure across the country on a fast track basis.

Third, the promotion of the mother tongue will revolutionise the educational landscape by making it more inclusive and equitable.

Fourth, conservation of environment for the future generations.

10. [Launch a national tribal health mission](#)

Source: This post is created based on the article **“Launch a national tribal health mission”** published in **The Hindu** on 9th August 2022.

Syllabus: Issues related to health, Schemes, and programs for the vulnerable sections

Context: The health of the Tribal in India is in a dismal state. A health revolution for the tribal people of India is the need of the hour.

Nearly 11 crore tribal people (Scheduled Tribes (ST) as per Census of India (2011) live in India. It is the second-highest population in the world. However, their health state is in dismal condition.

As per the Lancet report, 2016, India has the second-highest infant mortality rate for the tribal people. Pakistan tops this list.

Another report, i.e. the first national report on the state of India's tribal people's health, highlights the health state of the Tribal in India.

What are the findings of the report?

1) When it comes to Tribal welfare, the government's major focus goes on the scheduled areas. However, it is found that half of the tribal population lives outside the scheduled areas, where they are found to be mostly powerless.

2) Despite the significant reduction in the Child Mortality rate among tribal from 135 in 1988 in the NFHS-1 to 57 in 2014 NFHS-4, the percentage of the excess of under-five mortality among STs compared to others has widened.

3) **Child malnutrition** is 50% higher in tribal children: 42% compared to 28% in others.

4) **Malaria and tuberculosis** are three to 11 times more common among the tribal people.

5) Even the incidence of non-communicable diseases is increasing. **For example;** the cases of hypertension and diabetes, and worse, mental health problems such as depression and addiction leading to cancer and suicide, are increasing.

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6) Tribal people heavily depend on government-run public health care institutions. However, there is a 27% to 40% deficit in the number of such facilities in tribal areas. **There is a 33% to 84% deficit in medical doctors.**

7) There is **hardly any participation from tribal people** in designing health care facilities.

8) The official policy of additional allocation under Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) has been flouted by the state governments. There is even no accounts of accountability on how much of the allocated amount has been spent.

What should be done?

Following are some recommendations given by a government-formed committee for the health of tribal people:

First, launch a **National Tribal Health Action Plan** to bring the status of health and healthcare to par with the respective State averages in the next 10 years.

Second, the committee suggested nearly 80 measures to address the 10 priority health problems, the health care gap, the human resource gap, and the governance problems.

Third, the allocation of additional money so that the per capita government health expenditure on tribal people becomes equal to the stated goal of **the National Health Policy (2017)**, i.e. 2.5% of the per capita GDP.

Government must seriously consider the implementation of these recommendations.

11. [About NIRF rankings 2022: Rankings that make no sense](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“Rankings that make no sense”** published in **The Hindu** on **10th August 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the concerns associated with NIRF ranking.

News: Recently the **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)**'s ranking of higher education institutions (HEIs) has been released.

What are the key highlights of the rankings?

Read here: [Union Education Minister Releases India Rankings 2022 of higher educational institutes](#)

How one can understand NIRF ranking data is flawed?

Firstly, generally, students who cannot secure a seat in national law universities (NLUs) are admitted to private institutions. Similarly, private universities and institutions are the last choices for those looking for a career in academia. This is clearly visible from Common Law Admission Test admissions.

But according to NIRF, some private multi-discipline institutions are ranked higher than many prestigious NLUs and law departments.

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Secondly, while the National Assessment and Accreditation Council gives due weightage to publications in UGC-Care listed journals, the NIRF uses publication data only from Scopus and Web of Science.

Read more: [Fund and Faculty count in higher education rankings](#)

Why there might be data fudging in NIRF's ranking framework?

There is a Lack of a rigorous system for verification of details submitted by HEIs by the NIRF. For instance, **a)** Evidences suggests that some private multi-discipline universities have claimed the same faculty in more than one discipline, **b)** there are irregularities in financial resources utilisation reports (spending on library, academic facilities, etc.) by multi-discipline institutions, **c)** Research grants and consultancy charges received in one discipline appear to have been claimed by other departments.

Apart from that, the NIRF applies almost the same parameters to all the institutions across varied disciplines in research and professional practice.

Read more: [Challenges in NIRF: Recast this apples-and-oranges ranking method](#)

How does the institutions violated transparency?

The NIRF requires the data submitted to it has to be published by all the participating HEIs on their website so that such data can be scrutinised. This didn't occur because,

1) Some private multi-discipline universities have not granted free access to such data on their website. Such non-transparency is antithetical to the ranking exercise, **2)** The data uploaded on the websites omit details on the number, name, qualification and experience of the faculty.

Hence, severe methodological and structural issues in the NIRF undermine the ranking process. The methodology must be revised in consultation with all the stakeholders.

[12. A Fuller Right: SC offers hope that right to abortion won't be restricted by a woman's marital status](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"A Fuller Right: SC offers hope that right to abortion won't be restricted by a woman's marital status"** published in the **Indian Express** on **10th August 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the recent court judgement on abortion.

News: Recently the Supreme Court of India delivered a significant order, that the right to a medical abortion could not be denied to unmarried women.

What is the case?

Read more: [A law, without a flaw: on availing abortion services](#)

What are the reasons behind the court ruling permitting abortion for an unmarried woman?

1) The **2021 Amendment to the MTP Act**, no longer restricts itself to an unwanted pregnancy between a "husband" and "wife", but to a woman and her "partner", by marriage or not, **2) S Khushboo case, 2010:** In this case, the court recognised the legality of live-in relationships and pre-marital sex, **3) Suchita Srivastava case, 2009:** In this the court recognised woman's right

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to make reproductive choices is part of the “personal liberty” guaranteed under Article 21, **4) K S Puttaswamy case, 2017**: In this, the court reaffirmed that women’s right to bodily integrity is part of the fundamental right to privacy.

Read more: [Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill, 2020 – Associated Issues](#)

The US court recognised that the constitutional rights are interconnected: Unravel one and the entire edifice of protections could fall apart. Now, the SC offers hope that the right to abortion won’t be restricted by a woman’s marital status.

13. [How to talk to India’s unique digital polity of first-time, non-English internet-using voters](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**How to talk to India’s unique digital polity of first-time, non-English internet-using voters**” published in the **Indian Express** on **10th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications.

Relevance: About the first-time voters and techno-nationalism.

News: The Internet and Mobile Association of India(IAMAI) has recently released its report titled “Internet in India”.

What are the key findings of the report?

The report highlighted India’s and the world’s most unique digital polity of first-time, non-English internet users who think, act and transact “mobile first”.

With anywhere between two to eight hours of daily usage, the Indian internet user is the ideal test case for any platform or app-based service looking to tap a global audience.

Online gaming has nearly five times the number of users relative to those using the internet for online education.

Read here: [Internet in India report: India to have around 900 million internet users by 2025: Report](#)

What is the significance of first-time voters with digital knowledge?

The 2014 elections were the first time internet streaming played a significant role in disintermediating broadcast media. The 2019 elections were marked by the extensive role played by social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp.

As per the UN’s estimates for births in India, between 2002 and 2006 nearly 150 million people were born. They will be the first-time voters in the 2024 General Elections a sizable and distinct digital constituency.

This generation of first-time voters has experienced all the significant digital shifts in their formative years.

This is also the generation that had the highest exposure to online education due to Covid-19 vastly increasing their screen time and use of internet tools and services.

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How India is building techno-nationalism ahead of the 2024 election?

The unique digital characteristics of India's first-time voters will require creative approaches for political engagement ahead of the 2024 elections and require techno-nationalism.

The Election Commission of India has opened up the voter registration process once every quarter. Further, the ECI also announced further liberalisation of the voter registration process with 17-year-olds being able to register a year ahead of being eligible to vote.

Read more: [India needs to replace frequent elections with One nation One election](#)

How other countries are promoting techno-nationalism?

From securing semiconductor supply chains to regulating data flows, techno-nationalism is on the political agenda of western democracies and eastern nations alike.

Indonesia is not just controlling online gaming apps and services but also actively promoting indigenously developed gaming apps.

From Kenya to Brazil the countries are witnessing preemptive actions to insulate the electoral processes of their respective democracies from the spread of viral fake news and disinformation on WhatsApp.

Read more: [\[Yojana Summary\] One Nation One Election](#)

What should be done?

Over the next two years as the government seeks to put in place a comprehensive digital regulatory framework governing data, privacy, apps and algorithms, engaging the first digital generation of new voters on techno-nationalism will be crucial at every step.

14. [A good privacy law could fend off Chinese-style surveillance](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**A good privacy law could fend off Chinese-Style surveillance**” published in the **Live Mint** on **9th August 2022**.

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

Relevance: Data Protection Law in India

News: Recently, the government has withdrawn the personal data protection bill and has announced to replace it with, a comprehensive legal framework.

Background of data protection law and privacy law in India

In 2017, the Central government set up a panel under retired Justice B.N. Srikrishna to frame data protection norms.

Later in 2017, the SC held that the **right to privacy** is a part of **the constitutional right to life and liberty**.

Thereafter, the Central government introduced the data protection bill in Parliament in 2019.

Why does India need a robust data protection framework?

(1) At present, due to the absence of a **robust data protection framework**, there is a potential risk of the development of a mix of the **surveillance state** as well as **surveillance capitalism** in India. **For example**, The Police compelled **Razorpay**, a payment gateway, to supply data on

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donors to **fact-checker AltNews**. Although the records were obtained legally, there was no safeguard against their misuse because of the absence of data protection law in India.

(2) Rapid digitization without a **strong data protection framework** may leave the public vulnerable to exploitation. For example, the Government of India manages the world's largest repository of biometric **data**. By 2026, India will have **1 billion smartphone** users. Further, the consumer digital economy is poised for a **10-fold surge** this decade to \$800 billion.

(3) Other Countries; Europe's general data protection law holds natural persons to be the owners of their personal data like names, email addresses, location, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, etc.

What were the issues in the Data Protection Bill 2019?

The bill gave the government unfettered access to **personal data** in the name of sovereignty and public order.

Srikrishna cautioned that the provisions in the bill could “**turn India into an Orwellian State**”.

The Central government sought to give the state an upper hand against both individuals and private-sector data collectors in the withdrawn data protection bill 2019.

Large global tech firms were concerned about the provisions of the withdrawn bill that insisted on storing “**critical**” personal data only in India for national security reasons. Localization gets in the way of efficient cross-border data storage and processing.

The bill also wanted to allow the platforms to do **voluntary verification** of social-media users, ostensibly to check fake news. However, **the Internet Freedom Foundation** pointed out that if social media platforms collect identity documents, it would leave users vulnerable to more sophisticated surveillance and commercial exploitation. Further, the platforms may start **denying some services** without identity checks. This may deprive the **right to anonymity** of whistle-blowers and political dissidents.

According to the government, a joint parliamentary panel that scrutinized the bill sought the 81 amendments.

15. [COVID-19, arguably, has become endemic in India](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**COVID-19, arguably, has become endemic in India**” published in **The Hindu** on **11th August 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the endemic nature of Covid-19.

News: It has been 29 months since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. However, new COVID-19 cases continue to be reported from different parts of the world, including India, regularly. This shows that Covid-19 has become an endemic state.

About the recent Covid-19 cases around the world

India: After the third wave in January 2022, India saw the lowest number of daily new COVID-19 cases in March and April. However, since then, daily cases have spiked to around 18,000 a

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day. India revives the discussion on whether COVID-19 continues to remain pandemic or has become endemic.

Other countries: The United States has returned to a 'no mandatory COVID-19 test' for inbound passengers. In Europe, many countries are back to full normalcy.

What are the terms epidemics, pandemics and endemics mean?

Must read: [Difference between epidemic, pandemic and endemic](#)

Pandemics are not merely health events but also encompass the social and economic implications of infections and diseases. For instance, HIV/AIDS was an epidemic in the mid-1990s. Now, HIV/AIDS cases are reported regularly but it is endemic because all societies/countries have agreed to it being an acceptable risk.

Why one should consider Covid-19 as endemic?

New diseases usually do not disappear completely. Chikungunya, dengue and many respiratory viruses usually stay within populations once they enter a population.

Twenty-nine months into the pandemic, there is consensus that SARS-CoV-2 will stay with humanity for long, possibly for years and even decades.

The risk of infection and disease under COVID-19, till early 2022, was unknown, and the outcome unpredictable. Two and half years into the pandemic, the risk of getting COVID-19 continues and will always be greater than zero.

But the risk of the social and economic impacts due to COVID-19 is minimal and close to zero. In such a backdrop, one can conclude that while the **health challenges of SARS-CoV-2 remain, the socio-economic impact is blunted**. Hence, one can conclude the COVID-19 pandemic in India has moved to its endemic stage.

Read more: [One billion Covid Vaccines and beyond – Explained, pointwise](#)

Is the Covid-19 pandemic over throughout the world?

No, in epidemiology and public health, context (local setting, infection rate and vaccine coverage) determines the disease spread. Every country would reach an endemic stage at different points of time.

Countries that had higher vaccination coverage and higher natural infection (such as India) are likely to reach that stage early. Countries with low natural infection and vaccination coverage (as in Africa) would reach an endemic stage a little later.

Read more: [Is Covid-19 now endemic in India?](#)

What should be done?

In June-July 2022, around 30 deaths are being reported every day on average in people who tested COVID-19. In India, an estimated 26,000 to 27,000 people die every day due to a variety of reasons. The government should **take every effort to avoid any death that is preventable**.

COVID-19 is one of the many challenges and cannot continue to be the top and the only health priority. So, it is time to deal with the COVID-19 just like any other health condition and **integrate COVID-19 interventions into general health services**.

People should undertake voluntary precautionary measures. COVID-19 vaccination should become part of the routine immunisation programme.

Read more: [Explained: When does a disease become endemic?](#)

16. [A new global vision for G20](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “A new global vision for G20” published in **The Hindu** on **11th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Relevance: About the necessary reforms for G20.

News: The role of the G20 themes and focus areas lacks vision.

About the role of G20

The primary role of the G20 accounts for 95% of the world’s patents, 85% of global GDP, 75% of international trade and 65% of the world population.

The G20 plays an important role such as, **a)** Shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues, **b)** recognising that global prosperity is interdependent and economic opportunities and challenges are interlinked.

Read more: [Cabinet clears setting up of G20 Secretariat](#)

What does India want to change in G20?

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, India will strengthen international support for priorities of vital importance to developing countries in diverse social and economic sectors. This range from energy, agriculture, trade, digital economy, health and environment to employment, tourism, anti-corruption and women empowerment, including in focus areas that impact the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Must read: [G20 grouping and its relevance – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the challenges faced by multilateral organisations?

1) Multilateral commitments on aid and trade are faltering, **2)** The role of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization in securing cooperation between donor and recipient country groups is losing centrality. **3)** There are now three socio-economic systems the G7, China-Russia, and India and others, **4)** The Ukraine crisis is expanding the influence of the trade and value chains dominated by the U.S. and China.

What are the opportunities the G20 can utilise?

1) The G20 can harness the potential of the digital-information-technology revolution by redefining digital access as a “universal service.”

2) The world can build on the global consensus in the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights 1993. There is a growing recognition of economic and social rights. So, ensuring adequate food, housing, education, health, water and sanitation and work for all should guide international cooperation.

3) The global agenda has been tilted towards investment, whereas science and technology are the driving force for economic diversification. This can be corrected.

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4) Space is the next frontier for finding solutions to problems of natural resource management. Open access to geospatial data, data products and services and lower costs of geospatial information technology facilities do not require huge financial resources.

Read more: [G20 summits have lost its significance](#)

What reforms are needed to make G20 fully functional?

Firstly, G20 needs a new conceptual model seeking agreement on an agenda limited to principles rather than long negotiated moderating text. For instance, the Rio Declaration of 1992 is an appropriate model which incorporated three major priorities as part of a global agenda.

Secondly, India should seek collaboration on limited focus areas around science and technology, building on resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and other multilateral bodies.

Thirdly, the presumed equality, recognised in the case of climate change, needs to be expanded to other areas with a global impact redefining 'common concerns'.

Fourthly, emerging economies are no longer to be considered the source of problems needing external solutions but the source of solutions to shared problems.

Lastly, a Global Financial Transaction Tax, considered by the G20 in 2011, needs to be revived to be paid to a Green Technology Fund for Least Developed Countries.

17. [Fair share](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Fair Share**" published in the **Business Standard** on 11th August 2022.

Syllabus: GS 2 Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure

Relevance: Fiscal Federalism

News: At a recent meeting of the governing council of the NITI Aayog, the state governments indicated that their resources to fund spending were dwindling.

What are the causes of these tensions between the Union government and many state governments?

Some of this has been caused by the transition to Goods and Services Tax (GST). It has reduced the space available to state governments to raise their own revenue.

The GST compensation payments to the states, which guaranteed increases in state revenues under the GST, have been ended.

The states argue that the Union government is taking too **large a share of the tax revenues**. As per some reports, the states' share in taxes collected by the Union government has been between 29-32% since the pandemic hit in 2020-21. This is about 10 percentage points lower than the recommendations that were made by the **Fifteenth Finance Commission (FFC)**.

Further, the Union government is excessively resorting to various kinds of **cess** and **surcharge** in the tax mix. For example, the proportion of revenue raised from cess and surcharges has risen from about 6% in 2014 to almost 25% of the tax collection now. Unlike **regular taxes**, these are

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not part of the **divisible pool**. Therefore, the Union government does not have to share these with the states.

What are the arguments in favor of providing more resources to the state governments?

The fact is that the state's administrative machinery is on the front line of delivering growth and development.

It is the main touchpoint between the citizen and the government.

Underfunded states lead to **poor public provision** of services, with deleterious effects on both citizen welfare and the growth potential of the economy.

The centralization of the fiscal and spending power through various measures such as cess or centrally sponsored schemes could affect the delivery of quality services to citizens.

What are the arguments against providing more resources to the state governments?

The Centre also has spending commitments and needs resources to finance national security needs and to run welfare programs.

The State governments are often alleged of inefficient and ineffective utilization of funds. Further, the quality of spending is also debated.

What should be done?

In terms of spending, **reforms** are needed at both levels of the government. For Example, the **division of resources** should be done more transparently.

The Central government shouldn't excessively resort to **imposition of cess and surcharge**, as it distorts the tax system and creates inefficiencies. This could increase resentment among states and lead to greater friction between the Centre and the states.

The Union and state governments work together to take the development process forward.

18. Why higher GST on chit funds is a bad idea

Source: The post is based on an article "**Why higher GST on chit funds is a bad idea**" published in the **Live Mint** on 11th August 2022.

Syllabus: **GS 2** Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development, and Employment.

News: Recently, the Government of India has made an announcement of revised rates of GST on the chit funds. The tax has been raised from the earlier 12% to 18%.

About Chit Fund

It is an alternative source of credit, which is the earliest form of **peer-to-peer lending**.

In this, a piece of paper is used for **writing** a bid amount, known as a chit. Therefore, it is known as a '**chit fund**'.

It doesn't fall under the jurisdiction of the **Reserve Bank of India**. These are the legal entities, registered with and regulated by, the state governments under **the Chit Funds Act of 1982**.

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Functioning of the Chit Funds

A chit fund is a **close-ended group lending scheme**. In this, funding is involved in a cycle. The cycles end after each fund participant has received the pool of money once.

For Example, every month, each participant makes an identical contribution to the lump sum. And a **lump-sum** amount collected from the contribution of all participants is transferred to one of them who wins that **month's bid** for the pool of money. The **cost of borrowing** and the **return** to savers depend on the **bidding process**.

The chit fund intermediary currently charges around 5% of the full lump-sum amount, divided by the number of participants.

What are the benefits of the Chit Fund system?

In the case of a chit fund, any investor can **bid** to borrow from others against the promise of future contributions, while the **credit risk** devolves to the chit fund's promoter.

A chit fund is a unique **hybrid instrument** that makes an individual a **saver/lender** instead of a **borrower**.

One can bid early in the cycle if one needs money for any planned purchase, working capital for business, or for a personal emergency. Alternatively, one can wait and take the lump sum in a later part of the cycle.

Professional chit funds have served a segment of the Indian population that do not have stable income streams, proof of regular income, or the collateral that banks need to sanction personal as well as small business loans.

Borrowers in chit funds pay interest lower than most other sources of credit.

For savers, the interest earned is a **maximum of 4-6%** or often even **lower**.

How will the GST hike impact the chit fund industry?

The chit fund intermediaries can raise their **monthly commission** from the current 5% to 7% (the most allowed by law). This will increase the **cost of borrowings** in the fund. Similarly, there would also be a decline in the **already-low returns** that chit-fund savers make.

The savers may switch to **alternative saving instruments** in an environment of **rising interest rates**. Therefore, it would make **borrowing difficult** as there would be inadequate savings.

If the chit fund industry shrinks, then borrowers would have to find a substitute source of **unsecured financing**.

[19. State-level OBC groups must be included in central list](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**State-level OBC groups must be included in the central list**" published in the **Indian Express** on **11th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 Important Provisions of the Constitution of India

News: The Justice Rohini Commission has been given the 10th extension in five years.

The commission was constituted to ensure equitable distribution of reservation benefits among the OBC castes through sub-categorization

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Background

The **issue of sub-categorization** arises from the perception that a **few dominant castes** among the OBCs have cornered a **disproportionate amount** of the benefits from the reservation. It is leading to injustice.

About OBCs reservation

Articles 15(4) and 16(4) make special provisions for socially and educationally backward classes of citizens (SEBCs, popularly known as OBCs), the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Currently, for each state, there are **two OBC lists**, i.e., one for the state and the Centre. So, a caste included in the OBC list of a state enjoys the reservation benefits in state government jobs and educational institutions, but not with respect to central government jobs or educational institutions.

Historical development of the OBCs reservation

In 1955, the 1st **Backward Classes Commission** recommended the inclusion of 2,399 castes as OBCs. But, the then **central government** did not implement the recommendations and implementation of the welfare programs. Therefore, OBC castes have an abysmal representation in central government jobs. But the Centre suggested that state governments may draw up their own lists.

The **second Backward Classes Commission**, known as the **Mandal Commission**, gave its report in 1980. However, the central governments did not implement the recommendation for almost a decade.

Finally, the **V P Singh government** decided to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission. Various OBC castes were included in the Central OBC lists. These were those castes and minorities which were common to both the State Lists and the Mandal Commission List.

The central government introduced a reservation of **27% for OBCs** in government jobs on August 13, 1990. The constitutional validity of the reservation was upheld in the **Indira Sawhney case**. Pursuant to judgment, **the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993** was enacted.

In **Ram Singh and Ors vs Union of India Case (2015)**, the Central government argued that the inclusion of classes or groups in state OBC lists is a strong and compelling reason for the inclusion of such classes in the central lists. Because, in our constitutional scheme, the Union and state governments need to work in tandem and not at cross purposes. The Supreme Court judgment validated this argument.

Issues related to OBCs reservation

OBCs are identified differently at the state and central levels. For example, the State OBC list and Central OBC list. But the SCs and STs are identified **“with respect to any State or Union Territory”** and have only one list and one status, both at the level of state and central government.

The **“two-status”** castes deny reservations in all these **important avenues** like IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS, and **coveted educational institutions** like the IITs, IIMs, AIIMS, and the Central universities.

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Across all the states, there are hundreds of such OBC castes whose members are being denied reservation benefits in central government jobs.

The Way Forward

In order to establish the truth that few dominant castes enjoy the benefits of reservation, a caste census is required. The government should conduct an extensive **caste census** to give proportional representation to the OBCs.

20. [The slow execution of the police as an institution continues. Who will save it?](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“The slow execution of the police as an institution continues. Who will save it?”** published in the **Indian Express** on **12th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

Relevance: About police-politician nexus.

News: The political “masters” tries to create a nexus between them and the police through police stations.

Why police stations are crucial for politicians?

Police stations and outposts are the forums where maximum citizen-police interactions take place.

If the officer in charge of the police station is impartial, efficient and compassionate, then no one will approach the local member of the legislature (MLA) or parliament (MP). So, the political leaders try to create a nexus.

Read more: [Police reforms are not enough](#)

How do the politicians create nexus with the police?

At station level: The strategy commonly used is to have a **police station “manned” by an officer of choice** who, in turn, pays daily obeisance to the politician along with that the officer does not bother to conceal.

The officer in charge would naturally allocate “beats” to constables who give more time to local “dadas” instead of investigating crime or maintaining order.

District police level: Politicians influence the district police chief to appoint cronies of his choice. This hand-picked team will collect from street hawkers, traders, merchants, restaurants and bar owners. The **collection is redistributed between everyone** in the station as the system is understood by all.

Money is needed by the officers to secure “good” postings, by politicians for their lifestyle desires and their parties for election purposes.

Posting of zonal Inspectors General of police: There are not many senior officers and many of them would look for “right” postings. The officer will also be provided with favourable media coverage and installed with great fanfare.

Influence on Judiciary: The judiciary is burdened with the weight of its mounting pendency. Further, for judges, post-retirement avenues are totally dependent on the executive.

Read more: [Police Reforms Needed to Ensure Political Neutrality](#)

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The Indian Penal Code defines conspiracy as an illegal act and holds each conspirator to be equally responsible. But politicians de-construct and destroy institutions without any punishments.

Read more: [Need for Police Reforms in India](#)

21. [What is the Criminal Procedure \(Identification\) Act, 2022?](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**What is the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022?**” published in **The Hindu** on **12th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Relevance: About the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022.

News: The Ministry of Home Affairs recently notified that the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022 will come into effect from August. It also repeals the existing Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920.

What are the salient provisions of the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022?

Read here: [Criminal Procedure \(Identification\) Bill, 2022: Protest in LS as Bill envisages lifting biometrics of detainees](#)

What is the use of identification details in criminal trials?

Measurements and photographs for identification have three main purposes. **1)** To establish the identity of the culprit against the person being arrested, **2)** To identify suspected repetition of similar offences by the same person and **3)** To establish a previous conviction.

Read more: [Unfounded apprehensions about this Act](#)

What was the need to replace the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920?

In **State of UP vs Ram Babu Misra case**: The Supreme Court highlighted the need for amending the Identification of Prisoners Act.

87th Report of the Law Commission of India in 1980: The Commission undertook a review of the Identification of Prisoners Act based on the Supreme Court ruling and the numerous amendments made to the Act by several States.

The commission recommended several amendments.

These include **a)** Expanding the scope such as “palm impressions”, “specimen of signature or writing” and “specimen of voice”, **b)** Allowing measurements to be taken for proceedings other than those under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

Read here: [This is a criminal attack on privacy](#)

What is the difference between the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920 and the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022?

A comparison between the two Identification Acts

The previous Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920 and the freshly notified Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022 have similarities as well as major differences. A quick look at how "measurements" of convicts and arrested persons will be collected from now on

Relevant provisions	Identification of Prisoners Act	Criminal Procedure Identification Act
Persons whose measurements can be taken	should be convicted of an offence punishable with rigorous imprisonment of one year or upwards	if convicted of an offence punishable under any law
	should be arrested for an offence punishable with rigorous imprisonment of one year or upwards	if arrested for an offence punishable under any law or if detained under preventive detention laws
	if directed by the Magistrate for measurements to be taken for the purposes of investigation of proceedings under the CrPC, provided the person has been arrested in connection with such investigation previously	if directed by the Magistrate for measurements to be taken for the purposes of investigation of proceedings under the CrPC or any other law in force; there is no requirement for the person to have been arrested in connection with such proceedings previously
	ordered to give security for his good behaviour under CrPC	ordered to give security for his good behaviour under CrPC
Measurements that can be taken	finger impressions, foot impressions, measurements and photographs	finger-impressions, palm-print impressions, foot-print impressions, photographs; iris and retina scan; physical, biological samples and their analysis; behavioural attributes including signatures, handwriting or any other examination referred to in section 53 or section 53A of the CrPC, 1973
Destruction of measurements	in case of acquittal, discharge or release, if not previously convicted of any offence punishable with rigorous imprisonment of one year or upwards	in case of acquittal, discharge or release, if not previously convicted of any offence punishable with rigorous imprisonment for any term. For convicts, records are to be destroyed from 75 years of collection

Source: The Hindu

What are the concerns associated with the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022?

Read here: [Criminal Procedure \(Identification\) Bill: Features, Benefits and Concerns – Explained, pointwise](#)

The other concerns are,

- 1) The inclusion of derivative data such as “analysis” and “behavioural attributes” have raised concerns that data processing may go beyond recording of core “measurements”.
- 2) Unlike the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920 the present Act allows for “measurements” to be taken if a person has been convicted/arrested for any offence, including petty offences. This has the following issues,
 - a) The necessity of taking measurements of such persons for investigation of offences is unclear,
 - b) Likely to result in abuse of the law at lower levels, c) overburdening of the systems used for collection and storage of “measurements”.
- 3) Large collection of data can also result in mass surveillance, with the database being combined with other databases such as those of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS).

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Read more: [Identity and privacy: On Prisoners' identification Bill/ Why the Criminal Identification Bill overreaches](#)

What should be done?

Though the Act will aid police in **predictive policing**. Purposes for collecting “analysis” and “behavioural attributes” need to be better defined.

The Central government said that the privacy and data protection-related concerns will be addressed in the Rules formulated under the legislation and through model Prison Manuals that States can refer to. This has to be done at the earliest.

Read more: [Criminal Procedure bill will not make Indians safer](#)

22. [Survey data on poverty and broad policy pointers](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Survey data on poverty and broad policy pointers**” published in **The Hindu** on **12th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues relating to poverty and hunger.

Relevance: About the concerns associated with the NFHS data.

News: Academics have questioned the quality of NFHS data on poverty statistics for various reasons.

About India's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

NITI Aayog used the survey data of NFHS 4 to estimate the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and published the baseline report in 2021. The MPI is a product of the Head Count Ratio and Intensity of Poverty.

Rationale for the MPI: poverty is the outcome of simultaneous deprivations in multiple functions such as attainments in health, education, and standard of living.

Calculating method: NITI Aayog identified 12 indicators in these three sectors and calculated the weighted average of deprivations. The proportion of the population with a deprivation score greater than 0.33 to the total population is defined as the Poverty Ratio or Head Count Ratio.

Estimation of the Intensity of Poverty: is the weighted-average deprivation score of the multidimensionally poor. For instance, the Intensity of Poverty in Tamil Nadu declined from 39.97% to 38.78% during this period.

Must read: [Poverty ratio 32.75% in rural areas against 8.81% in urban: NITI report](#)

What are the concerns associated with the NITI Aayog's poverty index?

Firstly, the overall population was deprived in most of the indicators individually, and they were higher than the population identified as multidimensionally poor.

Secondly, the strength of the MPI as an instrument for a data-driven public policy depends on the quality of survey data, namely the NFHS data.

What are the factors affecting the quality of NFHS data?

The National Sample Survey Organisation's (NSSO) sample surveys have been debated among economists and statisticians, both in terms of **sampling and non-sample errors**, right from its initial days in the 1950s.

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The NFHS data were **collected in two time periods**. One before the pandemic and the other post-lockdown period. The difference in time period **interprets the statistics of the entire database**. For instance, the deprivation in terms of nutrition and maternal health declined, and schooling and school attendance increased in the post-lockdown period.

The other issues with NFHS data are **a) Arbitrariness** in reporting the age of the dead, **b) Differences** in data quality between educated and uneducated respondents, **c) Data quality** based on differences in time taken to complete a survey of different household types, **d) Market-based approach** to decide the data collection process, etc.

All these have serious implications for health data such as fertility and death rates.

Read more: [The worrying slowdown in India's fight against poverty](#)

What should be done with the NFHS Data and to reduce poverty?

For improving the NFHS: **a)** India should improve the sample design and response quality, **b)** Analysing the data and finding the inferences from different databases on an issue would help improve data gathering systems. **c)** The government must continue to use survey data both to derive policy conclusions and also to help improve data quality.

For reducing poverty: **a)** The survey data gives only broad policy pointers whereas programmatic interventions should be curated with ground-level realities, **b)** People may be deprived severely in a few functions, but may not be multidimensionally poor. Hence, attacking poverty should not only be multidimensional but also universal.

Read more: [Extreme poverty dipped in India: World Bank report](#)

23. [Punishing Process](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Punishing Process**” published in **The Times of India** on 12th August 2022.

Syllabus: GS 2 Important Provisions of the Constitution of India

Relevance: Fundamental Rights

News: Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) granted permanent medical bail to **Varavara Rao** on technical grounds, i.e., medical condition, advanced age, adherence to bail conditions, and delay in framing charges.

Observations Made by the SC in this case

Stringent restrictions against bail in laws like Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) don't hinder **constitutional courts** from protecting fundamental rights.

What are the issues in the bail provisions of India

At present, too many accused, who have not been proven guilty, are in jail.

The laws like UAPA have defeated the **principle of bail as the norm & jail as an exception**. Because UAPA requires judges to deny bail if police cases seem to be prima facie true. For example, **the Bhima Koregaon case**.

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Many accused die before bail. **For example**, Stan Swamy died in judicial custody, while waiting for the Bombay High Court to decide on his plea for bail on medical grounds.

In many cases, even the framing of charges isn't over.

Undertrials as a percentage of the prison population have been steadily increasing and are 76% at present.

The stringent bail provisions of custody and associated long process delays are nothing but a form of punishment.

The Way Forward

For Justice UU Lalit, who heard Rao's plea, and will be the next CJI, the problem of undertrial prisoners must take top priority.

The SC bench had proposed **a comprehensive bail law**. It has reiterated that courts must decide on **bail applications** within two weeks. Further, investigators must set down reasons for arrest, which trial courts must carefully scrutinize.

24. [Regulating digital lending](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Regulating digital lending**" published in the **Business Standard** on 12th August 2022.

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

Relevance: Digital Lending Framework in India

News: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has published the first set of norms to regulate digital lending in India. Norms are based on the recommendations of **a working group** that was set up in January 2021.

Needs for regulation on digital lending

At present, digital lending is a nascent segment in the Indian financial sector.

There are anecdotal allegations of many frauds in this segment in India. Therefore, actions must be taken to protect citizens from such frauds.

The digital lenders are finding it hard to sell such products to digitally unaware customers who don't understand the implications and fine print.

The central bank is concerned about the possibility of **widespread defaults** in this segment and cascading effects.

New Set of Norms

The RBI has created **three buckets for entities** in the digital loans market: **(1)** entities directly regulated by the RBI, **(2)** entities not regulated by the RBI but authorized to carry out lending in accordance with other provisions, and **(3)** entities involved in digital lending while being outside the purview of any regulations.

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Set of new norms for the digital loan market

This market works on the basis of **digital entities** known as **Lending Service Providers (LSP)**. These LSP act as intermediaries to arrange personal loans between lender and borrower. The loans are provided by a **regulated entity**, such as a bank.

In such cases, loan disbursements and repayments must be executed by direct transfers between the account of the borrower and the regulated entity providing the loan.

In this, any charges payable to the LSP in intermediation are paid by the regulated entity providing the loans, and not by the borrower.

Also, in any digital loan, a **standardized key fact statement (KFS)** must be provided to the borrower. Further, entities have to disclose the all-inclusive cost of digital loans in the form of an **annual percentage rate (APR)**, which will be part of the KFS.

Any data collected from borrowers must be need-based, collected with a clear audit trail, and with explicit prior consent.

The borrower must have the “**right to forget**” where personal data can be deleted.

All digital lending products must be reported to credit information companies.

All digital loans must come with a cooling-off/look-up period during which the borrower can exit the loan by repaying the principal and the proportionate APR without penalty.

The regulated entities and the LSPs working with them must also have a **nodal grievance redress officer** to deal with **FinTech** and complaints related to digital lending. If any complaint is not resolved within a stipulated period of **30 days**, a complaint can be lodged under **the RBI's integrated ombudsman scheme**.

What should be done?

The RBI has said it would release a **second set of norms** after engagement with the government and other stakeholders.

The government needs to legislate for the norms and entities within the regulatory purview and should set up an **institutional mechanism**

The RBI could ensure **greater transparency** by mandating disclosure of all fees and charges.

The RBI could regularly release aggregated and anonymized data to give a sense of market size and growth rates.

[25. The Portuguese Civil Code of 1867 is a colonial burden on Goa](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The Portuguese Civil Code of 1867 is a colonial burden on Goa**” published in the **Indian Express** on **12th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 Important Provisions of the Constitution of India

Relevance: Uniform Civil Code

News: Recently, a **28-member parliamentary standing committee** visited Goa to study it in the context of the demand for a uniform civil code. The ministry of law has told the standing

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committee, that if **the Portuguese Civil Code of 1867** of Goa, requires review it must be looked into.

Case of Uniform Civil Code in Goa, Daman, and Diu

The Portuguese had occupied and established the **Portuguese State of India in Goa, Daman, and Diu**. They did not interfere with the local customs relating to family relations. Therefore, framed **three separate codes** of religion-based customary laws prevalent in Goa, Daman, and Diu.

One of them was the **Portuguese Civil Code of 1867** which was extended to **Goa, Daman, and Diu** for the native subject.

Fourteen years after the advent of Independence, Goa and its affiliated territories were liberated and turned into a Union Territory (UT). Thereafter, **the Goa, Daman, and Diu Administration Act of 1962** was enacted by the government which declared that all laws in force in the Goa, Daman, and Diu **before their liberation** would **continue to be in force** until amended or repealed.

Since then, the government has not made any significant amendments or repealed the **pre-liberation family laws**. Further, the Central governments have also not extended any central law on family rights, including the **four Hindu law Acts of 1955-56**, to any of the three territories.

The Government's Stand

The Union Law Ministry has told the concerned **standing committee of Parliament** that the **Portuguese civil code** and its later amendments as in force in Goa may be reviewed if required.

Constitutional Mandate of Civil Codes in India

Article 44 of the Constitution of India requires the Central or State governments to endeavor toward enacting a uniform civil code (UCC) for the citizens throughout the territory of India.

What should be done?

The **21st Law Commission** had given its opinion against the feasibility and need of such a code at this juncture.

The Law Ministry has told the **parliamentary committee** that enacting a uniform civil code would be possible only when a **"sizeable majority"** of the people seeks such a change in their personal laws.

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26. [India@75: As we celebrate the nation, we must also reflect on the mixed nature of our democracy](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**India@75: As we celebrate the nation, we must also reflect on the mixed nature of our democracy**” published in the **Indian Express** on **13th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 Indian Constitution—Historical Underpinnings, Evolution, Features, Amendments, Significant Provisions and Basic Structure.

Relevance: Functioning of Indian Democracy

News: India is going to celebrate its **75th year of Independence** on and around August 15, 2022. It refers to the celebration of India’s assertion of our nationhood (national self-respect and identity) as well as how India established a democratic system in order to conduct the affairs of the nation.

What are the deep concerns of Indian democracy?

Firstly, at present, there is a **nationalistic rhetoric**, in which there are attempts to **shrink the idea of India as a nation into one community**. The rhetoric is marked by exclusion and an overemphasis on community identity. Therefore, in the present narration, democracy is secondary to the nation.

Secondly, a contradiction in the celebration of the Constitution of India: Although the document is being celebrated, the adoption of its spirit in social and political practice is half-hearted. For example, the **two most revolutionary elements** of the Constitution, fundamental rights and directive principles, are conveniently set aside from time to time for vested interest.

Our legislative choices, executive practices and judicial interpretations have undermined the Constitution from time to time.

Thirdly, Web of institutions: The Constitution gave us many institutions. Subsequently, Parliament has added many other institutions. But most of the new institutions created serve the purpose of controlling citizens. There is a serious erosion of most institutions. This is partly due to political interference in functioning of these institutions in India.

Fourthly, Indian politics is marked by **deep inequalities**. Ordinary Citizens are not able to “do politics”. One can enter into Indian politics through the family route or by finding out family connections. This political inequality is exacerbated by and in turn, enhances various other inequalities.

Fifthly, there is no balance between the **people as a collective and the individual** in India’s democratic life. Here, the idea of the individual seldom carries weight. Within communities, individuals are **secondary**. Further, **fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals** such as freedom of expression, right to life and liberty are seen as unnecessary both by the public and rulers.

What should be done?

The best way to celebrate 75 years of our nationhood is to remind ourselves of the **contradictoriness of democracy** that we practice.

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27. Why family needs to be at the heart of India's health system

Source: The post is based on the article “**Why family needs to be at the heart of India's health system**” published in the **Indian Express** on **13th August 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2** Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Relevance: Health Reforms; Kerala Model.

News: Since Independence, India has been striving to establish a comprehensive primary healthcare care system. The Covid pandemic once again highlighted the need for an effective primary healthcare system.

About the history of healthcare reforms in India

The **Bhore Committee Report** of 1946, the **Kartar Singh Committee Report** of 1973, the **National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)** of 2005 and the **Ayushman Bharat Mission** of 2019 are significant landmarks in this endeavour.

The NRHM: (1) The Mission has set the **Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS)** for physical infrastructure, human resources and service delivery, and (2) a **three-fold** increase in budget.

Health Care System in India: The system comprises a **multi-tiered structure**. It means at the **block-level**, there is a 30-bed community health centre is operated by four specialists and at the **village-level**, a community worker operates and provides services covering 12 diseases/needs.

Some good outcomes as a result of the NRHM Healthcare reforms

- (1) Institutional deliveries went up from 41% in 2005 to 89% in 2021,
- (2) The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) went down from 407 per one lakh women in 2005 to 113 per one lakh women in 2021,
- (3) The infant mortality ratio reduced from 58/1,000 live births in 2005 to about 28/1,000 live births in 2021,
- (4) There has been increased availability of drugs, diagnostics and doctors,
- (5) The healthcare system's footfall has registered an impressive improvement in states like Bihar and UP.

What are the shortcomings of NRHM?

Despite the launch of the mission, still less than 10% of the public health care facilities match up to the IPHS Standards.

The primary healthcare system continues to be plagued with gaps and deficiencies and the current facilities serve two to ten times the population they are designed to cater to.

One reason for the deficit is that public spending on healthcare is barely 1.1 per cent of the GDP and the other reason is the wavering political support for primary care.

The Kerala Model -Healthcare system

It has revamped its health care system based on the **UK's GP (general practitioners) system in the state**.

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Kerala appears to be the only state in India which has revamped **its primary healthcare system** (PHC) along the foundational principles of **comprehensive primary care**, i.e., a community-anchored delivery system, a continuum of care, and patient-centred, protocol-driven, evidence-based treatment.

This **comprehensive approach** has been enabled by a **tripartite partnership** between the **state's health department, women's collectives** and **community-level bodies**.

The Primary health centre (PHC) facilities have been renamed as **family health centres** (FHCs) which underlines the centrality of the family in the endeavour.

A series of **coordinated interventions** were made, like changing timings, redesigning the centres and equipping them with the patient and people-friendly facilities, providing intensive training to the staff to undertake new functions and responsibilities, etc.

The **Family Health Centre's (FHCs)** in Kerala provide a wide range of drugs and medical services, including nebuliser treatment for asthma patients, mobile teams provide palliative care at home.

What should be done?

For Kerala: The state government should focus on deepening the reforms, and instituting the accountability framework related to the doctors, paramedics and frontline workers, needs to be strengthened.

For Rest of India: National policy should be **nimble** and allow for **differential strategies** because a single system may not be apt for the entire country.

The Centre should adopt **the principles of flexibility, decentralisation** and provides the **space for innovation** to states and districts to plan, design and implement primary care in accordance with local needs. The **Centre government's** role should be limited to **measuring outcomes**.

Rest of the state government should learn from a proactive primary healthcare system that is working in Kerala. They should reset their approach and change the design of their health care system.

28. [The 'freebies' debate](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"The 'freebies' debate"** published in the **Business Standard** on **13th August 2022**.

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

Relevance: India's freebies burden.

News: Recently, the Prime Minister said freebies were coming in the way of development. The debate over "freebies vs development expenditure" reflects a primary problem that economics is supposed to tackle.

Must read: [PM's 'revdi' remark: We need to disentangle good subsidies from bad](#)

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About the development expenditure and freebies

Economists call few freebies positive externalities; i.e. they have a public utility that goes beyond the benefit to the individual user.

For instance, **a)** spending on Education, welfare payments, and highways all are called as positive externalities, **b)** Mid-day meals in schools improved school attendance and enhanced child health and reduced the birth rate dramatically. **c)** Other schemes and programs such as the construction of free lavatories, providing subsidised cooking gas.

Read more: [Freebies against democracy but legislation against them not advisable: SC](#)

What are the issues associated with freebies?

Constraints from other issues: The major issue is not the freebies themselves, but the constraint imposed by limited means. For instance, Delhi can give free power up to a consumption limit and also invest in schools but not Punjab with its high indebtedness cannot do the same.

The welfare state is unaffordable: In advanced economies, “transfer payments” through social security, and unemployment benefits dominate budgets. Thus leaving less and less money for infrastructure, research, and other “investments” for growth. For instance, in Britain, the National Health Service is near breakdown.

Read more: [From freebies to welfare](#)

What needs to be done to provide a better welfare state?

Follow the principle of Singapore’s founder, the late Lee Kuan Yew: He mandated **high personal savings** with which Singaporeans could buy government-provided housing, and also mandated **personal health funds** to pay for medical emergencies. In return for people, he offered low taxes.

This has the following advantages, **a) government spending does not leave behind a burden** for future generations, **b)** The government would not spend the money it did not have. Thereby ratio of **public debt to GDP will not increase**.

Provide fiscal space to states: Creating a fiscal responsibility law will not achieve anything. Instead, the centre can increase the share of tax revenue to states, so that states can afford and plan their freebies.

Read more: [Making sense of the ‘freebies’ issue](#)

29. [A Journey Unfinished: India@75 has much to celebrate but the full range of freedoms available to elites eludes most](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**A Journey Unfinished: India@75 has much to celebrate but the full range of freedoms available to elites eludes most**” published in **The Times of India** on **13th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Relevance: About India’s democracy.

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News: India is celebrating its 75 years of Independence. But India needs to do more to be truly independent, to be truly free.

How has India been democratic ever since its independence?

The Partition riots were a monumental tragedy that indelibly marked India's birth as a nation. It was not clear then that India would survive as a country.

Despite that, people of various states are feeling a sense of national unity and purpose that overcame their religious, caste, language and socioeconomic identities.

All this is due to the remarkable achievement of our early leaders, who put in place democratic practices and made them into traditions.

How democracy is unifying India?

Liberal democracy has been a safety valve, diffusing the varied pressures emerging from the vast country. It has ensured that most battles are fought in newspapers, at the ballot box, in Parliament, and not in the street.

Liberal democracy has helped preserve the unity of our country.

Read more: [India, democracy and the promised republic](#)

What are the challenges India is still facing?

Economic inequality exists in India due to unequal access to public goods like education and healthcare.

Draconian provisions: Freedom fighters sought independence in part so that they could speak out, criticise and protest without the ever-present threat of being jailed by an omnipotent colonial government, using its arbitrary laws and police powers.

Yet many of those laws and police powers are still on the books, some even enhanced.

Read more: [No inner-party democracy](#)

What needs to be done?

Need necessary improvements: Malnutrition and stunting of children need immediate attention. Similarly, the extent to which poor children fall behind grade level requirements in reading and arithmetic should be rectified.

True economic freedom can come only when most people can easily find decent jobs. So, India should create more jobs.

Need to aid religious minorities: Sri Lanka is a classic example of what will happen if politicians demonise a minority. The role of minorities in India's achievement should not be ignored.

Institutional reforms: India should **improve the quality and efficiency of law enforcement agencies**. Along with that, institutions such as the press and the judiciary also are in dire need of reforms.

Read more: [Preserving democracy in India](#)

Gandhi feared that in post-Independence India, freedom for the few is never sustainable – unless the many see, experience and cherish that freedom. On our 75th Independence Day, the government should know that the struggle for independence is still unfinished.

General Studies Paper – 3

General Studies - 3

1. [Tapping technology to check minor mineral plunder](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Tapping technology to check minor mineral plunder**” published in **The Hindu** on **8th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation.

Relevance: About illegal mining of minor minerals

News: The United Nations Environment Programme, in 2019, ranked India and China as the top two countries where illegal sand mining has led to sweeping environmental degradation.

Minor minerals such as sand and gravel have crossed 60 million metric tons in India. This makes it the second-largest extractive industry on the planet, after water.

Laws and monitoring have been made stringent for the mining of major minerals. But rampant and illegal mining of minor minerals continues unabated.

What are the impacts of illegal sand mining?

Severely affects soil formation and the soil holding ability of the land, leading to a loss in marine life, an increase in flood frequency, droughts, and also degradation of water quality.

These effects can be seen in the beds of the Godavari, the Narmada, Yamuna and the Mahanadi basins.

In Narmada basin, sand mining has reduced the population of Mahseer fish from 76% between 1963 and 2015.

Apart from these, illegal mining can also create losses to the state exchequer. For instance, U.P. is losing revenue from 70% of mining activities as only 30% area is legally mined.

Read more: [SC appointed Central Empowered Committee\(CEC\) report on Sand mining in Rajasthan](#)

How minor minerals are regulated?

Firstly, the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notifications of 1994 and 2006 made **environmental clearance compulsory for mining in areas more than or equal to five hectares**.

Secondly, a report by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on **Environmental Aspects of Quarrying of Minor Minerals (2010)** directed all State governments to make the requisite changes in the regulatory framework of minor minerals.

Thirdly, the Supreme Court of India after taking cognisance of a report directed state governments to make environmental clearance for mining in areas less than five hectares mandatory. Consequently, the EIA was amended in 2016.

The amendment also provided for the setting up of a **District Environment Impact Assessment Authority (EIAA) and a District Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC)**.

Fourthly, the NGT directed some States to use satellite imagery to monitor the volume of sand extraction and transportation from the riverbeds.

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What are the challenges in regulating minor minerals?

Not efficient regulation: State-wise review of EACs and EIAs in key industrial States such as Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, shows that these authorities have a rejection rate of a mere 1%. So, introducing clearances alone can not help eliminate irregularities in the illegal mining of minor minerals.

A State-wide review of the reasons behind non-compliance suggests a malfunction of governance due to **a)** weak institutions, **b)** scarcity of state resources to ensure enforcement, **c)** poorly drafted regulatory provisions, **d)** inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and **e)** excessive litigation dampens state administrative capacity.

Under-estimated quantity: The problem of illegal mining of minor minerals is often under-estimated. There have been numerous cases of the illegal mining of dolomite, marble and sand across the States.

No comprehensive assessment: This hampers the evaluation of the scale of sand mining in India.

Difficult to detect: Being removed from agricultural lands or fallow lands of the government near major highways or construction projects.

Power of state governments: The regulatory and administrative powers to frame rules, prescribe rates of royalty, mineral concessions, enforcement, etc. are entrusted exclusively to the State governments.

Read more: [Coastal sand mining, whether legal or illegal, poses one of the biggest threats to our environment.](#)

What should be done to protect minor minerals?

1) Satellite imagery can be used to monitor the volume of extraction and also check the mining process, **2)** The NGT and administrative authorities can obtain satellite pictures for the past 10 to 15 years and show how small hillocks of earth, gravel or small stone dunes have disappeared in an area, **3)** Drones, the internet of things (IoT) and blockchain technology can be leveraged to monitor mechanisms by using Global Positioning System, radar and Radio Frequency (RF) Locator.

2. [About Gregor Mendel and criticisms against his work: Judging the fudging of data](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Judging the fudging of data**” published in **The Hindu** on **8th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Awareness in the field of biotechnology.

Relevance: About the contribution of Gregor Mendel and the issues surrounding fudging of data.

News: Recently the 200th birth anniversary of Gregor Mendel, the ‘father of modern genetics’ was celebrated worldwide. This raised the issue of judging the fudging(cheating) of data.

About Gregor Mendel

-Mendel discovered the basic principles of heredity and laid the mathematical foundation of the science of genetics.

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-He performed controlled crossing experiments on around 29,000 plants with the garden pea between 1856 and 1863. He deduced that genes come in pairs and are inherited as distinct units, one from each parent.

-He registered many observable characteristics, such as the shape and colour of the seeds, and the colour of the flower, and formulated two principles of heredity.

His seminal paper, 'Experiments on Plant Hybridization', was published in the Proceedings of the Brunn Society for Natural Science in 1866.

In 1900, the British biologist William Bateson unearthed Mendel's paper and gave posthumous recognition to Mendel's works.

What are the criticisms against Mendel's work?

In 1936, eminent British statistician and geneticist, Sir Ronald Fisher, published a paper. By reconstructing Mendel's experiments, Fisher found the ratio of dominant to recessive phenotypes to be implausibly close to the expected ratio of 3:1. He claimed that Mendel's data agree better with his theory than expected under natural fluctuations.

But he also concluded, "The data of most, if not all, of the experiments have been falsified to agree closely with Mendel's expectations." Numerous articles have been published on the Mendel-Fisher controversy subsequently.

Read more: [Scientists solve the curious case of Himalayan glaciers resisting global warming](#)

How has the Mendel theory and fudging of data evolved recently?

In a 1984 book, an author argued that Ptolemy, Hipparchus, Galileo, Newton, Bernoulli, Dalton, Darwin, and Mendel are all alleged to have violated standards of good research practice.

The 2008 book by Allan Franklin and others ended the Mendel-Fisher Controversy. The book recognised that "the issue of the 'too good to be true' aspect of Mendel's data found by Fisher still stands.

How one can judge the cheating of data?

Benford's law says that in many real-life numerical data sets, the proportion of times of different leading digits is fixed.

It is difficult to conclude fudging in most cases. The available technologies for identifying data fudging are still inadequate to address all possible situations.

Judging the fudging is a continual process, empowered with new technologies, scientific interpretations, and ethical standards.

3. [India's tax-GDP ratio may be too high](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**India's tax-GDP ratio may be too high**” published in the **Indian Express** on **8th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 The Union Budgeting in India

Relevance: Tax/GDP Debate

News: In a recent web publication, the IMF published its **World Revenue Longitudinal Data set** for all countries, from 1990-2019.

Common Observations of India's Tax/GDP Ratio

(1) India's Tax/GDP ratio is low, at around 10-11% of GDP. It has stayed close to that level for the last 20 years. In 2019, it hit a decade low of 10% of GDP, the same as in 2014.

(2) In comparison with our peers, India's tax/GDP ratio is much lower. Therefore, it is argued that it should be increased.

Debates on Tax/GDP Ratio in the Indian Economy

India's tax/GDP ratio is one of the three important fiscal variables in the economy, i.e., **taxes**, **fiscal deficit**, and **debt**. And it is lower than what it “should” be.

These fiscal variables are interrelated. Therefore, a lower tax/GDP ratio impacts the other **two fiscal variables**. I.e., lower tax revenue means higher fiscal deficit, for the same level of expenditures, and higher deficit means higher debt. All three, directly or indirectly, are assumed to affect growth and/or inflation.

It has been argued that the low tax ratio in India has led to a lower rate of investment, a higher fiscal deficit, and lower GDP growth.

What are the issues in the arguments for low-tax/GDP ratio in India?

However, there is **no empirical evidence** to indicate a **causal relationship** between **tax ratios or fiscal deficits** and **growth**. But no doubt there is a **well-established relationship** between investment and growth.

India should compare its tax-GDP ratio with the tax/GDP ratio of the **G20 countries**. There is a **misinterpretation** because the tax collected is a function of the average level of per capita income. And Per capita income in the G20 varies from around \$2,100 (India) to around \$65,000 (US).

In the pre-pandemic year 2019, India's tax-GDP ratio was 16.7%. It was higher than that of China (15.9%), Mexico (14.1%), Indonesia (11.0%), Saudi Arabia (5.9%), and Turkey (15.9%) among G20 economies.

If the comparison is done with the tax-GDP ratio adjusted for PPP per capita income, the IMF's data reports that the **world average tax gap** is -1.3 percent and India is at +1.2 percent for the nine years 2011-2019. So, India's tax GDP ratio averages 2.5 percentage points more than an average economy.

Among 70 Emerging economies, excluding Advanced Economies and countries belonging to the former Soviet Union, India's rank is 20, i.e., India's Tax ratio is higher than 50 peers on a systematic basis.

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Debates over the structural measures to increase the tax/GDP ratio of India

Hike Corporate Tax Rate View: Some experts argued to increase revenue from **corporate tax** (one of three major components of tax revenue, the other being income and indirect taxes). Because inequality was increasing, the rich should pay more taxes to lower the fiscal deficit.

Lower Corporate Tax Rate View: A small minority of economic experts argued that the higher corporate tax rates will stifle investment, increase **tax un-compliance**, and **lower growth**. Therefore, there should be a lowering of the corporate tax rate in India to meet the intended goals

Various Structural Change Measures Taken for Increasing the Tax Collection in India Post-2019

Corporate tax cut 2019: In September 2019, the **Finance Minister** lowered the corporate tax rate by around 10 percentage points. This was **one of the largest corporate tax cuts** in world history. Unfortunately, the pandemic struck the world a few months later and disrupted world economies.

Efficacy of the tax cut in India

The corporate tax revenue has increased by 66%, and GDP by 33% based on the use of **fiscal 2019-20** as a base. It means, there has been an average tax buoyancy of 2.0 over three years since 2019.

Tentatively, the tax-GDP ratio in the fiscal year 2022-23 will average over 18 percent in India, a level close to Japan and the US.

4. [Experts Explain: What it will take to fulfill India's solar power dream](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Experts Explain: What it will take to fulfill India's solar power dream**” published in the **Indian Express** on **9th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc..

Relevance: About the challenges faced by solar PV manufacturing in India.

News: From less than 10 MW in 2010, India has added significant solar PV capacity over the past decade, achieving over 50 GW by 2022.

By 2030, India is targeting about 500 GW of renewable energy deployment, out of which ~280 GW is expected from solar PV. This necessitates the deployment of nearly 30 GW of solar capacity every year until 2030.

About Solar PV panels

A typical solar PV value chain consists of first fabricating polysilicon ingots which need to be transformed into thin Si wafers that are needed to manufacture the PV mini-modules. The mini-modules are then assembled into market-ready and field-deployable modules.

The bigger size of solar wafer there is an advantage in terms of silicon cost per wafer, as this effectively means lower loss of silicon during ingot to wafer processing.

What are the challenges that need to be overcome in solar PV manufacturing?

Higher Imports: India currently does not have enough module and cell manufacturing capacity. Hence, Indian solar deployment or installation companies depend heavily on imports.

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India's current solar module manufacturing capacity is limited to ~15 GW per year. India only produces ~3.5 GW of cells currently. India has no manufacturing capacity for solar wafers and polysilicon ingots, and currently imports 100% of silicon wafers and around 80% of cells even at the current deployment levels.

Size and technology: In terms of cell technology, most of the manufacturing still uses Al-BSF technology, which can typically give efficiencies of ~18-19% at the cell level and ~16-17% at the module level. By contrast, cell manufacturing worldwide has moved to other newer technologies, yielding module efficiency of >21%.

Raw materials supply: Silicon wafer, the most expensive raw material, is not manufactured in India. More than 90% of the world's solar wafer manufacturing currently happens in China.

Other key raw materials such as metallic pastes of silver and aluminium to form the electrical contacts too, are almost 100% imported. India is more of an assembly hub than a manufacturing one.

Read more: [Semiconductors: Heroes Of The New Digital World](#)

Academics plus industry: India has hardly invested in creating high-quality high-TRL technology centres that can help the industry to try and test the technologies in a cost-effective manner. Examples of the such centres include IMEC Belgium or the Holst Centre in the Netherlands.

What are the government initiatives to promote solar PV panels?

Firstly, there is a 40% duty on the import of modules and 25% duty on the import of cells, and a PLI scheme to support manufacturing capex.

Secondly, it is mandatory to procure modules only from an approved list of manufacturers (ALMM) for projects that are connected to state/ central government grids; so far, only India-based manufacturers have been approved.

Read more: [The Global Semiconductor Shortage – Explained, pointwise](#)

What can be done?

Although India is making great progress in the deployment of solar PV modules for power generation, its path to becoming a manufacturing hub for the same requires more than just putting tax barriers and commercial incentives in the form of PLI schemes, etc.

a) India will have to work on technology tie-ups to make the right grade of silicon for solar cell manufacturing, **b)** In long term, it would be beneficial to move up the value chain by making components that could drive the price and quality of both cells and modules, **c)** India needs to create industry-like centres to work on specific technology domains with clear roadmaps and deliverables for the short and long term, **d)** Strong industry-academia collaboration in an innovative manner to start developing home-grown technologies.

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5. [PMLA verdict — due process will be bulldozed](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**PMLA verdict — due process will be bulldozed**” published in **The Hindu** on **9th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Money-laundering and its prevention.

Relevance: About the issues surrounding PMLA.

News: The Supreme Court of India in Vijay Madanlal Choudhary vs Union Of India found all the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (“PMLA”) as constitutional.

The Court compared the intensity of money laundering with terrorism while disagreeing with its earlier judgment, where the Court had made a distinction between the two.

Must read: [The Supreme Court’s Judgment on PMLA – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the significant provisions of PMLA?

The PMLA is meant to deal with prosecution and punishment for the offence of “money laundering.” An accused commits laundering when s/he has relation with any process or activity with the “proceeds of crime.”

So, for the PMLA to come into action, there must have been another crime — independent of the PMLA — from which monies were derived.

Read here: [Prevention of Money Laundering Act\(PMLA\)](#)

What are predicate offences?

The other crime, which is a necessary precondition for an offence under the PMLA is described as the predicate offence.

These predicate offences can be various offences under regular penal law such as the Indian Penal Code 1860, the Prevention of Corruption Act, etc. These are governed by the regular criminal process.

Read more: [PMLA verdict, an erosion of constitutional buffers](#)

What are the challenges associated with PMLA?

a) Non-supply of the Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) to the accused/arrested person, **b)** Power to make any person (including existing or future accused) state the truth on oath even though it may amount to self-incrimination, **c)** Once a person is accused of committing the offence of money laundering, the burden of proving that proceeds of the crime are untainted property shall be on the accused, **d)** Blanket common and non-graded punishment for anyone associated with money laundering.

Read here: [Supreme Court examines allegations of rampant misuse of PMLA](#)

What are the concerns raised against the judgment?

1) Legislative intent can be a beginning point of constitutional analysis. i.e., whether the state has a legitimate purpose in making a law. But the Court treated legislative intent as the end point of its analysis.

2) The overemphasis on the seriousness of money laundering. There are so many offences under regular penal law that are punishable with life imprisonment or even death, where none of these draconian provisions applies.

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3) Legislative intent is reflected by Parliament as part of its normal law-making power, whereas the constitutional due process is incorporated in the Constitution itself and is meant to define the limits of parliamentary law, irrespective of its intent.

Hence, elevating legislative intent can bulldoze any constitutional argument/reasoning that due process has been completely compromised in PMLA cases.

Read more: [How Enforcement Directorate \(ED\) became so powerful?](#)

6. [The employment-income crisis](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The employment-income crisis**” published in the **Business Standard** on 8th August 2022.

Syllabus: **GS 3** Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development, and Employment.

Relevance: Jobless growth in India and associated reforms

News: India is the fastest growing large economy in the world. However, the Indian Economy is facing a number of challenges.

What are the challenges to addressing the employment-income crisis?

India is facing the **biggest crisis** of the **unemployed** and **unemployable** graduates, or secondary school drop-outs. This has caused disaffection among youth.

Some Measures Taken to solve the crisis

Education: Today, 50.2% of men and 41.0% of women have 10 or more years of schooling in the 15-49 age group.

Skilling: (1) **Sector Skills Councils** were set up from 2009-10 onwards. (2) **The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** was set up in 2014 with a strong focus on standardisation, and (3) **Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), polytechnics, and other skill-oriented institutions** were brought on a common platform.

The states and districts are playing a vital role in the implementation of skill programs.

The government launched **Skill Hubs** linking schools to ITIs/polytechnics, apprenticeship/internship embedded courses, credit equivalence frameworks, and so on.

What are the issues in the measures taken so far?

The **Comptroller and Auditor General of India**, has pointed out that there has been misreporting of employment due to incentivized thrust on employment.

Colleges and high schools had some apprenticeship and vocational opportunities, but not on a transformational scale.

Some solutions to fight the challenges outlined above through a reform of the education-skill continuum

(1) There should be **meaningful skilling** for enterprises and jobs in the **rural areas**. **For example**, the promotion of high-value activities in the agriculture and allied sector. **Basic IT and communication skills** should be part of every skilling program.

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For example, Madhya Pradesh has launched a pilot in some villages for full employment through the Livelihood Mission.

(2) There should be **an education-skills continuum**. Skilling should be linked with formal education. For example, there can be certificates, diploma courses, and bachelor's degrees in vocational education like counseling, tourist guides, accountancy, IT skills, etc. Thus, BA/B.Sc./B.Com graduates can be made employable on a large scale with modest investments.

For Example, **Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra** have higher **women's work participation** due to numerous technical and service-oriented institutions and courses.

(3) There should be a re-orientation of the ITIs and polytechnics. The focus should be on reskilling and upskilling through changes in curriculum development and course design.

(4) local governments and community organisations like women's self-help groups (SHGs) and youth organisations should be involved in the skilling plan for a local area.

In addition, there should be a database of all men and women seeking employment or enterprise support for each and every local body, rural or urban.

(5) Skills and credit have to go hand in hand. The newly-trained individuals or groups who want to develop their enterprises must be provided with credit. There can be **innovative technology-enabled financing** through **community collectives** like community cadre of Bank Sakhis and Bank Mitras.

(6) Apprenticeship or skill programs managed by potential employers must be encouraged to enable a more **need-based development of skills**.

(7) The **Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs)** should be leveraged in districts. They can run courses in partnership with the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVKs) like mechanisation and modernisation of agriculture and allied activities. Further, SHGs, farmers producer organisations (FPOs), primary agricultural cooperative societies, etc., can work with RSETIs for skill and credit linkage.

(8) The certification and assessment should be developed in accordance with the systems for higher education.

7. [New terms of trade](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **"New Terms of Trade"** published in the **Business Standard** on **8th August 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3** Effects of Liberalization on the Economy, Changes in Industrial Policy and their Effects on Industrial Growth.

Relevance: External Sector; Foreign Trade Policy, Free Trade Agreements

News: In the last fiscal year, India's merchandise export rose by over 40% in the last fiscal year. However, India's merchandise export growth has seen a moderation in recent.

Causes of the recent moderation

(1) The surge in India's merchandise export was driven by global commodity prices. Therefore, it was not going to sustain for a longer period of time.

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(2) Moderation is partly because of the imposition of export restrictions to contain domestic inflation.

(3) In recent years, India's participation in the global value chain has declined. Consequentially, it has affected exports.

(4) The World Bank data shows that India's exports of goods and services as a percentage of gross domestic product steadily declined from a high of 25.4% in 2013 to 18.7% in 2020.

Importance of attaining and maintaining higher levels of India's merchandise exports

High Merchandise export is an important driver for attaining higher sustainable economic growth.

Some measures were taken by the government – the government restructured the department of commerce.

(1) Now, the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** will look at regulations and the promotion of foreign trade. It will not be involved in the making of the foreign trade policy.

(2) Further, the **trade policy division** has been bifurcated to handle bilateral trade negotiations and multilateral trade negotiations. This will help in providing focused attention to negotiations on **free-trade agreements** that India is currently engaged in with a number of countries.

However, the reorganization of the commerce department cannot solve the problem. Instead, it should be seen as a starting point.

Other Potential areas for interventions

In addition, the government must bring **domain experts** into the system of the department of commerce.

India needs to build **institutional capacity** in the **trade policy establishment**. This will help India to take a practical position in trade negotiations. **For example**, India's decision to not join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) has been severely criticized in various quarters. India lost an opportunity to become part of the most dynamic trading bloc in the world.

India needs to integrate with global value chains (GVC) to boost its merchandise trade sustainably. **For example**, If India remains out of an RCEP-like trade agreement and increases tariffs to protect domestic businesses, then it would be difficult for India to become an integral part of any value chain.

The Way Forward

India should build on the momentum that it has gained after the pandemic and sustains a reasonable rate of export growth over the medium term.

The government should use the restructuring of the commerce department to build institutional strength.

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8. [Fair trial goes beyond courts, to the police and media](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Fair trial goes beyond courts, to the police and media**” published in **The Hindu** on **10th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges.

Relevance: About the information leak from police and its impact by poor media ethics.

News: Recently, the Chief Justice of India objected to the lack of media accountability in the media’s coverage of legal issues.

How does media hamper a fair trial?

In **criminal cases**, media attention is often drawn toward investigation and early trial stages, with a notable disconnect from the eventual outcomes of a trial.

This makes the police a crucial source for the media and communication between the two institutions is often a starting point of trouble. For instance, in Bhima Koregaon violence (2018) the police exposed letters purportedly written by activists that were still undergoing forensic analysis.

Why do media reports hamper a fair trial?

1) Unregulated divulgence of case details by police and disproportionate reliance on this information by the media hampers a fair trial, **2)** Government regulation is not uniform for print and television media and enforcement of these regulations is slow, **3)** Media fails to check the accuracy of police narratives before making them public. Further, reporters bear the burden of translating the significance of police versions in a criminal trial.

Read more: [Secure Indian interests: Ensure fair play in media](#)

Why police is revealing information to the media?

Police reveal crucial information to the media because **a)** They are more **concerned with demonstrating dynamism and efficiency**, rather than the protection of civil liberties, **b)** Most police departments do not have dedicated media cells, making officials of all levels authoritative sources of information and blurring the boundaries between an official and informal police account of events, **c)**

What are the potential impact of police revealing information to media?

Revealing information from police violates **a)** Presumption of innocence and **b)** The right to dignity and the privacy of suspects, the accused, victims, witnesses and persons closely related to them, **c)** Face social ostracisation and difficulties in retaining employment, making them vulnerable to crime and exploitation, **d)** Hampers the evidence-based narrative of criminal cases presented by the police to a court.

What are the various steps taken to restrict police from revealing information?

Firstly, the Supreme Court in **Romila Thapar vs Union of India, (2018) case** directed law enforcement authorities not to reveal details of their investigations, especially the personal details of the accused, before the trial is complete. This interpretation is held in various instances.

Secondly, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued a sparse office memorandum outlining a media policy over a decade ago.

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Thirdly, Kerala is one of the few States that have disallowed photographs and parades of persons in custody within its Police Act.

Read more: [Police – Training, Modernisation and Reforms Report: Make police complaints authority free from cops: House panel](#)

How do ensure the government can ensure a fair trial?

For media: In the immediate interest of the media and the general interest of the free press, the media institutions such as National Broadcasting Standards Authority and Indian Broadcasting Foundation must find answer this ethical crisis.

For police: In an ongoing case, the Peoples’ Union for Civil Liberties asked the Supreme Court to issue guidelines to regulate media briefings by the police to ensure a fair trial.

So a structured and well-designed media policy with training and enforcement mechanisms is the need of the hour for the police.

9. [Powering reforms](#)

Source: The post is based on the article: “**Powering reforms**”, published in the **Business Standard** on 10th August 2022.

“**Power plays**”, published in **The Times of India** on 10th August 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3 Infrastructure; Energy

News: Recently, The Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022 was tabled in the Lok Sabha, and it was immediately sent to the Standing Committee on Energy for closer scrutiny and debate.

The subject matter of electricity comes in the Constitution’s concurrent list. Therefore, the Government of India has introduced a bill for reform.

Background- The Electricity Act 2003

The act tried to provide a new architecture to promote competition in a system that was hitherto defined by a **maze of cross-subsidies**.

The Act tried to **foster competition** with the **open access mechanism**, which means a customer is not limited to a single supplier.

Features of the Proposed Bill

It proposes the principle of **open access**, i.e., the right of consumers to choose their electricity provider, regardless of who controls the physical infrastructure in their locality or state.

The state’s distribution infrastructure can be opened up to all licensees in the area.

It will segregate carriage and content to circumvent the conflict of interest that is faced by the State-DISCOMS due to simultaneous owning of the distribution infrastructure and retail.

There’s also a provision that can lead to trimming the cross-subsidies.

What are the possible challenges in front of the proposed bill and reforms?

Since 2003, a number of attempts have been made to introduce the principle of open access in India. But these efforts died down due to **strong opposition** and **poor drafting**.

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There are fears that this Bill will die in committee because a number of members of parliament have argued that the bill infringes upon the **states' rights to regulate electricity supply and pricing**. It would be an example of the encroachment by the Union government into the state's regulatory and legal domains.

Further, the Central government has also not consulted **the state governments** during the drafting of the bill or before its introduction into the lower house. Therefore, the bill may face **political backlash** during passage in the house.

In the past, **open-access provisions** were undermined due to exceptions and legal wrangling. For example, earlier only large consumers were able to choose their provider, which reduced the competitive pressures in the power sector.

In 2015, a parliamentary panel said that open access was fairly good in the case of **interstate access** but unsatisfactory for intra-state.

What should be done?

The Union government is competent to introduce the bill because electricity is on the **Concurrent List** of the Constitution.

The principle of open access would lead to competition, and the poorly-performing state electricity utilities may turn into better-performing providers in the coming years.

The power subsidies should be transparently provided and not through **cross-subsidization** within the **public-sector power company (state-owned DISCOMS)**. The cross-subsidies cause inefficiency and reduce competitiveness

10. A carbon market's form must follow its function

Source: The post is based on the article "**A carbon market's form must follow its function**" published in the **Live Mint** on **9th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 Ecology and Environment; Infrastructure and Energy

Relevance: Market Intervention for Combating Climate Change

News: This week, the Lok Sabha passed **the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act of 2022** before sending an update of India's plans to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Prime Minister of India revised India's **climate commitment** at last year's **CoP-26 summit in Glasgow**

- (1) By 2030, India aims at around 50% energy drawn from sources other than fossil fuels.
- (2) India would release 45% less dirty emissions for every rupee of economic output than we did in 2005.
- (3) India would also achieve carbon neutrality by 2070.

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Proposed bill

The bill amends the Energy Conservation Act 2001. The move will let the government specify **standards of energy** use by various groups of users, with mandates for **clean sources** in their usage mix.

The bill proposes to set up a **market platform** locally for the **trading of carbon credits**.

About the carbon market

The idea works by placing a price tag on a fungible **tonne of carbon exhaust**. **Further**, the prices of carbon units are based on the forces of demand and supply in a system of **dynamic burden sharing**. In this, the emitters pay the cost to buy credit for their own financial well-being, and the ones outperforming the green energy target will sell those credits.

The carbon market functions with a '**cap and trade**' mechanism. In this, a legal limit is set on emissions.

It allows the entities which are spouting more gases than their annual allowance to buy add-on rights, while **efficient carbon compressors** could sell their surplus to the defaulters.

Why did India need a carbon market?

It is a form of market intervention, which is a key element of economic success. For example, it works upon private incentives.

The deployment of private incentives and market signals helps to stall climate change.

What should be done?

The **cap-and-trade limit** should be tightened over the years in accordance with our climate goals.

For this, **emission caps** should be placed and should be calibrated with full transparency. **For instance**, the scientific data used for their basis, devices used for exhaust evaluation, and other elements of our policy frame must always be kept amenable to scrutiny.

It's crucial that **cap-and-trade** does not end up as an **inspect-and-extort regime** in India. For this, a tech-enabled model of open verification can be adopted by the government.

The past certificates issued by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) could be enlisted under a cap-and-trade plan.

11. [Step back from water's edge](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Step back from water's edge**" published in the Indian Express on 10th August 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3 Internal and External Security

Relevance: Maritime Security

News: In recent days, there were reports that a Chinese "spy ship" known as Yuan Wang-5, was going to visit the Sri Lankan port of Hambantota. This happened amidst India's emergency economic assistance to Sri Lanka.

History of the PLA's vessel visit to Indian waters

In 2014, a PLA Navy's (PLAN) Type-039, a diesel submarine was docked in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

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It was followed by a port call by a Type-091 nuclear-powered attack submarine on the Sri Lanka Port.

Why did Sri Lanka give permission to the Chinese vessel to enter its domestic port?

Sri Lanka has cordial diplomatic relations and economic dependence on China. Therefore, there could be no plausible reason for Sri Lanka to deny entry to Yuan Wang 5, especially into **Hambantota** on which China has a **99-year lease**.

Apart from India and the IMF, Sri Lanka also needs Chinese help for its economic recovery in this crisis time.

Although the actual mission of **Yuan Wang 5** is not known, it is also assumed that it was on a **legitimate space-related assignment**. For example, Further, China is active in space programs. It has planned 50 space launches for 2022, like a return of three Chinese astronauts to earth from **an 11-year-old space station**, the **Tiangong-3 space station** is under-construction, etc. For these, space activities, China needs survey/research ships in dispersed oceanic locations ranging from the mid-Pacific and south Indian Ocean to the coast of Africa, for control and tracking as well as rescue tasks

International laws for the passage of vessels in the sea waters

The 1982 UN Convention for Law of the Seas permits unfettered freedom of navigation on the high seas. Therefore, **a foreign warship** has a right to be in the **Indian Ocean**, likewise, a similar Indian vessel would be allowed in the South China Sea.

In the 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ), there exists the conditional right of “innocent passage” for all vessels, including warships.

During peacetime, UNCLOS mandates foreign vessels, especially warships, to have prior consent before entering **foreign ports**.

During wartime, the **1907 Hague Convention** permits entry for warships of belligerents into neutral ports for limited durations.

Indian Issues with the Yuan Wang 5 in the Indian waters

(1) First, China has overtaken the US Navy and has become a **“maritime Great Power”**. It is mandated to safeguard the **Maritime Silk Road** that spans the **Indo-Pacific** and includes the China-Pakistan economic corridor.

(2) In recent years, China has created a string of ports, in India’s neighborhood, meant to contain India.

(3) The Yuan Wang 5 research/spy vessel comprises **multi-spectral surveillance** and **eavesdropping devices**. The ship has **“lethal capabilities”** and **“aerial reach of more than 750 km”**. Therefore, it could do reconnaissance of India’s atomic research centers within Indian borders.

(4) The visit of the PLA’s ship to Hambantota could lead to the infringement of the **1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Accord**. The accord calls upon the two countries not to allow their respective territories to be used for **“activities prejudicial to each other’s unity, integrity, and security”**.

What should be done?

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(1) However, Colombo has often **acknowledged** that the security and economic interests of both India and Sri Lanka are inextricably interlinked and any deliberate actions that harm Indian interests will eventually rebound on it.

(2) Indian **armed forces** and **other agencies** are aware of such reconnaissance. They have already taken precautionary policies and procedures relating to **electronic emissions** and **missile-firing trials**. Further, the **Indian Navy's maritime domain awareness matrix** would follow the position and movements of Yuan Wang 5, if it was in our waters,

(3) India needs to bolster its **economic** and **maritime power**. Further, India can enforce its version of a "**Monroe Doctrine**," because there would be the frequent presence of PLAN in the Indian Ocean.

12. [The uproar over the Electricity \(Amendment\) Bill, 2022](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**The uproar over the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022**" published in **The Hindu** on **11th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Relevance: About the concerns associated with the Electricity (Amendment) Bill.

News: The Union Power Ministry introduced the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022 in Lok Sabha.

What are the key provisions of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill?

Read here: [Explained: Electricity Bill – promise, problems](#)

What is the history of the Electricity Act?

The Electricity Bill was brought for the first time and passed in Parliament in 2003.

Aim:

-To consolidate the laws relating to generation, transmission, distribution, trading and use of electricity.

-To protect consumers' interest and supply of electricity to all areas, rationalisation of electricity tariff, transparent policies regarding subsidies etc.

Outcome: The Act resulted in the privatisation of distributing companies.

Amendment: The 2007 amendment included provisions for "cross subsidy." Thus ensured subsidy to poor households was added to the Bill.

Later many amendment Bills remained in their draft form but it wasn't cleared.

Read more: [Explained: Electricity amendment bill 2021 —why are states such as WB opposing it?](#)

What are the concerns associated with the present Electricity bill?

a) Privatisation of distribution companies and generating units might result in job losses, **b)** The Bill might result in the privatisation of profits and the nationalisation of losses, **c)** The Bill is silent on subsidised power provided to poor farmers in States like Tamil Nadu.

The other concerns are,

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Make Centre powerful: The Bill proposes Centre's intervention in the area of power distribution. Further, the amendment empowers the Central Government to prescribe the criteria.

The issue with multiple distribution licensees: Such a provision might create a situation similar to the telecom sector where monopoly companies will destroy the public sector and smaller networks.

Read more: [Government policies are successful in ensuring reliable electricity supply](#)

13. [Custom That Costs Us Dear](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "Custom That Costs Us Dear" published in the Times of India on 11th August 2022.

Syllabus: **GS 3** Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.; Governing Budgeting

Relevance: External Sector; Ease of Doing Business

News: Since 2018-19, the government has switched from liberalism to protectionism on account of its import substitution.

History of tariff setting in India

(1) Since 1882, Britain had followed a policy of complete **free trade** in India. In 1894, it imposed 5% duty on imports meet revenue needs. However, it was simultaneously offset by an equivalent excise tax on domestically produced products in India. The custom duty was used with revenue roles instead of protective.

(2) The **Indian Fiscal Commission of 1921-22** recommended that custom duty has a protective role to play, as initial protection is important to withstand **foreign competition**. A **tariff board** can be established to which industries could petition for **grant of protective duties**.

(3) **First Tariff Board** was appointed in 1923. Based on the board's recommendation, the government granted protection to the iron and steel industry. Later on, **more tariff boards** were appointed between 1923 and 1939.

(4) With the advent of **World War II**, this practice of the grant of protection ended. Due to war, the government imposed strict and direct import controls through licensing.

(5) After the war, the government started liberalising controls. It ushered in an era of **liberal trade policy ensuing**. As a result, the Tariff Commission was created in 1951 in the prevailing liberal policy environment.

(6) In 1957-58, the balance of payments crisis ended this liberal era. In 1960s, strict import licensing regime was instituted. Later on, the Tariff Commission was disbanded in 1976.

(7) In the 1970s, the **licence-permit raj era** was ushered in. The Revenue Department had the authority to set **customs duties** in India.

(8) In 1991 reform, the government eliminated **import licensing**. Tariffs were used for protection once again. India also introduced anti-dumping and safeguard mechanisms. The GOI revived the

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Tariff Commission in 1997. However, but it failed to effectively challenge the authority of the revenue department to set **customs duties**.

Trends of customs-duty since 2014-15

In 2014-15, the duty rates were increased and applied to less than 1% of all tariff lines and later on. However, later on, it was increased to **3-4%** of all tariff lines.

In 2018-19, the then finance minister in his budget speech said, “I am making a calibrated departure from the underlying policy in the last two decades, wherein the trend largely was to reduce the customs duty. There is substantial potential for domestic value addition in certain sectors . . . To further incentivise domestic value addition ... I propose to increase customs duty on certain items”.

In 2018-19, increased custom duty rates were applied to 42. 3% of all tariff lines. Further, the **average of all customs duties** was also increased from 13. 7% to 17. 7%, and other measures were also taken in this regard.

What are the issues the trade policies have taken so far?

The Custom duties have been hiked without doing adequate analysis, discussion or debate while making decisions.

The government has used custom duties as a **revenue-raising instrument**. But, a **central principle of public finance** does not allow the customs duties to be used like a revenue instrument.

Institutional flaw: The revenue department shouldn't be the authority to impose customs duties. The Tariff Commission lacks necessary expertise and authority to influence the decisions of the revenue department.

The Way Forward

Increases in customs duties should be strictly reserved for protection to new industries.

The government should constitute an **expert body** which should be mandated to review high customs duties prevailing in many existing industries.

14. [The inequality challenge for India@75](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The inequality challenge for India@75**” published in the Live Mint on 11th August 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3 Inclusive Growth; Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development, and Employment; etc.

Relevance: Inequalities in India

News: The article compares the present development with the national income at the time of independence. It highlights the lacunas in the growth patterns of India.

During the period 1900-01 to 1946-47, national income growth was 1% per annum and per capita income growth was 0.2% per annum.

(1) During the period 1950-51 to 2019-20, India has **restored economic autonomy** and enabled India to pursue its **national development objectives**. For Example, the GDP has multiplied by

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just over 29, which means it has doubled every 14 years and the GDP per capita has multiplied by almost 8, which means it has doubled every 24 years.

(2) India's rapid economic growth since 1980 has led to a **substantial reduction in absolute poverty**.

What are the areas where India needs reflection as well as introspection in the coming period?

(1) During the same period, the **East or Southeast Asia economies** have performed better than the Indian Economy. For example, the per capita income as a proportion of that of the world economy rose from 12% to 18% for India, 13% to 87% for China, and 10% to 35% for Indonesia.

(2) Economic growth in India has been associated with **unequal outcomes** that have created divides between regions, sectors, and people.

(3) Western and Southern India have developed more than the east and north of India.

(4) There has been a widening gap between richer and poorer states.

(5) Over the period 1950-51 to 2019-20, the agricultural sector's share in GDP fell from 58% to 15%.

(6) There is a massive rural-urban divide prevalent in India.

(7) The **economic inequalities have** risen in India since India took the path of rapid growth from 1980s. For example, For India, **the World Inequality Report 2021**, estimated that the top 1% held as much as 33% of total wealth in India and the top 10% held 65% of total wealth.

(8) However, the scale of absolute poverty in India is striking. Poverty reduction could have been much greater.

(9) Malnutrition, particularly among children and women—persists, hunger and destitution are common,

(10) The child labour is prevalent, access to educational opportunities is sparse, and healthcare is neither available nor affordable.

(11) There has been jobless growth in India. Economic growth has not led to commensurate **employment creation** in India.

What should be done?

Economic growth can be transformed into meaningful **development** only if it brings about an **improvement** in the living conditions of people.

It is essential to recognize that employment is not only a **source of growth** but also a means of **mobilizing** people, which is the most **abundant resource** for development in India.

Employment is the only sustainable means of eradicating poverty and mitigating inequality.

The government should resolve to ensure that **poverty** and **illiteracy** do not exist 25 years from now when we celebrate the first centenaries (100 years) of our independence.

15. State Holds Back Nation

Source: The post is based on an article “**State Holds Back Nation**” published in the Times of India on 12th August 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3 Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Relevance: Inclusive Growth and Prosperity of India

News: India’s economic fundamentals and demographic composition can help it in making widespread prosperity a reality in the next two decades or so.

Strong Fundamentals of India

Economic Fundamentals

(1) The policy initiatives on **infrastructure development, digitization of the economy**, and a push towards **rural development** have created a **conducive environment** for **inclusive growth**.

(a) India’s **transportation infrastructure** has been improving steadily. Cities and towns in remote parts of the country are now much better connected. Therefore, there is **increased mobility of labor, capital, and raw materials which** could spur economic growth even in most interior parts of the country.

(2) Digitization of Indian Economy: In terms of digitization of the economy, India is by far the world leader in digital payments and transactions. For Example, in 2021, the number of **real-time digital payment transactions** in India was almost threefold that of China. The digital revolution has the **potential** to unlock the country’s **entrepreneurial spirit**.

(3) India has made commendable progress in improving the **quality of life** of its rural population. **For example**, rural India’s access to clean fuel for cooking increased from 18% of the population in 2012 to 54% in 2020.

Demographic Fundamental

India’s workforce can contribute to economic development through increased labor supply and higher productivity.

What is the metric to measure the increase in prosperity of India?

A key metric of the mass prosperity of any country is its per capita income. For India to come close to upper-middle-income countries on this metric, it needs a fourfold increase in its per capita income.

The Possible Measures to Achieve a Four-Fold Increase in Per-Capita Income

(1) Growth and distribution: (a) India’s GDP growth needs an **average annual growth rate** of 7% in the next 25 years, and (b) States like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh must grow at a much higher rate to **catch up with more prosperous** states like Gujarat and Haryana.

(2) Drivers of growth: India’s long-run economic growth will depend on an economic system that provides strong incentives for **productivity gains through technological innovation and capital formation**. For this India needs a **market-based system, where the private** sector is much involved

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Can India achieve productivity gains and capital formation that can set it on a 7 % GDP growth rate path?

Although it is not easy, undoubtedly it is achievable due to the following reasons:

- (1) India has irreversibly moved towards a **market-based system** since the **1991 liberalization**.
- (2) Furthermore, the speed of reform, like the **pace of privatization** has picked up in recent years.

What more measures do we need to move towards a 7% growth rate?

- (1) **India needs to speed up the privatization of the loss-making public sector banks:** A market-based banking sector will be in a solid position to allocate **capital efficiently** and **productively** across different sectors of the economy. It will lead to the **creative destruction of underperforming companies**, and will eventually pave the way for sustained economic growth.
- (2) In addition, India will also need a lot of **new private enterprises like start-ups** spread across the country to meet its growth target of 7%.

16. [In the field](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“In the field”** published in the **Business Standard** on **12th August 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS3 Major Crops** – Cropping Patterns in various parts of the country, – Different Types of Irrigation and Irrigation Systems; Storage, Transport and Marketing of Agricultural Produce and Issues and Related Constraints; E-technology in the aid of farmers; Issues related to Direct and Indirect Farm Subsidies and Minimum Support Prices;

Relevance: 11th Agricultural Census

News: At present, the 11th agricultural census is being undertaken. This census is going to be vastly different and much more consequential than its past versions.

How is the 11th agricultural census going to be very different?

For the first time, this huge exercise is being carried out fully digitally, on smartphones and tablets. It will make use of **satellite mapping, drones, and digitized land records** to ensure **accuracy** and **early availability of data**.

Issues in the implementation of agriculture and farmers-related ongoing schemes

Most of the **subsidies, cheaper institutional credit, and other benefits**, goes to **absentee landlords** instead of tillers of the land, tenants, share-croppers, and genuine farmers.

At present, policy planners have **no precise idea** of how many farmers and farm holdings are present in the country. **For example**, during the launch of the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana**, farmers-related data collected during the 10th agricultural census 2015-16 was found to be inadequate.

The **number of operational farm holdings** found in the last census is believed to have changed substantially due to **inheritance-driven** division or fragmentation of **land**, sale, purchase,

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leasing, and diversion of farmland to other purposes. For example, many smallholders have become **marginal farmers** and a sizable section of the marginal farmers have turned into landless laborers since the 10th census.

Parameters of the 11th Agricultural Census

It would work to collect data on the **number** and **size** of the operational farm holdings, their class-wise distribution, land use, tenancy systems, and cropping patterns.

Importance of the 11th Census

It would gather information based on **operational holdings** rather than their **ownership**. The former is more critical for precise targeting of resources, especially the financial and other sops being given to farmers by the Centre and state governments through income support and input subsidies as direct benefit transfers.

The government will use the **updated statistics** to reorient its farm policies to help **small and marginal farmers** to shift to relatively **remunerative crops** and **agriculture's allied activities**.

It will help the government to improve the **quality of the farm** produce to **global standards**. This will contribute to enhancing its **export potential**.

17. [India's big problem of low-quality employment](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**India's big problem of low-quality employment**" published in the **Indian Express** on **13th August 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3** Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Relevance: Job Creation in India; Inclusive growth.

News: Recently, a V.V. Giri National Labour Institute's report titled "Impact Assessment Study of the Labour Reforms" was published. It was based on the labour reforms conducted in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh during the period 2004-05 to 2018-19.

What is the status of Employment Creation in India?

Between 1980 and 1990 Period: Every 1% of GDP growth generated roughly **two lakh new jobs**

Between 1990 to 2000 Period: Every 1% of GDP growth generated roughly one lakh jobs.

About the Labour Reforms in recent decade

Before 2014 Reforms: The government focused on improving labour administration by simplifying procedures and digitisation.

Post-2014 Reforms: The government shifted primacy focus on reforming the content of the laws. In this context, the union government designed a framework for labour law reforms.

Thereafter, it encouraged the state governments to implement changes, since labour is a state subject. Rajasthan took the initiative and other states followed the economic reforms.

Read more: [Labour reforms are much needed for Indian progress towards a \\$5 trillion economy](#)

What are the key findings of the Impact Assessment Study of the Labour Reforms?

The labour reforms undertaken so far had **little effect** on increasing **employment in large enterprises** in India.

Rajasthan, the first state to implement the reforms, seems to have benefitted the least from them. This is because the **effects of labour reforms** cannot be revealed immediately as it will take time.

In contrast to creation of jobs, the report says, employment in formal enterprises is becoming more informal.

Must read: [Labour reforms in India](#)

What causes problems in labour reforms?

Labour Reforms couldn't induce the creation of large enterprises, the primary objective of the reforms because the increase in the threshold of application (i.e., now 300 labour) of the Industrial Disputes Act is conceptually flawed.

Large investors are employing increasing numbers of people on short-term contracts, while perversely demanding more flexibility in laws.

The labour laws are the only **one factor affecting business investment decisions**. In addition to labour reforms, an enterprise must have a **growing market** for its products, and **capital, machinery, materials, land**, etc. to produce for the market.

The reforms failed to serve the primary purpose of labour laws like to protect workers, not promote the interests of investors.

Read more: [Are labour law reforms the panacea to the investment problem?](#)

What should be done?

Fundamental reforms are required in the **theory of economic growth**, i.e., more GDP does not automatically produce more incomes at the bottom.

In addition, India needs to focus on the creation of jobs, labour policies must focus on the generation of better-quality livelihoods for Indian citizen or all citizens' ease of earning better livelihoods and with more dignity

18. [No holds barred – India must continue to try to designate terrorists and not lose faith in the process](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**No holds barred-India must continue to try to designate terrorists and not lose faith in the process**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 13th August 2022.

Syllabus: **GS 3** – Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.

Relevance: India-China relations and Terror threats.

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News: Recently, China has placed a “technical hold” on the joint India-U.S. proposal to designate Jaish-e-Mohammad deputy chief a global terrorist on the United Nations Security Council 1267 Committee listing.

What are the challenges happenings in India-China relations?

Despite 16 rounds of military commander talks at the Line of Actual Control, India and China have failed to resolve the standoff along the LAC that began in April 2020.

Chinese satellite tracking ship was supposed to dock at Sri Lanka’s Hambantota port after the Sri Lankan government gave a clearance to the visit.

Chinese technology majors in India are being raided by the Enforcement Directorate and Income Tax authorities under suspicion of a range of financial crimes.

Consequences of Chinese technical hold move

At a time when **bilateral trust** is already in deficit, China’s decision to stop an important terror listing would give a big blow to the bilateral relations between two countries.

The terror outfits, the LeT and JeM, may continue to perpetrate major attacks on Indians.

What India should do?

India continue its attempts to designate these terrorists, with perseverance, without losing faith in the process. It can take the following options to resolve the problem:

- (1) India should go for keeping the **international pressure** up, and garner more **co-sponsors** for the listing.
- (2) India should work on changing **1267 Committee procedures**, so that they don’t allow one country to hold back such important terror listings without due cause.
- (3) India can **open dialogues** with both China and Pakistan bilaterally on the issue. Here, Pakistan’s need to be removed from the FATF grey list and China’s interest in Pakistan’s economic recovery may be leveraged to ensure the listings are accomplished.

19. [India’s 75 years of scientific advancements: On path of science](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**On path of science**” published in the **Business Standard** on **13th August 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

Relevance: About India’s 75 years of scientific advancements.

News: As the country celebrates 75 years of Independence, it’s time to introspect India’s scientific advancements and their benefit to the common people.

About India’s 75 years of scientific advancements

Since 1947, the country has **emerged as a global power in space technology, nuclear power,** and many other fields.

India’s **probes to the moon and Mars, nuclear weapons, and strategic missile systems** are praiseworthy achievements.

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Along with that India also achieved **self-sufficiency in foodgrain, medicines, and vaccines**, and **exemplary developments in communications and information technology**.

Innovation: In the latest Global Innovation Index 2021, India ranked 46 among 132 countries, two notches above its 2020 position. India overperformed on innovation relative to its level of development for the 11th year in a row.

Agriculture: In 2021-22, India's farm exports touched a record \$50.21 billion. The country is among the 15 leading exporters of agricultural products.

“pharmacy of the world”: Local firms supply affordable drugs and vaccines to not only developing but also developed countries.

India's successful vaccination drives – from against smallpox, to polio, and now Covid, besides the ongoing Mission Indradhanush – are prime examples of Indians' trust in modern sciences.

IT industry and telecom revolution: Services firms in India, according to reports, are targeting record \$350-billion exports in the current financial year, up 37%, year-on-year, despite global headwinds.

Read more: [SERB-SURE scheme launched to augment research capabilities in state universities and colleges](#)

How did India achieve these 75 years of scientific advancements?

Planning Commission: The Planning Commission was set up in 1950 and the first plan draft, presented in July 1951, included a chapter on “Scientific and Industrial Research”;

The chapter recognised 11 research institutes at the national level in a bid to lay the foundation of scientific research in the country.

Scientific Policy Resolution, 1958: It is India's first major science policy. The plan realised “it is only through the scientific approach and method and the use of scientific knowledge that reasonable material and cultural amenities and services can be provided for every member of the community”.

Green Revolution: It was based on 1958 policy. After two successive years of drought, India was dependent on wheat imports and stared at yet another famine. The scenario drastically improved after **M S Swaminathan** – the father of the Indian Green Revolution – started to teach farmers to effectively increase yield with the help of high-yielding wheat and rice varieties, fertilisers, and advanced farming techniques.

IT and Telecom policy: India allowed domestic software firms to become globally competitive in the 1990s. This is the foundation of Digital India and associated socio-economic development.

Read more: [DRDO successfully test fires indigenously developed laser-guided ATGMs](#)

What should be done to improve 75 years of scientific advancements further?

Invest in R&D: According to a study by the NITI Aayog and the Institute for Competitiveness, India has among the lowest research and development (R&D) expenditures. Its R&D spending has decreased from 0.8% of GDP in 2008-09 to 0.7% in 2017-18.

Hence, India needs further investment and technological development to fulfil its missions like [National Hydrogen Mission](#).