



9 PM

Compilation

September, 2022

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General Studies Paper – 1

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General Studies - 1

1. [Netaji at India gate: The revolutionary's due](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Netaji at Indian gate: The revolutionary's due**” published in **The Indian Express** on **8th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1- The freedom struggle

Relevance– About Subhash Chandra Bose and Indian National Army

News: The article explains Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose contribution for Indian independence and events related to Indian National Army. If it succeeded; Indian would have attained freedom and not transfer of power.

How do Britishers look at the Indian national army?

Britishers tried to black out the news related to the Indian National Army. They termed it as “**Japanese inspired force**”. When INA trials began, Indians came to know about it.

Britishers depended on armed forces to control India; so they did not want the feeling of patriotism to seep into the army.

What was Subash Bose's plan?

He wanted to capture Imphal which would have provided him with a large number of Indian soldiers for recruitment. He wanted to raise three more divisions from these soldiers. There were already three divisions. The six divisions would have made INA the single largest force in the region.

With rapid advance into India; the army would have switched sides and it could create revolutionary conditions. The military push by Bose needed to be backed by Japanese air force but it did not materialise.

How did the idea of the Rani Jhansi regiment materialise?

The idea was mooted in a three hour conversation with Laxmi Shegal on 12th July, 1943. It was to be a fighting unit.

The Rani Jhansi Regiment started with 500 women volunteers in Singapore and 30 were selected for officer training. Those who were not combat ready were put into the Nursing Corps. After completion of the course, the recruits were moved to Rangoon in Burma. Their numbers went up to 1500. 1,000 were in the fighting unit and the rest in other roles. From Rangoon, the regiment shifted to Maymyo, Bose's advance headquarters.

What are other facts about the Indian National Army?

The provisional Government of Azad Hind was formed on October 21, 1943.

Bose did not want to be seen as collaborating with enemy forces occupying their country. So, he explained in great length that Japan has nothing to do with formation of government in India.

The financing of Azad Hind was mainly through contribution from Indians living in South East Asia. There was no tax or levy.

It declared war against Britain and America. Bose maintained that the Congress leaders wanted freedom in their lifetime. Expecting freedom in one's lifetime was bound to lead to compromises.

2. [The stark reasons why Bengaluru is sinking](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The stark reasons why Bengaluru is sinking**” published in **The Hindu** on **10th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1 – Urbanization

News: This article discusses about the problems that has led to waterlogging in Bengaluru and steps that needs to be taken to tackle this.

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Many social media posts are showing videos of abandoned vehicles floating or underwater, tractors and their trailers laden with software professionals commuting to work, and flooded layouts that are home to luxury villas.

What are the reasons behind the flooding of Bengaluru?

The Bengaluru's expansion swallowed nearby villages and panchayats were disbanded to create six city municipal corporations. These municipal corporations later merged into Bhruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).

The transition destroyed land records and nearby lakes and catchment areas were transformed into private lands. Builders soon transformed these areas into apartments, shopping malls and information-technology parks.

Bengaluru also lacks in institutional capacity to handle the problems of the future.

There is lack of coordination among the institutions like local governments, BBMP, panchayats, Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA), etc.

What can be done further to improve the present condition?

Although, Bengaluru has achieved success in rainwater harvesting, solar water heating, segregation of garbage and the stoppage of littering still there is more to be done. Reforms are needed to withstand climate change and build a better environment.

The reforms required are –

First, multiple institutions should be ended.

Multiple institutions do not improve execution but they provide troubles and complicate governance.

Therefore, outdated institutions should be replaced by a constitutionally compliant institution with local governments at the top. Therefore, 11 independent planning authorities must be merged and subordinated to the Metropolitan Planning Committee.

This constitutionally mandated institution will enable all stakeholders from largest land owners (defence, railways) to the mahanagara palika and panchayats within the metropolitan area to participate.

Second, community efforts are needed. There is a need to strengthen climate resilience that goes past flood control. Thus, the following efforts are required:

- 1. a)** curbing car travel and improving cheap public transport, **b)** preserving existing green cover and planting more trees, **c)** de-concretizing our pavements, **d)** prohibiting littering and segregating garbage.

People should enforce operational standards for sewage treatment plants and deal with illegal constructions and encroachments that harm our environment.

People also need to increase efforts to improve Rajakaluves (channels that connect water bodies).

People should ensure better working of the institutions by electing capable leaders into these institutions and making those institutions accountable.

However, any institution has its own limitations. Therefore, we should elect our politicians carefully.

Only those people should be elected who care about the environment as well as for the development and are not corrupt.

3. [India's growing water crisis, the seen and unseen](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**India's growing water crisis, the seen and unseen**” published in **The Hindu** on **15th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1- Economic geography.GS2- Government policies for development in various sectors.

Relevance– About water crisis

News-The articles explain the growing water crisis and its impact on rural-urban disputes.

What are various reports that tell us about the growing water crisis?

UNESCO UN water development report tells about the global concern over sharp rise in freshwater withdrawal, water stress and water scarcity in different parts of the world.

New water report of FAO– sounded caution about this impending crisis.

Water Scarcity Clock– Two billion people are living in countries having high water stress.

Global Drought Risk and Water Stress Map- Major parts of India, particularly central, western and peninsular India are highly water stressed.

NITI Aayog “Composite Water Index”– 600 million people in India are facing acute water shortages.

What are the impacts of water scarcity?

Response of areas with water scarcity includes transfer of water from hinterland.

When the city is small, it depends on groundwater. As it grows, dependence shifts to surface water. With further growth it shifts to the hinterland. It is enhanced at the expanse of irrigation water.

It triggers sectoral and regional competition. Rural-urban transfer has become a cause of concern.

According to a review paper in 210, urban water infrastructure imports an estimated 500 billion liters per day over a combined distance of 27,000 km. 12% of large cities depend on inter-basin transfer.

A **UN report on “Transboundary Waters Systems- Status and Trends”** linked this transfer with SDG goals.

What is the status of urbanisation in India?

India is urbanising at a very fast rate. According to the 2011 census, it was 34% of the total population. The **World Urbanization Prospect** report says that it will cross 50% by 2050.

What is the case of Ahmedabad and other cities in India?

80% of its water supply was from groundwater till mid-1980s.City now depends on Narmada canal for water supply. It includes inter-basin transfer.

Almost all cities, that depend upon surface water, import water from the hinterland.

City water supply has become subject of inter-basin transfer.

Available studies from Chennai and Nagpur show the imminent possibility of rural-urban conflict.

What needs to be done?

There is a need for a **system-perspective and catchment scale approach** to link reallocation of water with a wider perspective on development.

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Infrastructure investment for water resource management is needed.

Further there is a need for fostering rural-urban partnership and **integrated approach in water management**.

Institutional strengthening to build flexibility in water resource allocation at regional level.

4. [Administrator-Statesman](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Administrator-Statesman**” published in **The Indian Express** on **17th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1- Modern Indian History

Relevance– About Madhav Rao.

News-The article explains the contribution of Madhav Rao in administrative reforms.

What changes were happening in princely states thinking about statecraft?

The book by Rahul Sagar gives a base for thinking about what an alternative state and constitutional imagination based on the princely states would have looked like.

In the late 19th century, some princely states were experimenting with a new form of government that maintains the monarchy intact. It will partially modernize the state by devolving power into the hands of capable administrators.

They supported intellectuals. Examples are Baroda’s roles in the life of both Ambedkar and Aurobindo Ghosh. Vivekananda relied on the Maharaja of Khetri.

What was the contribution of Madhav Rao to his State?

He transformed Travancore and Baroda. He fixed the revenues of these states, encouraged industry, modernized their practices, created new administrative cultures. He promoted learning and interest in culture.

What details have been provided in his book?

He delivered a series of lectures, “Hints on the Art and Science of Government, a treatise in the education of the Ruler”. They are instructions to the prince.

The lecture has two objectives-

(1) It articulates the aims and ends of government.

It provides for **rule of law and due process**. It grants great **personal liberty and equality before law**. It has strong emphasis on public health and education, and a taxation policy that encourages manufacturing. It is open to men of talent without being a **meritocracy**.

(2) The second objective is the art and science of administration. There is emphasis on recognition of human character. King should know how to spot discontent and factionalism among ministers. He should know how to inspire confidence in ministers.

The book is also concerned about liberty.

We can even trace **secularism** in his book. He writes that religious instructions should not be given in matters of education.

What are PM Modi viewpoints about Madhav Rao?

He praises his emphasis on teamwork and fair play. He recommends that his teachings have the potential to solve any problem faced by Governments and the Corporate World.

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5. [Remember Periyar with a pledge to embrace dissent](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Remember Periyar with a pledge to embrace dissent**” published in **The Hindu** on **17th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1 – important personalities

News: Periyar E.V. Ramasamy’s birth anniversary is on 17th September. It is celebrated as Social Justice Day.

Periyar is often referred to as an iconoclast because of the rebellious nature of his ideas.

His thoughts had clarity and honesty which led people practicing different faiths to discuss and debate his ideas on rationality and religion.

He had vision for eradicating social evils, political reforms, oppressing the minorities, etc. some of his vision has been discussed in this article.

What were the different visions of Periyar?

Society

He did not only aim at the eradication of social evils but he also wanted to put an end to activities that do not raise the standards of society.

He was one of the pioneering voices against the Kula Kalvi Thittam introduced by the then Chief Minister C. Rajagopalachari.

Kula Kalvi Thittam proposed to impose a method of education on schoolchildren where students would learn their family’s profession as part of the school curriculum.

Periyar felt that it would encourage caste-based divisions that might cause irreparable damage to society.

Reforms

Periyar’s vision was about inclusive growth and freedom of individuals. He was an important personality of his time because of the clarity in his political stand.

Periyar was way ahead of his time. All the reforms he shared with people could not be implemented at the time because his thought led to extreme discussions.

Castes: He felt that there is a need to change the priesthood of all castes if we want to change caste dynamic.

Oppression of minorities: Periyar proclaimed that he would always stand with the oppressed in the fight against oppressors as oppression was his enemy.

Oppositions

People used to oppose his ideas and thoughts but he had a very clear vision on his points.

He said that opposition that is not based on rationalism or science or experience will lead to fraud, selfishness and conspiracies.

Periyar reminds us of welcoming the ideas of oppositions as he used to invite the opposition for the debate.

Therefore, we should create a society with social justice by creating open spaces for oppositions by discussing and debating.

6. [The consequences of declining fertility are many](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“The consequences of declining fertility are many”** published in **The Hindu** on **17th September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 1 – Population and Associated issues**

News: According to the World Population Prospects 2022, the average number of children per woman in the reproductive age group has declined by 50%.

This has changed from an average of five children per woman in 1951 to 2.4 children in 2020.

What has led to decline of in the global fertility rate?

Poorer countries have speeded the reduction in fertility rate faster than the richer countries.

According to the World Population Prospectus, the global fertility rate fell from three in 1990 to 2.3 in 2021.

Most advanced economies have their fertility rate below the replacement rate of 2.1 with South Korea has the lowest at 1.05 children per woman.

What is the situation of India in the fertility rate?

India's fertility rate was 6 per woman at the time of independence.

It further declined to 4 in the 1990s. Kerala became the first State in India to have a fertility rate below replacement level.

According to the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS) of 2021 –

1. Fertility rate has fallen below the replacement level for the first time to 2.0 in 2021.
2. Only five States have a fertility rate above the replacement rate. They are Bihar, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Manipur.

The fall in the fertility rate has been caused due to increased use of contraception, more years of average schooling, better health care, and an increase in the mean marriage age of women.

However, there are many positive and negative aspects of the declining fertility rate on the nation's economy.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the declining fertility rate on the nation's economy?

Advantages

Income: Lower fertility rate improves the employment rate of the workforce which increases their income. Lower fertility helps in the increase in the ratio of the working-age population.

This high ratio of workforce boosts income, investment and savings due to lower dependence.

Education: Lower fertility rate improves women's education and lowers the fertility rate of future generations.

Resources: Lower fertility rate will also lead to lower pressure on land, water and other resources and would also contribute to achieving environmental goals.

Public finance: A lower fertility rate will also have a positive impact on public finance. It will lead to a fall in government debt due to lower savings of households and corporates with the increase in the higher dependency.

This will lead the government to have surplus than going in to the deficit.

Inflation: A falling fertility rate will have a positive effect on inflation. There will be lower labour supply with increase in the salary. This will lead to the change in unemployment inflation trade-off.

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However, there are other problems associated with the declining fertility rate.

Disadvantages

Japan became the first country to experience the consequences of declining fertility rate.

For example, there has been increase in the **dependency ratio** in the Japan. This has led to near zero GDP growth since the 1990s and Japan is facing fiscal challenges to meet rising social security costs.

It will have a negative effect on the proportion of the working population. This will affect output in the economy.

An ageing population will also affect global interest rates negatively as the share of people over 50 years will be almost 40% of the population by 2100.

It could also diminish the creative capacity of humankind.

What can be the further course of action?

The labour laws should be reformed with flexibility for workers. This would encourage working women to have more children and non-working mothers to enter the labour market.

For example –

3. Germany found success in boosting births through liberal labour laws, allowing more parental leave and benefits.
4. Denmark offers state-funded IVF for women below 40 years, and Hungary recently nationalised IVF clinics.

Further, with labour reforms focus should also be on nutrition and health of the workers. This would ensure sustained labour supply and output despite lower fertility.

7. [Decolonization: After All, The Raj Is Dead](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**After All, The Raj Is Dead**” published in **The Times of India** on **21st September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1: Colonization and decolonization.

Relevance: India and decolonisation debate.

News: At present, there is an intense debate on decolonisation all over the world. But India should move past the decolonisation debate.

What India learnt from Britain?

India has imbibed much from Britain including the Westminster-style democracy. The 19th-century Bengal ‘renaissance’ or cultural rebirth or the campaigns against sati and untouchability were born from the constructive synthesis of the ideas of the European Enlightenment and Indian reformism.

Several early Congressmen were England-educated, deploying the ideas of Western liberal democracy against the British empire.

Many Dalit-bahujan thinkers see the Raj’s education system as a liberating influence from Brahmanical dominance. Writer-activist Chandra Bhan Prasad had even created a temple to “**Goddess English**” in Banka village in UP.

How did Britons and British universities criticised the British Empire?

a) British author William Dalrymple has talked about the rampant exploitation of India by the East India Company, **b)** Several Indian-origin academics who have written knowledgeably on imperialist oppression carry out their work supported by British universities and publishers.

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What colonial legacy does India need to root out?

1) Governments in all states use the colonial sedition law of 1870, a provision used against freedom fighters like Nehru and Netaji. Recently, the Supreme Court put a one-year moratorium on using the law.

Note: The UK abolished its sedition laws in 2009 because of their “chilling effect” on free speech.

2) India’s police forces are guided by the 1861 Police Act and several laws from the 1862 Indian Penal Code still remain, **3)** India’s elaborate VIP convoys that politicians of all parties prefer are relics of the colonial past. On the other hand, British politicians use public transport and prefer simplicity.

English language, a colonial legacy and India’s strength

Competency in English is one of India’s most valuable assets. It is spoken widely, and English language coaching centres are also present in many states. Globally, English is a language of aspiration and a language that many highly accomplished and globally renowned NRIs speak.

In 2022, as many as 1,18,000 Indians received student visas to study in the UK. At present, Indian nationals are the second-largest group, after British nationals, working in Britain’s National Health Service.

Indian-origin Rishi Sunak almost became the UK’s prime minister and Indian-origin Suella Braverman is Britain’s current home secretary.

What should be done?

India’s Parliament has very few minority community MPs. On the other hand, Britain has impressive diversity in the Parliament. India should learn from them.

India and Britain should confidently learn from each other how to improve modern democracy and work together to promote mutual economic advantages. Instead of calling for decolonisation, the real need is bridge-building with each other.

8. [India@100: What’s ahead for urbanisation?](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**India@100: What’s ahead for urbanisation?**” published in the **Business Standard** on **22nd September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1: Urbanisation, their problems and their remedies.

Relevance: Solution to India’s urbanisation.

News: The pace at which India urbanises will be a defining factor in achieving India’s developmental goals in the next 25 years.

What is the current pace of India’s urbanisation?

Since the 1950s, the speed of urbanisation in India has witnessed a consistent rise. According to the World Urbanisation Prospects (2018 Revision), an urbanisation growth rate of 2.4% was observed between 2010 and 2018.

By 2022, India’s projected rate of urbanisation was expected to be 35.9%, and by 2047, this is expected to increase to approximately 50.9%.

Must read: [Urbanisation and the Need for Sustainable Cities – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the challenges faced in India’s urbanisation?

Unplanned urbanisation: This resulted in Indian cities are plagued with issues like sewage management, urban planning, declining water table and air quality that negatively influences the ease of living.

Urbanisation follows the trajectory of economic development: Kerala has a projected urban population of around 73.19% in 2022, which is expected to increase to over 96% by 2036. In comparison, states like Assam and Bihar have an abysmal projected population of 15.4% and

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12.2%, respectively, in 2022, which is expected to marginally increase to 17.16% and 13.2% by 2036.

Note: Union Territories like Delhi and Chandigarh are projected to be 100% urbanised in the same time period.

Asymmetric pattern of urbanisation: This is characterised by India's unique social structure and kinship ties that tend to restrict mobility.

Read more: [Increasing the pace of India's urbanisation](#)

What should be done to make India's urbanisation sustainable?

Match with peers: India has to unequivocally aim at matching the rate of urbanisation prevalent among its peers. At present, India is lagging behind its peers in urbanisation.

Focus on the micro level: Districts shape the larger economic spatiality of the country. So, India needs to pay attention to the impact of urbanisation at the micro level. According to a report, urban districts roughly account only for 30% of all districts in the country. So, India needs to focus on the districts lagging behind and push for a faster rate of planned urbanisation.

Planned urbanisation: Well-planned cities lead to **a)** value creation through optimal distribution and utilisation of resources, **b)** fosters ease of living and prosperity through sustainable growth and economic productivity of its citizens, and **c)** result in a more stable social structure of cities. So, India needs to **1) Redesign cities** by looking at sustainable objectives and socio-economic growth and **2) Target key reform areas**, from remodelling its urban governance system to making it more people-centric.

Maintain urbanisation rate: The urbanisation rate must be regulated to prevent a population surge only in larger cities. This will aid in the process of building sustainable pathways to socio-economic development.

Read more: [Measures to promote sustainable urbanisation](#)

A dual focus on planned and uniform urbanisation will provide global recognition for India's urban story.

9. [A census is not about counting sheep – on Issues related to census](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "A census is not about counting sheep" published in **The Hindu** on **23rd September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1- Population and associated issues

Context: Census is a very important exercise for a democratic country. Considering its importance, the timely organization and completion of the census must be a priority for the government.

India's first Census was held in 1872. After that India has held its decadal censuses regularly from 1881 to 2011, despite any circumstances.

The recent census was to be held in the year 2021 but it was postponed due to pandemic and there are no explanations that when this census will be held.

What is census?

A census is storage of complete data about the country which is gathered openly, voluntarily, and with the use of public money, making it a social good.

Census counts each and every citizen, along with their certain data (age, religion, gender, etc.).

This helps in connecting the nation with the people.

Census also provides ways to nation to fix and resolve the problems of its people and it also has many more advantages.

What are the advantages of census?

General Census

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The census is vital and precious. It is a repository of complete data about the country which is gathered openly, voluntarily, and with the use of public money, making it a social good. It provides important information to the government on various social and economic parameters.

For example, Censuses of 1961 and 1971 highlighted the sharp decline in the gender ratio in India. It alerted how pre and post-natal factors were reflecting the 'son bias' and leading people to murder girls, born and unborn.

Also, the census in US in 1850 and 1860, showed the number of enslaved people in the U.S. to be rising. It strengthened the anti-slavery campaign ongoing there.

Census has also helped in clearing wrong assumptions and information. It was believed that population is increasing due to high reproductive rates in Muslims.

But census has provided that the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in Muslims is coming down and is on its way to stabilisation. The fall in TFR among Muslims is faster than in any community.

The 2011 Census also provided difference in divorce rate between city and rural India. The urban divorce rate (0.89%) is almost equal to the rural rate (0.82%).

Caste census

Caste census has been useful in providing identities of the people related to the caste. India had its last caste census in 1931.

A caste census was conducted after the general census of 2011 but it was not published due to socio-economic reasons.

What have been issues with the recent measures of counting of the people?

First, during pandemic while election rallies were allowed, the census practice was postponed.

Second, there is a negative feeling about the census among a few sections of the population. It is due to coupling the National Register of Citizens (NRC) with National Population Register (NPR), in few official government statements. It saw protests from the people.

These all complex issues created a lack of trust in the government by the people.

Third, the ability to hold a census peacefully has been the hallmark of a civilized state and state of affairs. Democratic Republic of the Congo was able to conclude its census recently, peacefully.

Fourth, Whereas, the countries like Afghanistan (1979), Lebanon (1932), Somalia (1985), Uzbekistan (1989), and the Western Sahara (1970) are the ones that failed to conduct a census since 1990. India surely won't like to join the list of such countries.

Fifth, the government is enforcing the laws that are making it easy to collect citizen's data. For example;

The Ministry of Home Affairs has just notified the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Rules, 2022. It provides for the procedure for taking body measurements to collect biological samples, retina scans, biometrics, etc.

A law now allows electoral rolls to be linked with Aadhaar.

There is a delay in enforcing data protection law for citizens

Thus, it should not be a problem in holding the census which displays its desire to connect with the people who ultimately comprise the nation.

10. Why our urban spaces need to be reimagined

Source: The post is based on an article "**Feroze Varun Gandhi writes: Why our urban spaces need to be reimagined**" published in **The Indian Express** on **24th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1 – Urbanization and associated issues

News: A day's heavy rainfall in Delhi has led to water-logged streets, crawling traffic, broken-down vehicles among others. There was also a similar situation in Bengaluru.

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This shows that there is a lack of urban planning in India and this needs to be corrected.

What are the reasons for lack of urban planning?

Lack of civic infrastructure: Cities in India have come up with economic areas and planning but they lack in civic infrastructure. The important elements of urban planning such as storm water drains, etc. are ignored.

Flexibility: There is also very little urban planning flexibility in the master plans on which cities are developed.

Further, cities have also performed poorly in the Ease of Living Index 2020. **For example,** Bengaluru scored 55.67 out of 100 and Delhi scored 57.56.

Master plans are not developed with much thought. They have limited urban planning flexibility, which didn't take into account, how market forces and migration will impact the plans.

What steps have been taken by other countries in urban planning?

The **Garden City movement evolved in UK** to provide healthier living spaces for workers, a bit away from city centers of work. These areas were planned with open spaces, public parks and boulevards. Once a garden city reached its maximum capacity, another city would be developed nearby.

In the **US**, the garden city movement evolved into the **neighborhood concept**. It planned residential houses and streets around community centers and schools.

London has a metropolitan green belt around the city to balance pollution and congestion and maintain biodiversity.

The concept of **15 minute city** has been developed in the **Paris**. The idea is that every Parisian should be able to do their shopping, work, and fulfil their cultural needs within a 15-minute walk or bike ride.

What can be the course of action for the city developments in India?

Master plan: Every Indian city should have a Master Plan which would be updated every decade or two. Those plans should consider the development of cities along with poverty mitigation and affordable housing and livability for urban migrants.

Land Use pattern: Urban land use pattern needs to get better. Currently India's urban growth is informal and unplanned. This leads to weak enforcement of building codes and insufficient urban services and infrastructure required for the growth.

Outdated planning practices: The outdated planning services have made the land utilization poor in the recognized towns and urban neighbourhoods.

For example, one-fourth land of Mumbai is open public spaces while half of it is underutilized spaces around buildings.

If these public spaces are utilized properly then it will lead to achieve similar ratios as globally benchmarked cities in public land availability.

Urban density: There is also a need to think about the urban density.

A higher urban density will lead to overutilization of public spaces and increase in the emission. High emission will make our cities prone to extreme heat and flooding.

Climate change: According to the World Bank, climate change may reduce India's GDP by 3 per cent and it may also reduce the living standards of its citizen by 2050.

Therefore, a proper structural engineering along with conservation should be made priority. **For example,** lakes in Bangalore can be converted into Bangkok-style ferries.

Insufficient Institutional capacity: India lacks town planning education in the country. There are only 26 institutes that provide this course and produce only 700 town planners each year.

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It is expected that India would ideally require 3,00,000 town and country planners by 2031. Therefore, more institutes are needed along with NITs and IITs to have standalone planning departments.

Hence, renewing our cities will require us to rethink various urban topics, including urban design, urban healthcare, affordable housing, sustainability and inclusion among others.

11. [As India ages, keeping an eye on the elderly](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “As India ages, keeping an eye on the elderly” published in **The Hindu** on **1st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1 – Population and associated Issues

News: 1st October is celebrated as International Day for Older Persons by the United Nations.

World Population Prospects 2022 report published by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) has projected big shifts in global demographic patterns in the coming decades.

What are the findings of the report?

Globally: The report says that 16% of the world population by 2050 is expected to be made up of people over 65 years. It also says that the global population will be 9.7 billion people by 2050.

India: The report projects India’s population to be 1.7 billion by 2050. India will be home to the largest population in the world which would include a large elderly sub-population. This demographic change will have a great impact on its health systems.

Previous United Nations reports have projected that the proportion of India’s elderly population will double to nearly 20% of the total population by 2050.

This change in demographic structure will increase the pressure on public health systems. The prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease will be higher among the elderly.

Therefore, eye care service delivery is placed to be the first point-of-contact with the elderly and to also help with health surveillance and planning.

What are the findings of Hyderabad Ocular Morbidity in the Elderly Study (HOMES)?

HOMES is an eye institute that produces a series of systematic reports on various aspects of health, quality of life, mental health, etc.

The study has used eye care as a point of entry to measure a variety of health and social metrics in 1000 participants. The findings of the reports are –

Over 30% of the elderly had distance vision loss and over 50% had near vision impairment and they needed reading glasses.

Nearly half the participants had at least one disability and a third of them had multiple morbidities.

About 70% of them were using at least one assistive device and spectacles were the most common.

The study also explored many links between vision impairment and an elderly person’s mental health and confidence. People with impaired vision had a greater fear, and risk, of falling.

Therefore, addressing the vision impairment of elders is important to improve their lives.

What should be the course of action for improvement in the conditions of elderly?

To address vision loss, a package of interventions including assistive devices for sight, hearing, and mobility can be introduced.

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Therefore, the Indian eye care model has always prioritized primary care vision centers that bring care closer to those in need.

The future of elderly care needs to be long term, comprehensive, and integrated, and oriented towards making primary care accessible.

Proper accessibility will ensure that no elderly person is denied care irrespective of their financial status.

A comprehensive eye examination can be the first step towards enabling such a healthy and happy future for our elderly citizens.

12. [No discrimination – ON Supreme Court ruling on abortion rights](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**No discrimination**” published in **The Hindu** on **1st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1- Social empowerment. GS2- Vulnerable sections

Relevance– Abortion rights of women

News– The article explains the recent Supreme Court ruling on abortion rights of unmarried women. It also explains the ruling by Delhi High Court on abortion by unmarried women.

What is Supreme Court ruling on abortion of unmarried women?

The Supreme Court ruled that single and unmarried women have the same right to a medically safe abortion as married women.

There is no rationale for excluding single or unmarried women from the categories of women who could seek abortion care after the completion of 20 weeks of pregnancy, but before 24 weeks.

Change in marital status is one of the reasons for which abortion during the extended upper limit of 24 weeks is permissible. Even abandonment by the partner could constitute a change in circumstances that could impact a woman’s decision about the pregnancy.

Unwanted pregnancy affects a woman’s physical and mental health. So, it is quite important that she alone should decide about abortion.

The legislature has allowed abortions up to the 24th week of pregnancy. It is allowed if two registered medical practitioners are of the opinion that continuing the pregnancy would involve a risk to the woman’s life and health.

Rape survivors who may legally seek an abortion in the extended period of 24 weeks will also include survivors of marital rape.

What was the earlier ruling by Delhi High Court?

The Delhi High Court had declined to allow the termination of the pregnancy of a 25-year-old woman who was in a consensual relationship. She wanted to terminate the pregnancy after her partner declined to marry her.

The High Court cited rule 3B. It contains the list of the women eligible for termination of pregnancy such as rape survivors, minors, those with physical disabilities and mental illness. Court observed that the list does not mention single women who had become pregnant in a consensual relationship.

General Studies Paper – 2

General Studies - 2

1. [A lot is at stake for India-Bangladesh ties](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “A lot is at stake for India-Bangladesh ties” published in **The Hindu** on **5th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Relevance: About the India-Bangladesh relationship.

News: Recently Bangladesh Foreign Minister requested India to ensure that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stays in power in next year’s polls. He claimed that both India and Bangladesh would gain political stability by ensuring this. His comments came before the Bangladesh PM’s visit to India.

What are the possible outcomes of Bangladesh PM’s visit to India?

Both countries aim to sign a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**. CEPA comes at a time when Bangladesh is set to lose the duty-free and quota-free market-access facility to India after 2026 when it graduates to a developing country.

What is the present status of India-Bangladesh relations?

Trade: Bangladesh is India’s sixth largest trade partner with bilateral trade rising from \$2.4 billion in 2009 to \$10.8 billion in 2020-21.

According to a World Bank working paper, Bangladesh’s exports could rise 182% under a free trade agreement. This could become 300% if combined with trade facilitation measures and reduced transaction costs.

Connectivity: India and Bangladesh have implemented several projects to boost eastern India-Bangladesh connectivity. India’s connectivity projects with ASEAN and Bangladesh will open up the region to economic growth.

Bangladesh has expressed its interest in joining the India-Myanmar-Thailand highway project. India-Bangladesh bilateral waterway trade will get boosted as India can now use the Mongla and Chittagong ports.

Currently, three express trains and international bus services operate between Indian and Bangladesh.

India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Commission: The commission expanded the India-Bangladesh partnership to include Artificial Intelligence, Fintech, cybersecurity, startups, and connectivity.

Land Swap Agreement: In 2015, India and Bangladesh resolved the decades-long border dispute through the Land boundary Agreement.

Curb of illicit activities: Bangladesh’s government has uprooted all anti-India insurgency activities within Bangladesh by leading from the front.

Read more: [Recent Developments in India-Bangladesh Relations – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the opportunities in India-Bangladesh relations?

1) Bangladesh could improve several manufacturing industries by leveraging Indian expertise in service sectors, 2) India is rallying Bangladesh to divert its exports through Indian ports in place of Malaysian or Singaporean ports.

What are the challenges in India-Bangladesh relations?

Teesta river water sharing: For West Bengal, Teesta is important to sustain its impoverished farming districts which comprise 12.77% of its population. For Bangladesh, the Teesta’s flood plains cover about 14% of the total cropped area of the country and provide direct livelihood opportunities to approximately 7.3% of the population.

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NRC: In 2019, India enacted the **National Register of Citizens and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act**. This created an uproar within and beyond the borders. Bangladesh government termed the move as “unnecessary”.

Role of China: China had successfully approached China for a mega project to enhance Teesta river water flow. Bangladesh also requires China’s support in resolving the Rohingya refugee crisis. Bangladesh is the second biggest arms market for China after Pakistan.

Ties with Pakistan: Although memories of 1971 remain, Bangladesh has expressed its interest in establishing peaceful relations with Pakistan.

Read more: [Improper Comments on Bangladesh will impact India Bangladesh ties](#)

What should be done to improve India-Bangladesh relations?

Long-term stable relations with its most trusted friend (Bangladesh) in the neighbourhood is the need of the hour for India. But the challenge for India is to earn the trust and confidence of Bangladeshis across the spectrum and strata. This can be done by resolving long-standing issues such as Teesta water-sharing and killings at the border.

2. [Coercion as conversion: Sexual orientation and gender identities do not require medical intervention](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Coercion as conversion: Sexual orientation and gender identities do not require medical intervention**” published in **The Hindu** on **5th September 2022**.

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

Relevance: About conversion therapy.

News: Recently, the National Medical Commission (NMC) declared conversion therapy a “professional misconduct” and empowered State Medical Councils to take disciplinary action if the guideline is breached. This is a significant and welcome move to remove another layer of discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community.

What is the reason behind NMC banning conversion therapy?

In its landmark 2021 judgment, the Madras High Court issued guidelines for the police, social welfare ministries of the State and Centre, and the medical council for the protection of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Madras High Court had directed NMC to issue an official notification listing conversion therapy as a wrong, under the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002.

What is conversion therapy?

Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual or of any other orientation are often subjected to conversion or ‘reparative’ therapy, particularly when they are young, to change their sexual orientation or gender identity by force.

The therapy varies from psychiatric treatment, use of psychosomatic drugs, electroshock therapy, exorcism and violence.

Impacts: The therapy can lead to trauma, manifesting in depression, anxiety, drug use, and even suicide.

Read more: [Rainbow of Hope](#)

Basis of conversion therapy: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry contends that the interventions offered in conversion therapy are provided under the “false premise that homosexuality and gender diverse identities are pathological”.

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Why Conversion therapy for LGBTQIA+ should be banned?

Read here: [Need to ban the Conversion therapy of the LGBTQIA+ community](#)

How to improve the life of the LGBTQIA+ community further?

Clear-cut definition: Like Canada, India should be clear on what action will be taken against quacks, psychiatrists and doctors accused of offering reparative treatment and the punishment they will face.

Change the education policy: Medical textbooks prescribed in 2018 still consider lesbianism a “perversion”, an act of “mental degenerates”. This has to be changed.

Legislative changes: Societal change has to be complemented by laws that address the needs of a diverse community higher than the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 has sought to do.

Society has to acknowledge the “variability of human beings” and accord equal respect to everyone, whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity.

3. [Bittersweet pills: A simpler drug regime should mean better TB outcomes not another missed opportunity](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Bittersweet pills: A simpler drug regime should mean better TB outcomes not another missed opportunity” published in **The Times of India** on **5th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues related to health

News: The article discusses about the issues in tackling tuberculosis in India and the impact of recent drug invented.

The ZeNix phase III trial has shown that only 3-4 drugs will be needed for 6 months for tuberculosis than the other treatment which requires 13-14 drugs daily for 18-24 months.

What is the current situation of TB in India?

India has been struggling with the TB for a longer period of time.

A government survey finds that 63% of the chest symptomatic do not seek healthcare.

It shows the shortfalls of public awareness campaigns and also the broken primary care health services in India.

Lack of timely diagnosis of TB is one of the issues along with the overall gaps in proper observation of the disease.

The mortality rate in 2019-20 increased by 11% even though there was a 25% reduction in the number of cases.

The present invented drug ZeNix will have a great positive impact in India because India has the world’s highest burden of the TB disease including its multidrug-resistant strains.

4. [Japan is recasting its national security vision in face of an aggressive China](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Japan is recasting its national security vision in face of an aggressive China. India must inject strategic content into ties during 2+2 dialogue**” published in **The Indian Express** on **6th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India

News: China’s growing military capabilities and fearless attitude on territorial disputes are at the heart of the deteriorating environment of India and Japan.

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What is required by India and Japan in meeting common security challenges against China?

India has defence exchanges with Japan for nearly two decades.

They both share a common interest in keeping the Indo-Pacific “free and open” and been partners in the Quadrilateral forum but still their bilateral security cooperation remains underdeveloped. It is required that Japan and India both should involve in strategic military partnership in order to counter China.

There is deep political resistance and bureaucratic inertia against effort to recast defence policies in both countries.

The recent 2+2 dialogue will be an opportunity to get a first-hand account from the Japanese leadership on Japan’s bold new plans to transform its military strategy and build on the common interest in preventing the rise of a new leadership in the Indo-Pacific.

What is the approach of Japan in tackling the threats from China?

Japan’s new strategy to cope with Chinese power involves three broad elements — **reorienting Japan’s diplomacy, boosting national capabilities to prevent aggression and deepening defence partnerships.**

Recently Japanese PM talked of a new “realism diplomacy”. It will allow Japan to meet the new security challenges through pragmatism and firmness. For that it has taken the following steps:

- 1) The Japanese PM has announced to increase budget on its defense from 1% to 2%.
- 2) A doubling of the defence allocation over the next few years, could make it the third-largest defence spender after the US and China.
- 3) Japan’s focus is on building “counter-strike” weapons to prevent Chinese aggression. China’s missile arsenals are growing but Japan does not have long-range missiles. Some experts in Japan are calling for the deployment of a thousand long-range missiles.
- 4) Japan is also looking to strengthen security partnerships with other like-minded countries such as Australia and India.
- 5) It is also promising to strengthen the defence capabilities of the Indo-Pacific countries, unilaterally as well as through the Quad.

5. Public health need not be led by doctors alone

Source-The post is based on the article “**Public health need not be led by doctors alone**” published in **The Hindu** on **6th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2-Issues related to development and management of health

News-This article discusses the issues related to the concept of public health as a separate discipline. There is underrepresentation of public health experts in health sector bodies at central and state level.

Public health professionals are not present in State and Central advisory bodies of health. During pandemic as well, doctors with no experience in public health were guiding the public health issues.

This is because it is felt that public health does not require specific competencies, and anyone can do this work.

There is a difference between public health sector and public health discipline. Providing medical care at a primary health centre does not make the person a public health professional.

It is important to understand that public health is a separate profession with a specific set of competencies.

What constitutes public health?

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4 A's i.e. academics, activism, administration and advocacy, can describe public health work.

Academics: It is the brain behind public health. It means having good understanding of epidemiology and biostatistics.

Epidemiology is the study of the distribution and determinants of health and disease in populations.

Biostatistics is the study of development and application of statistical theory, methods and techniques to public health research data. Then, planning, implementation and evaluation of public health program

Activism: It is the heart of public health. It includes a good understanding of non-health determinants, including social and commercial factors. How they influence health and how these can be addressed?

Administration: It means administering health systems from a primary health centre to the district, State, and national level. It means implementing and managing health programmes, addressing human resource issues, supply and logistical issues, etc.

Advocacy: In public health, individual can hardly make a difference. It requires proper communication and negotiation skills with key stakeholders to enable the functioning of public health at the different levels.

How is it different to the clinical approach?

Historically, public health remained a medical college-driven discipline. However, now a specific college degree is required for public health professional.

Clinical approach is focused on individuals, which divide humans into organs or systems. However, but it is not inappropriate for a broader public health approach, aimed at working with communities or health systems.

Many doctors and other health professionals work at the grassroots level and develop a good sense of public health due to their inclination. But they do not become public health professionals as they may not have the necessary skills.

What should the course of action?

The Health Ministry has recently proposed the creation of cadres for public health professionals and health management at the State, district and block levels. It is a welcome step but there is also a need to look at the quality of public health training being provided.

6. [Four years after landmark LGBT verdict: The march to full citizenship](#)

Source-The post is based on the article "Four years after landmark LGBT verdict: The march to full citizenship" published in the **Indian Express** on **6th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2-Mechanisms and laws for protection and betterment of vulnerable sections. GS1-Social empowerment

News: Exactly, 4 years ago, Supreme Court in the case Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India, struck down provisions of Section 377 and decriminalised same sex relationship. The articles highlights the major developments that took place after this judgment to recognise many non-traditional forms of relationships and families.

What are the developments that have taken place after Navtej Singh Johar case?

Madhu Bala v State of Uttarakhand (2020) held that the right of a same sex couple to live together is a constitutional and human right.

In Vanitaben Damjibhai Solanki v State of Gujarat (2020), the Gujarat High Court ordered police protection for two women police constables in a relationship. The couple was facing threats by their families, who vehemently opposed their relationship.

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In **Pramod Kumar Sharma v State of UP (2021)**, the Allahabad High Court reinstated the home guard to service whose appointment was cancelled due to a video, which displayed his affection to his same-sex partner. The Allahabad High Court order relied on Navtej Singh Johar and held that the display of affection amongst members of the LGBTQI community cannot be bogged down by any apparent disapproval by the majority.

Finally, in **S Sushma v Commissioner of Police (2021)** court banned the questionable practice of ‘conversion therapy’. The therapy attempts to cure or change the sexual orientation of queer people.

[Read more about the case](#)

The case has led to the National Medical Commission issuing directions that doctors practising conversion therapy to “cure” queer citizens will amount to professional misconduct under the Indian Medical Councils Rules.

In **Deepika Singh v the Central Administrative Tribunal (2022)**, expanded the definition of family. The case involved a government employee who married her partner, a widower with two children. She was denied maternity leave for their third child (her first biological child) since she took leave to care for her “step”-children. According to the rules, she was entitled to 730 days of leave to take care of “upto two children”.

[Read more about the case](#)

7. [The difficult path to India-Pakistan peace](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The difficult path to India-Pakistan peace**” published in **The Hindu** on **6th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Relevance: About India-Pakistan relations.

News: After the promulgation of the new Prime Minister in Pakistan, there have been signs of a thaw in India-Pakistan relations.

Read more: [Explained: What Imran Khan’s ouster as Pakistan PM means for India](#)

What is the status of Pakistan’s economy?

After the Covid-19 pandemic, Pakistan’s economy is facing **a)** Widening current account deficit and high inflation, **b)** Unprecedented floods and decades of poor planning led to issues in Pakistan’s economy, **c)** International Monetary Fund (IMF) has begun its \$6 billion Extended Fund Facility programme for Pakistan in 2019. It also increased the funding later.

What are the developments in India-Pakistan relations during Pakistan’s economic turmoil?

Earlier Pakistan thought of the economic benefit of seeking [trade in essential commodities with India](#). But due to domestic pressure, they changed their decision.

Read more: [Why Pakistan Reverses its Decision on Trade with India?](#)

India **provided essential vaccine supplies to Pakistan** during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Pakistan Army chief had permitted backchannel talks and a “limited trade resumption package” with India to improve Pakistan’s economy.

What are the challenges in engaging with Pakistan?

Pakistan’s deep securitisation of the Kashmir dispute: This makes it hard for Pakistan’s leadership to stick to one decision for long time.

Domestic issues: In 1953 when Mohammed Ali Bogra and Jawaharlal Nehru negotiated the Kashmir dispute. They got close to an agreed solution on Kashmir. But each time, Bogra’s inability to foster domestic coalitions to support the peacemaking process with India overrode the negotiations.

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The same issue of garnering the support of domestic coalitions is still present in Pakistan. This has derailed several India-Pakistan peace dialogues.

Must read: [Pakistan's National Security Policy and its Implications for India – Explained, pointwise](#)

When India can expect improvement in India-Pakistan relations?

The outcome of the next general elections might open a sustained backchannel dialogue and trade. Until there is bipartisan support in Pakistan on the need to normalise ties with India and Pakistan enters a long period of de-securitisation, there will not be any long-term improvement.

8. [Rear guard action: Car accident-related deaths can be drastically reduced by the use of seat belts](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

“Rear guard action: Car accident-related deaths can be drastically reduced by the use of seat belts” published in **The Hindu** on **6th September 2022**.

“Fasten rear seat belts” published in **The Times of India** on **6th September 2022**.

“Unsafe at any speed: Safety rules need to be tightened” published in the **Business Standard** on **6th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Issues – Road accidents.

Relevance: About car accident-related deaths.

News: The tragic death of former Tata Sons chairman in a car accident has turned the spotlight again on lax safety rules for car passengers in India.

About India's car accident-related deaths

According to the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, India is among the global top 10 in terms of road accident deaths. Some 1,50,000 people die in road accidents each year.

The road and highways ministry's **road accidents report for 2020** reveals that 15,100 drivers and passengers were killed due to the non-use of seat belts.

Almost 17,800 travellers in four-wheelers were killed that year. Hence, the majority of these deaths of drivers and passengers could have been prevented had seat belts and airbags been deployed.

Read more: [Road accidents in India — 2020 Report](#)

What are the Central Motor Vehicle Rules on seat belts?

Both front and rear seat belts have been mandatory under the **Central Motor Vehicle Rules** but the rule is rarely enforced. A study in 2019 across 11 cities revealed that only 7% of respondents said they used rear seat belts and only 27% were aware that their use was mandatory.

Why rear seat belts are essential to prevent car accident-related deaths?

A study in the US shows that rear seat occupants were eight times more likely to suffer serious injuries in a mishap if they did not wear seat belts. This is because, **a)** Rear seat belts slow down the dangerous forward momentum. **b)** A rear seat belt can act as a check against a sudden, violent force.

Safety research shows that wearing rear seat belts also reduces the risk for front passengers, who otherwise can be injured by rear passengers being thrown forward.

What does India need to tighten the Safety rules to reduce car accident-related deaths?

Indian cars are less safer: This is because,

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a) Industry reluctant to provide safety features: The car industry has been arguing that the additional safety requirements — principally the deployment of six airbags — will push up the cost of cars at a time when the industry is struggling against sluggish demand.

Note: *The introduction of mandatory front seat belts and airbags had been met with objections until car companies discovered that there was no correlation between safety features and demand.*

b) The state of the small car market: The small car market of India consists of the most unsafe vehicles on Indian roads today. The manufacturers have steadily reduced the thickness of the bodywork in the interest of cost savings is a cause of worry.

c) Double standards of car makers: The manufacturers do not add safety features to cars they make for the Indian market, though all safety features are added to export models.

Growth of highways: The proliferation of six-lane highways all over India has meant that speed limits have risen to 100 kmph. National highways constitute only 2% of the total length of roads in India, they contribute to 36% of fatalities.

Proven reports: A study by IIT-Delhi estimated that “air-bag deployment reduced mortality by 63%... lap-shoulder-belt use reduced mortality by 72%, and combined air-bag and seatbelt use reduced mortality by more than 80%.

Read more: [Role of Motor Vehicle Act, 2019 in reducing road accidents](#)

What should be done to reduce car accident-related deaths?

Role of car manufacturers: The car industry should accept the government proposal to mandate

a) The introduction of Y-belts for middle rear seat passengers **b)** The deployment of side airbags in all cars irrespective of car size.

All cars must come with **built-in warning beeps** for both front and rear seat belts.

Enforcing India-specific and effective road safety policies: These include **a)** Looking at composite factors such as poor road design, **b)** Maintenance of road and traffic infrastructure in fixing responsibility for accidents, **c)** Removal of medians on intercity highways and replacing them with steel guard rails or wire rope barriers.

9. [Shadow of 377: Doctors offering ‘conversion therapy’ must be severely disciplined. NMC must ensure this](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Shadow of 377: Doctors offering ‘conversion therapy’ must be severely disciplined. NMC must ensure this** published in **The Times of India** on **7th September 2022**.

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

Relevance: About conversion therapy.

News: Based on the Madras High Court ruling on Conversion Therapy, the National Medical Commission(NMC) has written to all State Medical Councils banning conversion therapy and calling it a “professional misconduct.”

What is Conversion Therapy?

Read here: [Coercion as conversion: Sexual orientation and gender identities do not require medical intervention](#)

What did the Madras High Court ruled on Conversion Therapy?

Read here: [Explained | The ban on conversion therapy for the LGBTQIA+ community](#)

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What are the challenges in enforcing the ban?

Prejudice among medical fraternity: A study of medical school students, interns and postgrads in India has found that only around 20% of respondents believe homosexuality is not an illness. The Indian Psychiatric Society de-pathologised homosexuality only in 2018, two years after Supreme Court decriminalised homosexuality.

Adolescents are more vulnerable: US data indicates that around half the persons receiving conversion therapy are adolescents. Their cooperation is often extracted from their desire to be a 'better' son or daughter.

What should be done to improve the life of the LGBTQIA+ community?

a) The NMC needs to practise what it has been asked to preach. For instance, NMC must ensure severe disciplinary action against such practitioners, **b)** Parents, especially the educated ones, should change their opinion on the LGBTQIA+ community.

Must read: [Four years after landmark LGBT verdict: The march to full citizenship](#)

10. [The Spirit of 1971](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The Spirit of 1971**” published in **The Hindu** on **8th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its neighborhood

Relevance: India and Bangladesh bilateral relations

News: The recent visit Bangladesh PM have seen positive outcomes and various agreements.

What are the agreements made?

The agreement includes – a) Water sharing agreement (first in 26 years), b) free trade agreement talks and c) infrastructure projects especially in the railways sector.

Kushiyara River: The water sharing agreement on the Kushiyara River is important for resolving water problems. It is one of the important issues of 54 trans-boundary rivers and for the 1st time Assam and other north-eastern States have been brought on board.

Feni Reiver: There has also been agreement on withdrawing 1.82 cusec water from the Feni River.

Teesta River: There has been still no agreement on Teesta, which is held up by the West Bengal government. The agreement will require more effort from the Central and the state government.

Special Economic Zones: Bangladesh’s PM has also mentioned of two dedicated Special Economic Zones for Indian companies in Mongla and Mirsarai in Bangladesh. It will help to attract FDI inflows from India in Bangladesh.

The visit of PM of both the countries in the past has helped in better bilateral relations between the two countries in trade, connectivity and people-to-people ties.

The present ruling government in Bangladesh took steps like; shutting down terror training camps, and hand over more than 20 wanted criminals and terror suspects to India. It has been instrumental in improving the relations.

However, some of the developments linked to Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Rohingyas issue in India has been a cause of concern to Bangladesh.

Both India and Bangladesh need to revive what is referred to as the “Spirit of 1971”.

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11. [Time for a joint space exercise](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Time for a joint space exercise**” published in **The Hindu** on **8th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests

Relevance: India and US bilateral relations

News: India and the U.S. will undertake joint military drills in October in Auli. The location is at an altitude of 10,000 feet and some 95 km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

India and the US should also join hands in the space war exercises.

Why Space drill is important?

First, this drill will push India’s defense partnership into a new sphere.

Second, it will also send a strong message to the common opponents like China.

Third, it will have other positive outcome which is required for the wider Quad.

Fourth, India and US, in the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) meeting, identified space as a critical area of cooperation.

Fifth, China has advanced to the **Cis-Lunar space (region beyond the geosynchronous orbit)**. It is done with an ambition to establish a permanent presence on the Moon by 2024.

Sixth, Space has assets that form the bedrock of the modern economy; GPS (PNT — position navigation timing), telecom networks, early warning systems for missiles.

How has India performed in space force?

Space in India has mostly remained under the sole jurisdiction of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).

However, the successful demonstration of anti-satellite (ASAT) missile test and first ever simulated space warfare exercise (IndSpaceX) in 2019 has changed the image of space being limited to ISRO.

The government has also set up the Defence Space Research Agency (DSRA) to help develop space-based weapons for the DSA.

Space is now equally recognised as a military domain as land, water, air and cyber.

How can India and the US join hands in space warfare programs?

Space has been an important critical area of cooperation in the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) meeting between India and the U.S.

India and the US can cooperate in a **joint anti-satellite (ASAT) missile test** because both the countries have shown capabilities in this.

ASAT is a missile launched from the Earth’s surface to destroy a satellite passing overhead.

What are the challenges associated with space exercise?

There is a possibility of China-Pakistan collusion against India.

It will derail the ongoing Core Commanders dialogue in Ladakh.

It may lead to militarization of space.

12. [The wheat of the matter: Disruption of supply chains due to Ukraine war has implications for India’s food security](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The wheat of the matter: Disruption of supply chains due to Ukraine war has implications for India’s food security**” published in **The Indian Express** on **8th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues related to nutrition and hunger

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News: The pandemic and Ukraine-Russia war has increased food insecurity worldwide and it is a matter of concern for India also.

How Ukraine and Russia war has impacted food security worldwide?

Russia and Ukraine accounts for 27 per cent of the world market for wheat, 16 per cent for corn, 23 per cent for barley, and 53 per cent for sunflower.

Before the war Ukraine exported about 95 per cent of grain.

Countries mainly in Africa West Asia and Asia depend on Russia and Ukraine for more than 50 per cent of their wheat imports.

What has caused rise in the food price around the world?

According to a report by International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) **speculation on agricultural products on the future exchanges** was one of the main reasons for the rise in food prices.

The arrival of large pension funds, hedge funds and investment banks in the agriculture markets has also been the reason of excessive speculation.

Future Market: The main purpose of futures markets was that farmers could transfer the price risk to sell the produce at the current price but deliver it in the future. It acted as a safeguard for farmers due to uncertainty caused by weather failures, wars, etc. This future markets have been misused by the speculators and big financial companies.

Betting: The prices of markets do not vary with the demand supply problems but it varies due to speculation and big companies betting on the prices. This betting on the future markets leads to price volatility and endangers food security around the world.

What are the current food security issues with India?

Food inflation is a major cause for concern for food security in India.

The pandemic has reduced the income of the households which has been one of the reasons for rising hunger levels in India.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Food Price Index has increased by 30 per cent in the year 2021-22.

According to the Global Hunger Index, India ranks 101 among 116 countries.

According to the Hunger Watch Report, 45 per cent of the people reported running out of food in the month of January.

The situation is even more unpredictable now because of the rise in prices.

What can be done further?

India: The Indian government should regulate the private sectors and bring more transparency on food stocks. The restrictions should be set on the hoarding of the food stocks by the private sectors.

Internationally: A limit on the purchase can be set for the speculators but this requires a multilateral agreement.

13. [The evolving role of CSR in funding NGOs](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“The evolving role of CSR in funding NGOs”** published in **The Hindu** on **8th September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Development processes and the development industry**

News: Pandemic acted as a shock for everyone. NGOs also faced problems, but Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) helped. But NGOs still face problems in covering their organizational development and indirect cost.

What are the problems faced by NGOs?

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NGOs have many expenses (rent, bills, etc.) and these expenses are not often fulfilled by funding. The underfunding of the NGO impacts programs and initiatives taken by NGOs.

Organizational development cost and indirect costs combined with program expenses make up NGOs' true costs.

NGOs' indirect costs range from 5% to 55%, depending on their operating model.

CSR funders contribute very little to organizational development cost of the NGOs.

They pay for the indirect cost of the NGOs, which is often below 5%. This causes NGOs to face financial stress in paying rents, salaries, etc.

Many CSRs leave NGOs with unpaid bills and NGOs are made to look for funding from other sources.

Research says that in 2020, 54% of NGOs had less than three months in reserve funds.

How can the situation of NGOs be changed?

CSR programs can help in covering both indirect costs and organizational development.

Corporates can help NGOs by providing other assistance such as accounting facilities in addition to their fundings.

They can further help NGOs by offering volunteer financial analysis services to calculate NGOs true cost.

What are the problems associated with CSR funders?

Regulatory compliances

CSR funders mostly focus on regulatory compliances because of the amendment in CSR law 2021.

The amendment includes penalties for non-compliance of the law.

Shifting Responsibilities

90% of the CSR are small and unlisted companies and they generally leave decisions on CSR funding to board members instead of forming CSR committees.

They focus more towards risk avoidance, compliance, and cost minimization.

Some companies have given this responsibility to their HR or administration heads rather than hiring professionals.

What can be the course of action for NGOs?

First, Companies can pool their resources with other CSR or social stake holders.

Second, they can also hire top professionals who have experience of working with NGOs.

Third, CSR funders can learn from other CSR funders who view organizational development and indirect cost differently.

For example, the CSR branch of ASK Group which works to enable better livelihoods for rural communities shifted from 10% to 20% funding to NGOs.

This was done after the CSR team presented the standard which is being followed by other companies.

14. Our urban spaces need renewal, not new names

Source: The post is based on the article **“Our urban spaces need renewal, not new names”** published in the **Livemint** on **9th September 2022**.

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

Relevance: About renaming Rajpath as Kartavya Path.

News: As part of the Central Vista's makeover, the Government of India has decided to rename the historic Rajpath and Central Vista lawns in the national capital as 'Kartavya Path'.

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What is the reason behind renaming Rajpath as Kartavya Path?

Read here: [NDMC passes resolution to rename Rajpath to Kartavya Path](#)

After Independence, Kingsway was named Rajpath and Queensway was renamed Janpath. Renaming is a reminder that public service is about “duties and not the right to rule”.

What are the reasons for renaming places after Independence?

1) Bombay to Mumbai, Calcutta to Kolkata and Bangalore to Bengaluru are just a few examples of name switches. Many of these were driven by a need to assert a linguistic identity, 2) More recently, the renaming of Allahabad and Aurangabad, among others were renamed to change the nomenclature from Medieval India.

What are the concerns in renaming the Rajpath as Kartavya Path and other name changes?

1) The recent renaming of Rajpath underlines the citizen’s duty to the state, but not the state’s duty to uphold the rights of our people, 2) All the name change costs public money, from revisions in signage to official documents and assorted data sets, 3) It might end up dividing people also, 4) The cost-benefit ratio of such name changes is usually dismal, 5) The original names of places have long been enmeshed in our poetry, music and culture. Renaming them will hamper those experiences, 6) The persistence of people’s memory makes many of these changes irrelevant. For example, Delhi’s Connaught Place was sought to be called Rajiv Chowk but is referred to as such only officially.

What should be done?

The urban landscape at present needs substantive improvement to avoid frequent urban floods that disrupt urban life, other issues associated with civic systems and better urban planning. The government has to focus on these issues.

15. [We must demand safe roads and not just more airbags](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Our urban spaces need renewal, not new names**” published in the **Livemint** on **9th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Issues – Road accidents.

Relevance: About car accident-related deaths and road safety in India.

News: The tragic death of former Tata Sons chairman in a car accident has turned the spotlight again on lax safety rules for car passengers in India.

What are the challenges to road safety in India?

1) Road safety advocacy group SaveLife Foundation, a non-profit organization, has consistently flagged “**fatal**” **corridors** where a disproportionately high number of crashes and fatalities occur as a result of **poor road engineering**. The recent accident also highlights dubious engineering and design.

2) Government aims to construct Highways at a speed of 50 km per day. But the government fails to focus on the quality and maintenance of these roads.

3) Driving itself is an encounter with chaos on Indian roads, with rules that exist only on paper. Airbags and seat belts are a system that works in conjunction. But many people

4) India’s automotive industry has a record of delaying safety mandates on airbags and anti-skid braking systems. This is because they are trying to keep vehicles affordably priced in India.

What can be done?

Must read: [Rear guard action: Car accident-related deaths can be drastically reduced by the use of seat belts](#)

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Indian tech-savvy consumers are grown enough to seek 5-star crash-test ratings. It shows the robustness of cars and hence their safety. But they need to strap themselves in a seat belt and encourage their family also irrespective of where they sit in the car.

16. [Mature leadership in India and Bangladesh has not let minor disagreements threaten shared interests](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Mature leadership in India and Bangladesh has not let minor disagreements threaten shared interests**” published in **The Indian Express** on **9th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its neighborhood

Relevance: India and Bangladesh bilateral relations

News: Bangladesh is now central to India’s **Neighborhood First Policy**. It has become more important after economic crisis affecting Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The recent Kushiya river water agreement is an important development towards it.

Bangladesh is India’s largest trading partner in the Subcontinent, the largest development partner, the most productive connectivity partner and the largest source of foreign tourists.

What has led to the improvement in the bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh?

2008: The bilateral relation started improving with the inauguration of Maitri Express, in April 2008, the first passenger train between Dhaka and Kolkata.

2009: Bangladesh PM took action against Indian insurgent groups, operating from Bangladesh.

2010: Comprehensive Framework of Cooperation was signed by Bangladesh. This helped in the grant of duty-free access to Bangladesh’s exports to India in 2011.

Intelligence cooperation between the nations has helped both sides to tackle extremist groups.

What are the agreements made in the current visit?

There are agreements made in seven sectors between the two nations.

These include – a) connectivity, b) environment, c) water management, d) science and technology, e) railway, f) law, and g) information and broadcasting.

New **infrastructure projects** have also been announced.

Kushiya River: There has been an agreement on the water sharing method of the river. This river flows from Assam’s Silchar district into Bangladesh. It is the major agreement on water sharing treaty since the Ganga water treaty in 1996.

Feni River: India has requested to finalise the temporary water sharing agreement of Feni River. This river fulfills the water requirements of Tripura.

Teesta River: This issue of this river has not been resolved due to the unhealthy Centre-state relation. The river fulfills the water requirement of North Bengal. 80 per cent of the river’s catchment area falls in India still the river supports the livelihood of a large population in Bangladesh.

Joint Rivers Commission: It met after 12 years. It has been asked to examine the sharing of 54 Trans-Boundary River between the two nations and share the water stock data. There has also been agreement in strengthening mutual cooperation in solving pollution of common rivers and extending Ganga treaty beyond 2026.

Scholarships: Bangladesh has announced 200 scholarships to descendants of Indian military personnel who lost their lives in the 1971 War of Liberation.

What are the future areas of cooperation between the two nations?

Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

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It is expected that Bangladesh will become a developing country by 2026 from a Less Developed Country (LDC).

India-Bangladesh CEPA will help in managing the transition and preserving the trade privileges that Bangladesh enjoys.

Energy Requirements

Indian companies are also working on fulfilling the energy requirements of Bangladesh. For example, 1320 MW thermal power plant being built at Rampal by the NTPC in a joint venture 50:50.

A 1,600 MW power plant in Godda, Jharkhand is being built by the Adani group.

“Friendship” pipeline from Assam’s Numaligarh refinery will deliver petroleum products to Parbatipur in Bangladesh.

Defense sector

India has extended around 8-billion-dollar Line of Credit (LoC) to Bangladesh. It includes 500 million dollars, especially related to defense-related procurement.

It will help Bangladesh to diversify its defense procurement as now it is highly dependent on China. It will also help in countering China’s Belt Road Initiative (BRI) and debt-trap policy.

Rohingya issue

Rohingya refugees have become a burden on Bangladesh.

Bangladesh PM has sought help from India to return the refugees to Myanmar.

What measures can be taken to solve the existing issues between the two nations?

Water is a state subject under the Constitution. Therefore, center has little power to settle issues like Teesta River dispute.

It is the time to review the constitutional status of water and declare it as a union subject under the control of the Union government.

This will help in resolving major water sharing issues internationally as well as inter-state water disputes.

17. [Success of the new education policy depends on how we recruit and assess teachers](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“Success of new education policy depends on how we recruit and assess teachers”** published in **The Indian Express** on **9th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues associated with education

News: The article discusses the problems related to the recruitment of teachers and measures that can be taken to improve the recruitment process.

What are the problems present with the recruitment of teachers?

The teacher recruitment process in the country is not efficient. The recruitment process varies from regions and types of schools.

This leads to multiple criteria and processes in hiring teachers which brings inequality in teacher quality.

The process is also inadequate in measuring the candidate’s competency.

The most common and widely taken test for teachers is the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) conducted at both the state (STET) and central levels (CTET). However, this test is required only for government school teacher recruitment at the elementary stage (Class 1-8).

The test has its drawbacks such as low pass percentages, poor test quality, lengthy test papers, etc.

What steps have been taken to tackle the issues?

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NEP-2020 has recommended a revision of the existing test and supplementing it with other processes such as classroom demonstrations and interviews.

It has also recommended extending these processes to all stages of education in public and private schools.

What can be the further done to improve the teacher recruitment process?

There should be a **comprehensive competency framework** that provides details for the required skills that a teacher should possess.

There should be a **proper guideline for judging a teacher's competency** (knowledge, skills) that contributes to the teaching-learning process.

The competency can be checked by taking tests and involving others methods of assessment like classroom demonstrations and teacher interviews.

The curriculum provided by NEP can be adopted towards providing training in classroom and making learning joyful.

What will be the benefits of adopting such holistic recruitment process?

There will be multiple long-term benefits to adopting such a holistic model of teacher recruitment.

First, it will contribute to a fair education for students from diverse sections of society.

Second, it will ensure uniformity in the quality of teachers recruited across the country.

Third, the recruitment process will also become reliable.

Fourth, it will help in checking a teacher's ability in explanation of the concept and selecting appropriate study materials for the students.

Fifth, it will also help to evaluate a teacher's empathy towards students.

Sixth, this will reduce the coaching culture as the assessment processes will be non-standardised, which cannot be easily studied from coaching materials and guidebooks.

18. [The outline of an essential global pandemic treaty](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "The outline of an essential global pandemic treaty" published in **The Hindu** on **9th September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Bilateral agreements involving India**

News: COVID-19 was one of the most severe pandemics the world has seen in the last 100 years. The impact of the pandemic can be seen even now and an effective global treaty is required to face future challenges.

What were the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic?

Health care system

Health-care systems have been utilized beyond their capacity.

There has been gross health inequality in distribution of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics across the world.

Low-income countries

The low-income countries have faced major impact of the pandemic.

The socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic are irreversible in these countries.

Only 3% of people in low-income countries had been vaccinated with at least one dose when compared to 60.18% in high-income countries.

The international target to vaccinate 70% of the world's population by mid-2022 was missed. Because poorer countries were left behind when vaccines were rolled out.

Pharma companies

The pandemic has caused enormous increase in the wealth of pharma companies (Pfizer, BioNTech, and Moderna) because they had monopoly over the Covid vaccines.

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There have also been other reasons of increasing inequality across the world such as inadequate precautionary measures taken by countries, lack of interest in giving funds for developing coronavirus vaccines, etc.

What can be the course of action?

The **creation of Global Pandemic Treaty** has been proposed at the Special Session of the **World Health Assembly (WHASS)** to mitigate future challenges. The **declaration of monkey pox as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)** has highlighted this need.

The global treaty should include the following features:

First, a treaty should cover important aspects of data sharing and genome sequencing of emerging viruses.

Second, it should formally commit governments to implement an early warning system and a properly funded rapid response mechanism.

Third, it should ask nations to agree on a set of common measures that are related to health investments with an aim to reduce the public-private sector gap.

Fourth, a global pandemic treaty should not only reduce socioeconomic inequalities but also enhance global pandemic preparedness for future health emergencies.

What role has been played by India in the pandemic?

India has played an important role worldwide in tackling the pandemic.

First, India never restricted the shipment of vaccines even when it experienced shortage at the domestic level.

- India has shipped 594.35 lakh doses of Made in India vaccines which is an example of global cooperation.

Second, India also acted as a global leader in dealing with vaccine patent issue with major pharma companies across the world.

- It recommended World Trade Organization (WTO) to allow all countries to choose to neither grant nor enforce patents on covid-19 drugs and technologies until global herd immunity is achieved.

India currently produces 60% of the world's vaccines and is said to account for 60%-80% of the United Nations' annual vaccine procurement.

19. [Indo-Pacific Economic Framework: Challenges and Opportunities](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Indo-Pacific Economic Framework: Challenges and Opportunities**” published in The **Business Standard** on **9th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Bilateral regional and global grouping

News: The article explains challenges and opportunities presented by the **Indo-Pacific Economic framework** and what should be India negotiating strategy for **IPEF**.

The USA is hosting the first in-person meeting of the grouping on 8-9 September in Los Angeles.

The formal launch of rule-setting for the group is expected at this meeting.

Indian earlier participated in its meetings as an “**observer**”.

What are specific features of IPEF when compared with mega regional trade agreements?

It is not an alternative to **RCEP** and **Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)**. IPEF has a trade pillar but it is not a trade agreement.

Trans-Pacific Partnership, which seems to be a subset of CPTPP, was an economic instrument as part of the USA's “**Pivot to Asia**” strategy for containing China. Its **WTO++** provisions related to **IPR**; state-owned enterprises was to establish a **rule-based world order** that China will find difficult to abide by.

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CPTPP is a water-down provision of **TPP** with relaxed provisions related to investment, labor, and environmental standards to make it for China easier to seek its membership.

Membership of both **RCEP** and **CPTPP** will give China a dominant position in rule setting. This is the reason behind **IPEF** gaining salience by excluding China.

What are the opportunities provided by IPEF for India?

First, it has nine members from East Asia and its two pillars are focused on **trade and connectivity** and **supply chain resilience**. It provides an opportunity to integrate with **East Asian value chain hubs**.

Second, In the post-pandemic **era** and in the wake of the **Ukraine crisis**, large corporations are seeking **China plus one relocation strategy**.

Third, **ASEAN** is also looking for **supply chain resilience** through bilateral FTAs and diversification beyond **RCEP**.

Fourth, it provides a flexible framework to seek remedial action against **non-tariff barriers** in the context of the **ASEAN-India FTA**.

What are the challenges for India?

First, it does not include tariff preferences and there is less scope for India to have **enhanced market access**.

Second, it may have deliberately designed to have focus on modern day provision related to **digital trade, regulatory policies, trade facilitation, labour and environmental standards and sustainable social development** similar to **US-Mexico Canada agreement**. These rules are not in confirmation with India negotiating position on trade agreements.

Third, trade facilitation rules are likely to be drawn from **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation** rules. All members of **IPEF** are also **APEC** members and they have reached consensus on modern day provision related to trade facilitation at **APEC** summit in 2017. Almost all of them have unleashed domestic reforms. India will have to overcome these challenges.

How can India deal with these challenges?

India is in the midst of advanced negotiation on a free trade agreement with the **EU** and Australia. The **EU** is providing leadership in concluding free trade agreements with emphasis on provisions like **labour and environmental standards**.

Australia is a founding and leading member of the **APEC** and has been acknowledged for its contribution to **trade and investment facilitation** and establishing **regulatory ease** for cross-border supply chains.

India's ability to conclude FTA with these countries will help in unleashing domestic reforms and signaling mechanisms to the world of its readiness to be part of **IPEF**.

20. [Floods in Pakistan and the pulls and pressures of India-Pakistan disaster diplomacy](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Floods in Pakistan and pulls and pressures of India-Pakistan disaster diplomacy**" published in **The Indian Express** on **9th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian and its neighbourhood relations.

News- The article explains the Indian-Pakistan disaster diplomacy.

Recently Pakistan has been devastated by heavy floods which led to heavy loss of life, essentials shortages. Indian Prime Minister expressed his condolences.

What are the recent developments related to India-Pakistan relations?

Modi invited Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif to his swearing-in ceremony and both leaders held the promise of a new beginning in their bilateral relationship.

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The sequence of events that followed like- red line on meeting between Hurriyat separatists and Pakistan diplomats; terror attack in Uri and Pathankot impacted relations negatively. India took a stand that **talk and terror cannot go together**.

Relations further deteriorated when India abrogated the special status of Jammu & Kashmir. It led to downsizing the officials in both High Commissions.

After Shehbaz Sharif assumed power in Pakistan, there have been some positive signals. He has urged India to resolve the Kashmir issue and focus on tackling poverty and unemployment; India's PM also congratulated the him on forming the government.

In a letter to Modi; Sharif said that Pakistan remains committed to **“regional peace and security”** and sought **“peaceful and cooperative ties”** with Pakistan.

What were earlier responses to the disasters by both countries?

In 2001, when an earthquake hit Bhuj, Pakistan sent tents and blankets. Vajpayee thanked the Pakistan General for the gesture.

In 2005, when an earthquake hit both countries, India sent aircraft with relief supplies and pledged \$ 5 million through the UN to support Pakistan.

During 2010 super flood in Pakistan, India offered \$ 5 million in help, however, the offer was declined.

What is Case for help?

PM Modi's outreach by way of the message created a potential opening for **“disaster diplomacy”**. The Pakistan ruling class is well disposed to humanitarian gestures from India.

State of Pakistan Finance Minister said that the government can consider importing vegetables and edible oils from India.

General Bajwa spoke in favour of improving ties.

India has a desire to be **“first responder”** in times of disaster and crisis in neighbouring countries.

Vaccine diplomacy has already been billed as a major achievement for India.

What are possible options for India?

The help can be at **micro level** by sending emergency essential supplies.

At **macro and medium-to-long-term**, it could help in construction of damaged properties and cultural heritage.

However, the current regime's policy of zero tolerance for terrorism and extending help, to tackle disaster, are at conflict with each other.

21. [RUPP & Tough: EC's move to weed out shady political parties should look at some funding provisions too](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“RUPP & Tough: EC's move to weed shady political parties should look at some funding provisions too”** published in **The Times of India** on **9th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Salient features of Representation of People Act

News- The article explains the issues related with registered Unrecognised Political Parties(URPP) in India.

Recently, Income tax officials recently carried out raids on URPPs in a larger clean-up process.

What are some facts about Unrecognised Political Parties(URPPs)?

EC data shows that in 2021 there were 2796 Registered unrecognised political parties. It is an increase of 300% over last two decades. In 2019, Lok Sabha elections, only 30% of these parties contested elections.

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100% tax exemptions are given to them subject to certain conditions.

Like recognised parties they need not to disclose cash donations upto Rs. 2000.

Why does the system get abused?

Combination of tax exemptions, anonymity in funding and easy registration encourages formations of such parties.

Introduction of electoral bonds is also problematic because it allows anonymity and problematic sources of funding political parties.

22. 1 Doctor Per 1,000 Isn't Healthcare's Magic Number

Source– The post is based on the article “**1 Doctor Per 1,000 Isn't Healthcare's Magic Number**” published in **The Indian Express** on **9th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issues related to development and management of health.

News: The article explains India's obsession with achieving **WHO recommendation of 1 doctor per 1000 population** and neglecting other aspects of the public healthcare system.

The National Medical Commission website shows 692 medical colleges with 92,793 seats.

How does India perform when compared with countries in the same economic category?

Sri Lanka-In 2000, its doctor population ratio was lower than India but health indices were better than India. It had a maternal mortality rate of 56 in 2000 compared with 370 in India.

Countries like Bangladesh, Indonesia and Vietnam have better health indices than India despite having lower doctor-population ratio. In contrast, Pakistan's case is the reverse.

What are the possible reasons for better health in other lower- and middle-income countries despite the lower doctor-population ratio?

There is a strong emphasis on public health, a conscious move away from **doctor-driven health systems**. Furthermore, they have been focusing on improving **social determinants of health** such as access to clean drinking water, sanitation, education, and food security.

Sri Lanka case: From 1980s, it worked on **maternal health surveillance** and training to midwives to improve use of antenatal and natal services. It has not allowed privatization of medical education till date.

Iran case: It has established a network of “**rural health houses**” by recruiting workers from the community and giving them proper training.

What are the challenges faced by the current healthcare setup in India?

First, there is the collapse of the three-tier healthcare system, and rampant privatization of healthcare.

Second, India's obsession with quantity has resulted in a large number of colleges without inadequate infrastructure and facilities, and inadequate, not enough faculty. Colleges for nursing and paramedical staff are in the worst condition.

Third, on paper the number of healthcare staff are increasing but in reality, in rural India, there is an acute shortage of doctors and nursing staff. They end up moving to other countries or adding to the number in cities.

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23. [How Bharat is fighting TB through Jan Bhagidari: Health minister writes about govt & citizens working together to make the country TB-free by 2025](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**How Bharat is fighting TB through Jan Bhagidari: Health minister writes about govt & citizens working together to make the country TB-free by 2025**” published in **The Times of India** on **10th September 2022**.

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

News: The Prime Minister of India has set the goal of making India TB free by 2025 which is ahead of the global target of 2030 for eliminating the disease.

Jan Bhagidari plays an important role in achieving this target.

GoI has launched **Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana** under the aegis of the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP) to achieve this target.

What is Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana?

This scheme helps patients to target their nutritional requirements.

This scheme has helped 62.71 lakh TB patients with financial support of Rs 1,651 crore between 2018 and June 2022.

This includes direct benefit transfer of Rs 500 per month into the bank account of the person with TB.

What is Ni-Kshay 2.0 portal?

GoI has recently initiated the Ni-Kshay 2.0 portal under the Pradhan Mantri TB-Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan.

This was launched by President Droupadi Murmu.

The objective of Ni-kshay 2.0 is to **end the existing social problems and discrimination against TB patients** by providing nutritional and social support.

Any individual or organization (corporates, NGOs, etc.) can register as Ni-kshay Mitra on the Ni-kshay 2.0 portal to support people affected by the disease.

TB patients can be supported for a minimum duration of **one year** and a maximum of **three years** in any block or district across the country.

What kind of support do patients need?

TB patients need three kinds of essential supports. They are:

First, a kit that contains appropriate food and supplements to take care of patient’s nutritional needs.

Second, patients’ need support for additional lab-based diagnostic requirements.

Third, support is needed to provide patients with vocational skills which will help them to join the workforce and live a prosperous and productive life.

GoI also provide free diagnosis, free medicines and other kinds of support to people who have been affected by the disease.

What role is played by Jan Bhagadari and how important is it?

Jan Bhagidari (people’s participation) plays an important role in achieving any target and making India a prosperous nation.

Swachh Bharat Mission, Covid vaccination drive and the recently Har Ghar Tiranga campaign are successful examples of Jan Bhagaidari (people’s participation).

Therefore, collective strength and people’s participation is needed to move towards a TB-free India by 2025.

24. [End of an era](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**End of an era**” published in **The Hindu** on **10th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Issues

News: The article discusses the concern associated with the demise of longest serving monarch Queen Elizabeth II.

The time period of Queen Elizabeth II

Queen Elizabeth II was the longest serving monarch who reigned for over 70 years.

Her tenure started as a head of the state after the First World War.

Her era saw the changing political power from the British Empire to the Commonwealth and the emergence of post-colonial nations.

The cold war came to an end during her period.

What are the implications of the demise of the Queen?

It raises the question of monarchy.

British monarch is currently the head of the state of U.K., Belize, Canada, Grenada, Jamaica, New Zealand, and many others. Few countries are looking to end this monarchy.

For example, Barbados became the 18th country to remove the British monarch from the role of head of state in 2021.

Australia is also seeing the movement for making the country republic.

Six Caribbean countries have also hinted towards removing the British monarchy.

However, the position of the Commonwealth group of 56 nations remained unchanged even though there has been an increase in movements to detach from British monarchy. But it was also due to the influence of Queen Elizabeth II. Therefore, prospects of grouping might get affected.

25. [Dry Bihar to turn Liquor bottles into glass bangles](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**Dry Bihar to turn Liquor bottles into glass bangles**” published in **The Hindu** on **10th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS-2- Social empowerment, Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of population and performance of these schemes.

Context- The article explains Bihar government plan to set up factories to make glass and bangles out of seized liquor and challenges associated with it.

What are some facts related to the Bihar government plan?

It is a social and economic empowerment program through its rural livelihood program called **JEEVIKA**. It is funded by the World Bank.

Earlier bottles seized were crushed and treated as garbage. However, now the plan is to give these bottles to JEEVIKA workers. JEEVIKA women workers will be training in bangles making in other states.

₹1 crore has been allocated to set up a glass-making factory in Patna and send JEEVIKA women for training in bangle-making to other states.

What are the challenges related to Bihar government’s new excise policy?

More than thirty thousand people and also government officials were arrested during raids against those involved in illegal liquor trade activities. Due to the large number of persons involved, jails were overcrowded and cases were clogged in courts.

Due to lack of storage, government officials had to crush large quantities of seized liquor.

What is the economic viability of the idea?

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First, In making glass bangles, other materials like limestone and soda are used. Now, who will provide these materials for factories to run?

Second, these factories will have to face competition from factories in Faizabad, Mumbai and Hyderabad which have **economies of scale**.

Third, would bottles be supplied in sufficient amount to sustain the bangle making factory in the long run?

26. [Covid's medium-term impact and India's Human Development Index loss](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Covid's medium-term impact and India's Human Development Index loss**” published in The **Business Standard** on **10th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issues related with development and management of social sector

News- The article explains the loss in India's Human Development Index score in 2020 and 2021.

What are some facts related to the HDI report?

There are setbacks on the life expectancy and education front.

Life expectancy could recover the loss of two years, if we take into account the death toll due to COVID19, but getting back to previous level on the education front is difficult.

Slide on index depends on whether countries withstood Covid better or not.

How does India performed in comparison to other countries?

Bangladesh- Its position is better on non-economic indicators. It has lower income but better overall index score. It did not suffer any setback in HDI indicators during Covid years.

Other developing countries- Vietnam belong to the “**high**” human development category and Malaysia belongs to the “**Very high**” attainment category. For India, it will take till 2030 to move from medium to high, if it improves its indicators at pre-Covid rate.

India index is roughly where China was at the turn of the century.

What needs to be done?

There is a need to close the gap with regard to health and education. In this context, Amartya Sen approach of **development as capability building** should be followed.

There is a lack of public spending on health and education. Private spending is more in comparison to public spending and there are regional variations as Bihar states continue to languish. It needs to be corrected.

Recent initiatives of the government like health insurance should make a difference but these are not enough.

When it comes to public spending, government preference is more for physical infrastructure rather than social infrastructure. It needs to have a relook. Investment on physical infrastructure has gone up to 1% of GDP in recent years.

27. [Why sports management in India needs to include former players](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Why sports management in India needs to include former players**” published in **The Indian Express** on **10th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Statutory, Regulatory and various Quasi-judicial bodies

Relevance-About regulatory structure.

News- The article explains the concept of regulatory capture and need for sports federation to have administrator who were sportsman themselves in past.

What is regulatory capture?

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It is a situation when independent government agencies start to uphold the interests of the companies and industries they regulate instead of serving public interest. For Example, the telecom regulator makes rules that favour Jio or Bharti.

Industry gets protected at the expense of consumers.

It is referred to as lobbying in western world and **accepted corruption** in Asia.

Integrity gets compromised because of this.

In the case of India, the role of the government becomes crucial because both public and private operate together in the same field.

What is the appointment process for regulatory agencies?

Such appointments in India and elsewhere are prerogative of government and rooted in local cultural circumstances.

Objective is to ensure that capture of agency by government or industry is reduced to minimum. When India started liberalization, western methods of appointment were admired but now there is consensus in favor of regulatory architecture of our own.

Why is the regulatory architecture of our own difficult for India?

Because we have followed the practices of shukrana and nazrana in our societal engagement. These are expressions of gratitude and anticipated benefits respectively. Some of these practices are followed in the professional sphere also.

Why have sports federations become important from the perspective of institutional appointment?

As there will be more commercialization of Indian sports, federations will have more attractive employment opportunities.

Judges and bureaucrats will have more employment opportunities in these federations after their retirement. They have learnt the methods of institutional capture, that is securing post-retirement appointments to regulatory agencies. But they should be guided by a larger public interest and resist the temptation of being beholden to the agency.

Why do we need to act quickly to have our own system of appointments?

Two events are important, that suggest having own system:

First is the International Olympic Committee ultimatum to the Indian Olympic Association to resolve its governance issue and hold elections, failing which it will ban India.

Second is **FIFA** suspension of All India Football Federation because of influence from a third party that is the Court of Inquiry by the Supreme Court.

Why do sportsmen need to be appointed to the sports federation?

The presumption that bureaucrats or judges are better placed is a self-serving argument.

Sorts administration is becoming complex, demanding training and skills that are more complex. Government should begin the process by itself. There is no need for external pressure as in the case of **AIFF**.

28. [India-Bangladesh ties, a model for bilateral cooperation](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**India-Bangladesh ties, a model for bilateral cooperation**” published in **The Hindu** on **12th September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2** – India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Relevance: About the India-Bangladesh ties.

News: The recent state visit of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh showcased the high stakes of India-Bangladesh bilateral ties. The latest visit resulted in seven agreements designed to increase

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cooperation in the diverse domains of water sharing, railways, science and technology, space, media and capacity building.

What are the recent agreements signed between India and Bangladesh?

Read more: [Mature leadership in India and Bangladesh has not let minor disagreements threaten shared interests](#)

a) There was the agreement “to continue close security cooperation” over counter-terrorism, border crimes, and border management, **b)** Both countries agreed “to build resilient supply chains” between the two countries and “across the region”.

Read more: [Kushiyara River: Delhi, Dhaka sign river pact, first in 25 years](#)

What are the areas of cooperation between India-Bangladesh ties?

Read more: [Recent Developments in India-Bangladesh Relations – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the areas of concern between India-Bangladesh ties?

Apart from **Teesta river water issue** the other issues are, **a)** The continued presence of 1.1 million Rohingyas who fled from Myanmar in 2017 has created enormous pressure on the Bangladesh economy and social harmony. So, Bangladesh wants stronger support from India to facilitate their early return to Myanmar, **b)** India’s sensitivity to growing cooperation between Dhaka and Beijing, **c)** Despite India and Bangladesh government’s secular policy, “incidents” against the minority is a cause of worry.

Note: *In the recent meeting, India made an assurance of more material assistance to support Rohingyas’ “safe, sustainable and expeditious return”.*

Read more: [A lot is at stake for India-Bangladesh ties](#)

The cumulative and adverse impact of COVID-19 and the Ukraine war on Bangladesh’s economy is visible by escalating protests, the sharp rise in fuel prices, erosion of foreign currency reserves, and a deepening financial crisis. This might change the present regime during the parliamentary elections in 2023.

But the people should respect the present regime for being “a role model for bilateral and regional cooperation”.

29. [The tedious process of adoption](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The tedious process of adoption**” published in **The Hindu** on **12th September 2022**.

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

Relevance: About adoption procedure in India.

News: From September 1, District Magistrates (DM) have been empowered to give adoption orders instead of courts. All cases pending before courts have to be transferred.

About the recent changes in the adoption procedure

The Parliament passed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021 to amend the Juvenile Justice Act (JJ Act), 2015. The key changes include authorising District Magistrates and Additional District Magistrates to issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the JJ Act by striking out the word “court”.

The amendments to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016 mention, “all the cases pertaining to adoption matters pending before the Court shall stand transferred to the District Magistrate from the date of commencement of these rules.”

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Note: The District Magistrates have also been empowered under the Act to inspect child care institutions as well as evaluate the functioning of child welfare committees, juvenile justice boards, child care institutions etc.

What are the concerns associated with the revised rules?

a) The **Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)** says there are nearly 1,000 adoption cases pending before various courts in the country. Adoption cases already before courts for the past several months will have to be transferred and the **process will have to start afresh, b)** Many believe neither judges, nor DMs are **aware about the change in the JJ Act** leading to confusion in the system and delays, **c)** District Magistrates **don't handle civil matters** that bestow inheritance and succession rights on a child. If these rights are contested when a child turns 18, a **judicial order is far more secure** to ensure the child is not deprived of his or her entitlements.

Must read: [Review of Guardianship and Adoption Laws report: Explained | On guardianship and adoption of minors](#)

What is the adoption procedure in India?

Adoptions in India are governed by two laws — the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 (HAMA) and the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015. Both laws have separate eligibility criteria for adoptive parents.

Adoption under JJ Act: Persons have to register on CARA's portal after which a specialised adoption agency carries out a home study report. After it finds the candidate eligible for adoption, a child declared legally free for adoption is referred to the applicant.

Adoption under HAMA: A “dattaka hom” ceremony or an adoption deed or a court order is sufficient to obtain irrevocable adoption rights. But there are no rules for monitoring adoptions and verifying the sourcing of children and determining whether parents are fit to adopt.

Note: HAMA is a parent-centric law that provides son to the son-less for reasons of succession, inheritance, the continuance of the family name and for funeral rights and later adoption of daughters was incorporated because kanyadaan is considered an important part of dharma in Hindu tradition.

Read more: [Facilitating adoption in India: Finding a home](#)

What are the challenges in adoption in India?

1) There are very few children in CARA's registry (only 2,188 children). This forces many to wait for upto three years to be able to give a family to a child. This allows traffickers to take advantage of loopholes in HAMA, **2)** There is also corruption and trafficking as childcare institutions and NGOs directly give children for adoption.

What should be done to facilitate adoption in India?

Empower CARA to maintain various specialised adoption agencies, a registry of children, and prospective adoptive parents as well as match them before adoption.

India should frame a “child-centric, optional, enabling and gender-just” special adoption law like in other countries.

Read more: [Panel moots district-level survey to bring more children into adoption](#)

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30. [We need civil society engagement in Kashmir](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“We need civil society engagement in Kashmir”** published in **The Hindu** on **12th September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Development process and development industry**

Relevance: **problems associated with killing of Kashmiri Pundits**

News: There has been increase in targeted killing of Kashmiri Pundits in the past six months. This has raised concerns over their right of return of the Kashmiri Pundits as well as the safety of minorities living in the Kashmir.

There are two types of Kashmiri Pundits – a) Migrant and b) Non-Migrant. Migrants were offered government jobs and were given high securities under **return and rehabilitation of Kashmir migrants scheme**. Whereas non-migrants lived on without any state protection.

But now, with the targeted killings of the Kashmiri Pundits, both feel endangered,

What are the solutions to killing of Kashmiri pundits?

There is no top-down solution to returning of Kashmiri pundits. The efforts of individuals and civil society will need to create positive conditions on the ground. Government can only enable the process.

They will have to encourage people to stop blaming each other.

Individuals or communities will have to look within themselves and build courage to acknowledge mistakes and restore trust.

What was the effort taken by Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR)?

Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR) started a Pundit-Muslim dialogue series in 2010.

The participants in this dialogue were public intellectuals and other influential persons.

These dialogues created a social environment that enabled Kashmiri Pundits to take up government postings in the Kashmir.

Participants were sharing individual experiences that were often misunderstood by other community.

Participants pointed out that interdependence was not strange to Kashmir and it was grounded in wider cultures.

The Pundit-Muslim dialogue also saw a series of conversation from both the sides and there were different points of views.

What are the grievances of both sides?

In one such discussion, participants expressed their grievances. For example;

Muslim participants felt the Pundits did not see the struggle of the Muslims in the Valley who faces violence from the system. The Kashmiri Muslim was always portrayed as being misguided and helped by Pakistan.

While, Pundits expressed their anger that Muslims did not protest the Pundit killings not even when the killers claimed them.

The greater responsibility lay with the Muslims as they were the majority.

A respected Kashmiri Pundit public intellectual observed that the Pundit community too had suffered from a lack of leadership.

If any senior leader has taken the issue to Muslims, then the movements Pundits from the valley could have been stopped. They would have guided the Pundits not to sell their property in a hurry.

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What can be further course of action in resolving Kashmiri Pundits dispute?

There is a need of an urgent civil society engagement between communities in Kashmir. This engagement can create confidence, restore trust and strengthen inter-community bonds. It could also enable Pundits to fulfil their dream to return in peace and with dignity.

31. [India-UK ties can ease an Elizabethan burden](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**India-UK ties can ease an Elizabethan burden**” published in **The Live Mint** on **12th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India

News: The article discusses India and UK relations after the demise of Queen Elizabeth II.

India and Britain trade relations exist from the Mughal era.

Even now there is discussion on the trade from the Britain side asking India to cut the duty of 150% on Scotch whisky imports.

U.K. is currently facing serious economic problems and ties with India will be of help for both the countries.

What is the current economic condition of the U.K.?

There is galloping inflation with rise in food prices.

There are problems with the energy supplies after Russia decided to reduce the gas supply.

There is an increase in cost of living with high debt burden.

However, the ties with India and can be useful in improving these situations.

What are the areas of cooperation between India and the U.K.?

India wants easy entry to skilled Indians into the U.K. even though U.K. has dropped tariffs on labor intensive Indian exports.

U.K. wishes India to grant access to British legal services market and lower import barriers to its Scotch and cars.

The other areas of cooperation between the two nations are Indian production of British defence equipment and cooperation in technology (AI and Data exchange).

Both the nations have decided to sign an early-harvest interim agreement by the end of October.

However, there has also been concern in the U.K. over buying Russia’s oil by India in spite of Western sanctions on Russia.

32. [New paradigm: FTAs, multilateral exposure limited to supply chains, governance](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**New paradigm: FTAs, multilateral exposure limited to supply chains, governance**” published in **The Indian Express** on **12th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements

News: India has recently decided to stay away from trade part of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). This decision has come on the backdrop of declining trade in India.

What is IPEF and why has India taken decision to stay away from IPEF?

IPEF has four pillars trade, supply chains, tax and anti-corruption and clean energy.

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It is not like a regular trade agreement as the 14 members are not obligated by all the four pillars even though they are signatories of it.

India has decided to stay away from trade part of the agreement and has joined other three pillars.

What are the other problems with IPEF?

IPEF is being seen as an alternative to Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

America recently decided to stay away from Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and IPEF is led by America.

Therefore, IPEF is being seen as re-establishing America economic existence in the Indo-Pacific.

What are the concerns behind the withdrawal of India from the IPEF?

One of the reasons behind it, is the increase in imports from China.

Second, IPEF also does not incorporate issues such as tariff reduction or reciprocal commitments.

Third, India is looking to find a place in the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP).

Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) is an eleven-member partnership program led by the US that focuses to secure supply chains of critical minerals with an aim to reduce dependency on China.

Fourth, India is also more impacted than other countries when global trade slows down.

For example, the net exports to real GDP growth were at minus 6.2% in April-June 2022-23 even as the country's trade deficit went low to 28.7 billion dollars in August from a record high of 30 billion dollars in the month of July.

Fifth, the trade deficit also remained high in the month of August and there are other concerns coming up in the future.

What are the future concerns for India in trade?

First, the European Union is heading towards recession.

Second, there are shipments being postponed because of the confirmed orders.

Third, inflation in the US has led to lower demand.

Fourth, there are new items added to the negative list of exports such as wheat, steel, and iron pellets. These all worsen the balance of trade situation.

Fifth, there is an estimate from the experts that Current Account Deficit could rise to 3.3 percent of GDP in FY23.

Why staying away from IPEF is not of much concern to India?

Even though India has stayed away from IPEF agreement there are other agreements with which India is looking to move forward.

The agreements are – **a)** trade agreements with UAE and Australia, **b)** a free trade agreement (FTA) with the United Kingdom, and **c)** there are trade talks with Canada going on.

Although exports have been impacted globally there are demands for low-value products which will help India's MSMEs.

This is a positive sign for India in the medium and long term and countries are also moving away from China because it has become costlier and less reliable.

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33. [Disengagement on Line of Actual Control is a welcome start, but normalization of India-China relations is a long way off](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Disengagement on Line of Actual Control is a welcome start, but normalization of India-China relations is a long way off” published in **The Indian Express** on **12th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its neighborhood

News: Recently China and Indian forces has decided to disengage from the Gogra-Hot Springs. This engagement has come after a series of clashes and agreements between the two nations. However, still the bilateral relations between the two countries are declining.

What are reasons for declining bilateral relation between India and China?

China surprise attack to India in April 2020 in LAC was in violation of a range of bilateral agreements negotiated by India and China.

This broke India’s political trust in China that was already weakened by the earlier military crises in the high Himalayas during 2013, 2014, and 2017.

Galwan clashes between the two sides in mid-June 2020 also saw blood shedding for the first time on the Chinese border in five decades.

What steps have been taken by India to counter China?

India has imposed a series of economic measures against China and increased its military engagements in the border.

India has also stated that the “state of the border” reflects the “state of the relationship”.

India has stepped up its security cooperation with America and restored the Quadrilateral forum with Australia, Japan, and the US.

What are the future courses of action that India can take?

India and China will meet at SCO summit in Uzbekistan. There are various points on which India would like to talk to China. They are –

First, a disengagement of the military by pulling the troops on both sides to their peace time locations.

Second, India would also want the resolution of two other points (Depsang plains in the north and the Demchok valley in the south) of conflicts in Ladakh.

However, India faces a great threat from the growing military gap with China and it is hard to return to the border that was once peaceful.

Therefore, India should be open for a political engagement with China in Uzbekistan and lay out clearly India’s terms for the normalization of bilateral relations.

34. [Tokyo-Delhi compact](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Tokyo-Delhi compact**” published in **The Indian Express** on **12th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations.

Relevance– About India-Japan relations.

News- The article explains the outcomes of recently held **2+2 ministerial dialogue** between India and Japan and other important aspects of their relations.

Recently the second **India-Japan 2+2 ministerial dialogue** was held in Tokyo.

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What are other important developments taking place in the context of ministerial dialogue?

There is heightened tension across Taiwan strait where China installed five missiles inside Japan's exclusive economic zone.

There is an increase in the defence budget of Japan to 2% and it is developing counter strike capabilities to tackle emerging threats from China and North Korea.

What are the key outcomes from dialogue?

The Joint Statement reiterates their commitment to a **free and open Indo-Pacific, a rules-based global order that respects sovereignty and territorial integrity** and the **peaceful resolution of disputes**.

A key outcome of this round of talks was the agreement to launch the **Joint Service**

Staff talks between the Japan Joint Staff and the Indian Integrated Defence Staff which enhance their cooperation further build on existing bilateral and multilateral exercises including **"Dharma Guardian", "JIMEX" and "Malabar"** and, an earlier decision to conduct the inaugural India-Japan fighter exercise between the two air forces.

Discussion on the **Ukraine issue**.

They also welcomed Japan's participation for the first time in the **MILAN** multilateral naval exercise.

What are the other aspects of their relationship?

There were two bilateral summits this year-the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to India in March and that of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Japan for the Quad Leaders' Summit in May.

Both are celebrating the 70th anniversary of their relationship.

Modi and Abe laid a strong foundation of the relationship. PM of Japan, Kishida played an important role in developing bilateral ties in his capacity as Foreign Minister between 2012-17.

What are the potential areas of cooperation?

Cooperation in defence equipment and technology, covering areas such as Unmanned Ground Vehicles (UGV) and Robotics, where Japan has considerable strengths.

Another area of potential cooperation is in the manufacturing of drones. Japan's largest drone manufacturer, ACSL, has already established a joint venture in India with Delhi-based Arc Ventures.

The Agreement Concerning Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services (ACSA)

between the Self-Defence Forces of Japan and the armed forces of India signed in

2020 has already been operationalised earlier this year. This paves the way for deeper cooperation between the two militaries.

35. [The Indian education scramble](#)

Source- The post is based on the article **"The Indian education scramble"** published in **The Business Standard** on **12th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issue related to development and management of education, human resources.

Relevance- About our education system.

News- The article explains the issues concerning our education.

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There is debate among educational policymakers about teaching methodology. For example, whether a 10 years old kid must learn Newton law of motion before learning to ride a bicycle.

What are the issues related to our educational system?

First is, It was largely designed by Britishers and had greater emphasis on knowledge as something superior to skills. Regular graduate courses are seen as superior to vocational education. It is in contrast with Germany, where 75 per cent of the people in the 19-24 age group have received formal vocational education whereas in India the corresponding number is merely 5 per percent.

Second is the central role of tuition. While the southern states are slightly lower in, the eastern ones have two-thirds or more school children taking tuition. There is an almost universal belief in India that private tuition is an absolute must to score well in exams. It promotes rote learning.

Third issue is related to exponential growth in edutech startups and large investment going into these ventures.

Fourth issue is the large number of coaching centers for IIT in Kota and UPSC coaching institute.

Fifth issue is related to Artificial intelligence where roughly 80% of research funding in the world is devoted to. There is a possibility that chatbots would replace 90% of jobs currently being done by professionals like doctors, lawyers and physicians, the lifeline of India's middle class.

What are new guidelines in China related to tuition classes?

Recently, China banned private for-profit businesses from offering both online and offline tutoring classes for primary and secondary school students. These guidelines also ban such businesses from offering classes on weekends, holidays, and summer and winter breaks.

36. [Great G20 power, great responsibility](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Great G20 power, great responsibility**” published in **The Hindu** on **13th September 2022**.

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

Relevance: About India's G20 presidency.

News: From December, India will assume the Group of 20 (G20) year-long presidency along with India will also hold the G20 Summit in India in 2023. India will have the opportunity to assume centre stage in proposing and setting the global agenda and discourse.

What are the other International events India participated in or going to participate in?

India participated in **1)** The ‘Senior Officers Meeting’ of the Quad, **2)** India and Japanese counterparts held the second India-Japan ‘2+2’ Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting in Tokyo.

India is also scheduled to attend **1)** The meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Samarkand in Uzbekistan. This will be the first in-person summit of the SCO since the COVID-19 pandemic, **2)** India and China will take up the remaining issues along the LAC when the disengagement at Patrolling Point 15 in Gogra-Hot Springs is completed, **3)** India will also preside as President of the United Nations Security Council for December 2022.

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

Why India's G20 presidency is significant?

Read more: [Heading the G20 and New Delhi's choices](#)

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India can assert its political, economic and intellectual leadership while hosting the G20 presidency.

What India should do as a G20 president?

India will have to perform a delicate balancing act: India have to balance the West, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and G7 partner nations setting the agenda along with the emerging nexus between China and Russia. India might have to address issues that help in bridging the emerging divide in the world order.

India needs to promote specific priorities: India can find a common ground for setting its G20 agenda by addressing issues of global concern. India needs to focus on specific priorities related to domestic and regional issues such as economic recovery, trade and investment, unemployment, patent waivers on diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines.

India should chart a road map for quick global economic recovery, focusing on the supply chain resilience mechanism and stressing on green and digital transformations in the economy and their impact on societal well-being.

India should forge greater cooperation with many G20 members: India should forge greater cooperation with the European Union, the U.K., and Canada especially on realising free trade agreements.

Ensure better and more balanced representation at the G20: India could invite and engage countries from Africa and South America to ensure better and more balanced representation at the G20.

Areas such as technology transfer, greater access to trade for developing countries, addressing debt distress of countries by offering sustainable aid and loan programmes, tackling food and energy prices/security for vulnerable economies etc. could be relevant.

Read more: [Preparing for the presidency – On Assuming G20 Presidency](#)

India will be central in outlining key priority areas and in ensuring that the forum does not remain just a ‘talk shop’ but translates into a ‘walk shop’ in terms of meaningful actions and outcomes. Only this will give credibility to India’s pivotal role in the international community.

37. [Three to tangle: The Pakistan factor should not undermine India’s close security ties with the U.S.](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Three to tangle: The Pakistan factor should not undermine India’s close security ties with the U.S.**” published in **The Hindu** on **13th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.

Relevance: About India-US security ties.

News: Recently, the U.S. decided to refurbish the F-16 fighter fleet of Pakistan. The U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified a possible Foreign Military Sales worth \$450 million for engine, electronic warfare upgrades and spares for Pakistan’s F-16s. The proposed sale does not include any new capabilities, weapons, or munitions. However, this might upset India-US security ties.

Why India is concerned about the US decision to refurbish F-16s?

The F-16 fighter fleet has been the backbone of the Pakistan Air Force since the early 1980s. It was upgraded and replenished periodically. The U.S. administration has maintained that since

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Pakistan is a major non-NATO ally, the defence partnership with Pakistan is a critical component of its global war on terror.

India continuously raised its concerns about the US decision to upgrade and provide more F-16s to Pakistan with U.S. interlocutors. This is because terrorism against India has been Pakistan's state policy for decades. India's apprehensions came true in February 2019. A day after the Balakot air strike conducted by the Indian Air Force, Pakistan deployed its F-16s to target Indian military bases close to the Line of Control.

Note: In 2016, the U.S. Congress stalled the Obama administration's move to give more F-16 fighters to Pakistan.

Read more: [India US 2+2 Dialogue and the Dynamics of India-US relations – Explained, pointwise](#)

About India-US security ties

India and the U.S. have committed to deepening defence and security cooperation.

India and the US have been skilfully managing their differences over Afghanistan, the crisis in Ukraine, and the threat of U.S. sanctions under its [Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act](#).

Read more: [India-US ties key to anchoring Indo-Pacific region](#)

What should be done to improve India-US security ties?

To stay in Afghanistan, the U.S. needed Pakistan; now to stay away from Afghanistan it needs Pakistan even more. But the US should recognise India's concerns are immediate and real.

The U.S. rewarding Pakistan will take out accountability of Pakistan and continue terrorism as a state policy. India and the U.S. need to work together to ensure the spectacular gains made in bilateral ties are preserved and nourished.

38. [India has lost its way in the use of international law](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**India has lost its way in the use of international law**” published in **The Hindu** on **13th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Foreign policy of India.

Relevance: About International law and India's participation.

News: India's Constitution makers saw the value of international law. Article 51 of the Constitution states that the state shall foster respect for international law. But now the Indian policy-makers rarely employ the international law vocabulary.

About India's participation in international law

Ever since India's independence, India asserted its sovereignty and championed the principle of self-determination in international law. India played a key role in organising the first Asian-African Conference at Bandung in 1955, proclaiming that colonialism should “speedily be brought to an end”.

India has **a)** Remained committed to the UN Charter and has always advocated the peaceful settlement of international disputes, **b)** Engaged with international law norms in multiple fields such as human rights, trade, investment, environment, ocean, space, etc. has expanded vastly, **c)** Played an active role in shaping international law on terrorism by proposing a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT), and **d)** Initiated the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to influence international environmental law.

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Read more: [How India has approached customary international law](#)

Why India's low participation in International law is a cause of concern?

Western countries justify their conduct of international relations by embedding them in international law to gain legitimacy for their actions. However, India only makes **marginal articulation of India's national interests internationally**.

For instance, **a)** India's failure to use the international law vocabulary to call out Chinese transgressions of India's sovereignty, **b)** India's statement as part of the right of reply in September 2021 in the United Nations did not once mention 'international law', **c)** Barring a few instances such as suing Pakistan at the International Court of Justice in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case, India has not used international courts to hold Pakistan accountable for its breach of international law, and **d)** India's failed to legally challenge Pakistan's denial of most favoured nation status to India at the World Trade Organization.

All this resulted in India's failure to develop and contribute new international law doctrines, interpretations, and principles that suit its national interests.

Must read: [India should develop its strategy of ethical lawfare by mainstreaming international law lexicon into its diplomatic toolkit](#)

What are the reasons behind India's low participation in International law?

This is because **1)** India's foreign service is heavily populated by generalist diplomats, **2)** The **legal and treaties (L&T) division** of the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** is grossly understaffed. The L&T division has a strength of 13 offices as opposed to an approved strength of 23, **3)** Fragmentation of decision-making in international law with the involvement of several Ministries such as finance, commerce, law, environment, etc, and **4)** The Government has also failed to fund research in international law. This resulted in India's abysmal capacity in international law, and **5)** The MEA funds research centres such as the **Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)**. But the ICWA focuses largely on the study of international relations, not international law, **5) Low performance of Indian Society of International Law (ISIL):** It was supposed to become a centre of excellence for research in international law. Its flagship journal, the Indian Journal of International Law (IJIL), is nowhere close to the top international law journals in the world despite being over 60 years old.

What should be done to improve India's participation in International law?

Fulfil the recommendation of the parliamentary committee: In 2021, the committee recommended that the MEA should establish chairs for research in international law in universities.

India's ambition of punching above its weight in international affairs cannot be accomplished without its investing in international law. So India should invest in them.

39. [Trade aversion](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Trade aversion**" published in **The Business Standard** on **13th September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Important international groupings**

News: India has recently decided to stay away from the trade aspect of Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

The government has argued that there are not clear guidelines and commitments in the areas of labour, environment, and public procurement are still emerging.

This decision of India might affect its long-term economic goals.

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Although India has joined the three pillars of IPEF (supply chains, tax and anti-corruption, and clean energy) but the decision to stay from the trade pillar will weaken its position.

Why are the issues involved with the decision of India to stay away from the trade part of IPEF?

India's decision to stay away from the trade pillar of IPEF could have geopolitical and geoeconomic implications.

First, India is not a member of any mega trade agreement yet. IPEF provided an opportunity for India to build trade partnerships with countries in the region along with the US.

Second, it is possible that India will not be benefitted from supply chain pillar of the IPEF as well. Because trade and supply chains are interconnected and interdependent.

Third, it will also send a message that India has joined QUAD with a narrow focus on geopolitical security and it is not open for broader economic partnership in the region.

Fourth, India might also get isolated in trade and other economic aspect of the forum if India is not active in the IPEF forum. Therefore, it will be difficult for India to stand as an alternative to China in the Indo-Pacific region.

Fifth, the trade conditions of these agreements are making India, uncomfortable. However, these conditions might become a part of bilateral trade negotiations with advanced economies.

What should be course of actions for India?

If India has to become part of the global value chain it should be ready to negotiate and accept the terms of those trading groups.

India's decision to walk out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and now from the IPEF trade component affects its position in bilateral trade talks as well.

Therefore, India's trade policy needs to be fundamentally corrected and appropriate reforms should be carried out.

40. [Gyanvapi order: The law cannot resolve vexed religious issues](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Gyanvapi order: The law cannot resolve vexed religious issues**" published in **The Indian Express** on **13th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

Relevance: governance and issues arising out of it

News: The district judge of Varanasi in *Rakhi Sing & others* has ordered that the petition by the five Hindu women is maintainable under the Civil Procedure Code (CPC) of 1908.

District judge dismissed the mosque committee's objections which were on the grounds that it is barred by the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, the Waqf Act 1995 and the UP Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple Act, 1983.

What is the current ruling of the district court of Varanasi in Gyanvapi mosque?

The judge has noted that the petitioners are seeking neither the conversion of the Gyanvapi mosque into a temple nor making any claim to ownership.

They are merely seeking a right to worship as a civil right.

The deities are being worshipped constantly till 1993 and after 1993 till now once in a year under the regulation of the State of Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, the bar set by the Places of Worship Act 1991 is not applicable.

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The constitutionality of Places of Worship Act, 1991 is currently under review in the Supreme Court.

The court has held that the entry of the property as waqf in the revenue records as per law does not create ownership rights.

The Masjid Anjuman Committee's objections on the maintainability under Order 7, Rule 11 of the CPC have been rejected.

What is the Places of Worship Act, 1991 and judgments associated to it?

It was passed when the Ram temple movement was at its peak.

The intention behind this law was to maintain the religious character of places of worship as it was on August 15, 1947. However, the law exempted the ongoing Babri Masjid dispute from its purview.

The five-judge bench of SC has said that this law promotes secularism which is the basic structure of the Constitution.

The bench also stated that non-retrogression is the fundamental principle of our constitutional law. Further, the court said that historical wrongs cannot be corrected by moving to courts.

Justice D Y Chandrachud has held that the Places of Worship Act, 1991 prohibits the conversion of the place but it does not prohibit ascertainment of the places of worship.

He further said that even the destruction of the deity's property does not change the property's character. The effect is that a temple remains a temple even after demolition.

What can be possible solutions to the Gayanvapi mosque?

A law cannot be a solution to social and religious problems. Laws are constantly changed or repealed. Thus, excessive reliance on Places of Worship Act is not correct.

First, in a court, there is only one winner but there is always room for both parties in arbitration, mediation, and out-of-court settlements. Therefore, a third mediator could be adopted so that both parties get benefits.

Second, Multi-faith prayer rooms are quite common at Western airports therefore it is possible to create a separate room for these women prayers in the mosque.

41. A Setback for Moscow

Source– The post is based on the article “A Setback for Moscow” published in **The Indian Express** on **13th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

News- The article talks about the important development taking place in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and the dimensions of war that India needs to watch closely.

Recently, Russia suffered a serious setback in Ukraine and was pushed back at some fronts by Ukrainian army.

What are the key events that are happening currently in the war?

Ukraine's army has captured some key towns in the northeast of the country that have been under Russian occupation. The latest reports suggest that Ukraine has regained an estimated area of nearly 3,000 sq km.

Russia has formally acknowledged that it has pulled out of a large part of the Kharkiv region and is regrouping for a better defence of its territorial gain in the Donbas region.

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Until now, the consensus was in favor of prolonged stalemate between the two sides. Ukraine's territorial gains in the last few days have made Ukraine's victory a real possibility. Russia is surely losing ground.

What are the dimensions that India needs to have a close watch?

First is the nature of the debate in Moscow. Until now, domestic political environment has been favorable for Putin in Russia. But now, with the setbacks, this attitude of Russian population might change.

Second, Putin will have to recast its military strategy. He has to escalate the offensive to a higher level including the threat to use nuclear weapons. These options carry huge risks.

Third, Russian military setbacks could weaken the Russian **sphere of influence**. Major aim of Putin's Ukraine war is to expand the **Russian zone of influence in Eurasia**.

Fourth, Ukraine gain and sustained US pressure could compel European nations to continue their opposition to war. Putin thought that European dependence on Russian natural gas will make it difficult for Europe to sustain its support for Ukraine.

Fifth, it can alter the nature of China's relations with the US and Russia. It will send **strategic ripples** across Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific. Putin and Xi Jinping announced an **alliance "without limits" and "no forbidden areas"**. Beijing has lent political support to Moscow in the war.

What should be India's strategy?

Until now, India's focus has been on managing the economic consequences of the war in Ukraine and limiting its geopolitical impact on India's security.

The intensive regional summit in Samarkand and the annual session of the UN General Assembly in New York – should give Delhi a close look at the changing dynamics in Ukraine and develop an effective response.

42. [For India, the buzzword now is 'all-alignment'](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"For India, the buzzword now is 'all-alignment'" published in The Hindu on 14th September 2022.**

Syllabus: GS 2 – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Relevance: About India's all alignment policy.

News: In his book the India Way, External Affairs Minister offers a critique of India's traditional policy of "non-alignment". He distinguishes between the "optimistic non-alignment" of the past and the more realistic "multiple engagements of the future".

How India's participation in the SCO summit is a clear signal of India's all-alignment policy?

Next year, India will host the SCO summit, and is expected to invite all members — this includes the Chinese President and Pakistan's Prime Minister. India's engagement with the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan highlights India balances various blocs. For instance,

a) India is a member of SCO and BRICS and also a member of Quad, groups such as the I2U2 (India-Israel-U.S.-UAE), and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

b) India joining the Russian-led 'Vostok' Army Exercises along with China, and plans to host SCO-RATS counterterror exercises. On the other hand, the Indian Air Force took part in the Australian 'Pitch Black' exercises, and the Indian Army is planning exercises with the U.S. (Yudh Abhyas).

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This shows India is the only country that would form the intersection, a part of all of those groupings.

How does India's all alignment policy function within the SCO grouping and what India can do in the upcoming SCO Summit?

India's ties with Russia: India has refused to heed pleas from the U.S. and Europe to endorse resolutions critical of Russia at the United Nations. India often abstained from voting on the Ukraine crisis. Further, India's imports of Russian oil jumped from 0.66 million tonnes in the first quarter to 8.42 million tonnes in the second this year.

In the recent [Eastern Economic Forum](#) meeting, India outlines it wants to further strengthen energy ties, building on the \$16 billion investment Indian public sector units already have in Russian oil and gas fields.

India's ties with China: The two leaders of India and China met 18 times between 2014-2019. But have not spoken directly once since the standoff that began in April 2020 between the Indian Army and the People's Liberation Army (PLA). India-China bilateral ties have come to a virtual standstill on most fronts, with the exception of trade.

During the Doklam conflict, it was a "brush by" meeting between two leaders at the G-20 summit that led to the "breakthrough" in talks. So a similar can happen in the upcoming SCO summit or the G20 Summit.

India's engagement with Iran: The SCO meeting is expected to pitch the Chabahar port terminal India is developing as an important route for trade to Central Asia and Russia.

Further, Iran has asked for India's support with "above ground" equipment and parts for its plans to extend the rail line from the Afghan border outpost to Turkmenistan, the shortest possible route for India. This is in line with India's plan to build a connectivity framework that counters the China-Pakistan-Economic Corridor from Gwadar.

India's engagement with Pakistan: The decision by the Pakistan government in 2019 that no trade with India is possible without a reversal of India's Article 370 moves in Jammu and Kashmir has ended formal communication between both the countries.

With Pakistan reeling from massive floods, an economic crisis, and growing worries of an unstable Afghanistan Pakistan might look for a way to hold a conversation with India.

All this shows India fights for its unique brand of multi-alignment or "all-alignment" with partners worldwide, without having to choose between them.

[43. The solution to India's stunted improvement on the Human Development Index: Improving access to quality education](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**The solution to India's stunted improvement on the Human Development Index: Improving access to quality education**" published in **The Indian Express** on 14th September 2022.

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

News: United Nation Development Program (UNDP) has released the Human Development Index (HDI) report for 2022.

HDI report involves four indicators with three dimensions — per capita income, health (life expectancy) and education (average and expected years of schooling).

What are the findings of Human Development Index at the global level?

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The annual rate of progress in HDI which had gone up from 0.7 per cent in the Nineties to 0.8 in the next decade has now declined to half that level during 2010-21.

Higher achievements were recorded by medium and low HDI countries.

The worst affected are Latin America and Caribbean regions whose growth has slumped to 0.3 per cent during 2010-21.

Why are the concerns for India associated with findings of the reports?

The performance of India has declined in various categories in comparison to other developing countries for the last decade. The **global HDI rank of India** has slipped from 129 in 2019 to 131 in 2020 and to 132 in 2021-22.

India's performance in all three dimension of HDI 2021-22 is lower than 2019. Whereas, in other very-high, high, medium and low HDI countries the decrease is found only in health index.

India's per capita income in terms of Purchasing Power Parity has gone down by 5 per cent compared to a 2 per cent increase for the developing countries during 2019 and 2021-22.

The **decline in life expectancy** is sharper for India than for developing countries.

There is a **sharp fall in the expected years of schooling** and there is also high inequality in different dimensions of development.

Inequality: According to inequality-adjusted HDI figures, India's rank has gone down from the 132nd to 134th position. This inequality is higher than the average figures for other countries.

However, India has seen decline in health and education inequalities compared to other low and medium HDI countries.

Health inequality: India's rank in health inequality has improved during 2010-21 which is better than other low and medium HDI countries.

Still, the inequalities in health and education are more than twice that of the very high and high HDI countries.

Therefore, **access to quality education** is must for determining the focus of the country's development strategy as it moves towards a 10 trillion dollar economy.

What are the issues associated with findings of the HDI report?

There is a doubt on the calculation methods and data used by UNDP for finding HDI.

We cannot come to the exact conclusion until the robustness of the data used is confirmed.

Therefore, there is an urgency of conducting the population Census and regular national surveys in India.

44. [On India opting out of IPEF: India must actively pursue trade agreements, not only bilateral ones but also plurilateral pacts](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "On India opting out of IPEF: India must actively pursue trade agreements, not only bilateral ones but also plurilateral pacts" published in **The Indian Express** on 14th September 2022.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India

News: India has recently decided to stay away from the trade pillar of Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

India also decided to opt out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in 2019.

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The decision of India from staying away from such multi-trade agreements may be a concern to its trade development.

What is Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)

Read More about [IPEF](#)

IPEF offers member countries the option to not participate in all of the given pillars.

Therefore, India has joined the other three pillars (supply chains, tax and anti-corruption and clean energy) and stayed away from the trade pillar.

Why has India decided to stay away from the trade pillar of IPEF?

The government has said that there are several areas of concern such as labor to environmental standards, digital trade, and public procurement.

Further, the terms of the agreements and the benefits that the member countries will get, are also not clear.

These are important concerns however these important concerns should not prevent India to stay away from the trade pillar of the IPEF.

These term and can also be sought in other bilateral agreements.

What are the challenges involved with India staying away from trade component?

This decision of India to opt out of the trade pillar has come at a time when the global economic environment is uncertain and challenging.

The International Monetary Fund has **lowered its forecast for global growth and world trade in goods and services** this year. The issue is low demand and tightening policy of central banks to tackle increasing inflation. This slowdown in trade has already become visible in India's trade statistics.

The export growth of India slowed down after the country witnessed unexpected exports growth in the first quarter of 2021-22.

What can be the course of action?

India must take part in the trade agreement of both bilateral and multilateral. It will help in improving trade and exports of the nation.

45. [India at 100 should be a society where gender is not used as a tool to exclude](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**India at 100 should be a society where gender is not used as a tool to exclude**” published in **The Indian Express** on **14th September 2022**.

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

News: The article discusses the problems associated with Trans-genders and steps taken by the government to resolve them.

What steps have been taken by government and court for the welfare of Trans-gender community?

Court

The **NALSA vs Union of India** judgment of 2014 gave equal rights to the transgender community.

It talked about the self-determination of gender, prevention of discrimination in all spheres of life and spoke about positive action for the community.

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The **Madras High Court** in a series of judgments has issued orders for reforming queerphobic curricula, banning conversion therapy, issuing a glossary for trans-sensitive media reporting, among others.

Government

The Transgender Persons Protection of Rights Act was enacted and its rules were notified in 2019. It led to the **formation of National Council for Transgender Persons** for the first time.

The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the nodal ministry** for the welfare of transgender persons. It launched social measures like a National Portal for application for Transgender ID cards, the SMILE scheme, etc.

The recent one is **Ayushman Bharat TG Plus card** that provides health insurance for transgender persons including gender-affirming care.

However, all these measures are not enough to improve the condition of trans-gender community and there is still a lot to be done.

What problems are still faced by the trans-gender community?

The Transgender Persons Act and Rules don't provide for a reservation which was directed in the NALSA judgment.

Many states and UTs have not yet notified rules, or created separate washroom for trans-persons, among others.

Only 2 percent of transgender persons have been issued transgender ID cards which makes them eligible for various social schemes.

Transgender Welfare Boards have also not been constituted in many states and UTs.

The government has also opposed same-sex marriages and abstained from voting at the UN on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Laws on reproductive health have excluded trans and queers from committing surrogacy, availing artificial reproductive techniques or seeking a legal abortion.

These all show that there is a lot more to be done and India should transform itself from gender biased state towards a gender inclusive state.

How should India move forward in recognizing other genders?

India should not continue excluding a section of society for the way they are born even after 75 years of our Independence.

India should have a society where gender is not used as a tool to exclude, discriminate or harass.

It should be a nation where transgender people are sitting in Parliament or in the assemblies and shaping their destiny.

46. [India's great anaemia mystery](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“India's great anaemia mystery”** published in **The Indian Express** on **14th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Development and management of health

News- The article explains the increase in prevalence of anaemia among women and children despite improvement in other health indicators.

The prevalence of anaemia among women has increased from 53% in 2015 to 57% in 2019-20. Similarly, the percentage of anaemic children has increased from 58% in 2015 to 67% in 2019-20.

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How WHO defines anaemia?

Anemia is a condition where the number of red blood cells or the hemoglobin concentration within them is lower than normal.

What could be the probable reason behind it?

Cereal-centric diets, with relatively less consumption of iron-rich food groups. However, there is increase in children and women consuming iron dense food from NFHS-4 to NFHS-5. The children consuming an adequate diet has increased from 9.6 percent to 11.3 percent from NFHS-4 to NFHS-5.

Poor water quality and sanitation conditions. Sanitation coverage of households has increased from 48.5 percent to 70.2 percent. Households with access to improved drinking water sources improved from 94.4 percent to 95.9 per cent.

Delivery of health and nutritional interventions. Women's consumption of folic acid during pregnancy and access to ante-natal check-ups has improved over the last five years

Women's empowerment is another factor. But women empowerment has increased during this period

Why does the data on anaemia seem anomalous?

Several factors that are responsible for anaemia have improved since NFHS-4.

All other major undernutrition outcomes like stunting, wasting and underweight have improved over the past four to five years.

How to properly understand the reason behind the increase in anaemia?

There is a need to go beyond haemoglobin and look for some other iron-specific biomarkers, like serum ferritin and marker of inflammation. It will identify the role of iron deficiency as a driver of anaemia.

Measurement of anaemia should account for non-iron nutritional deficiencies like that of vitamin B12. There is a need for screening for genetic blood disorders, like thalassemia and sickle-cell anaemia.

The NFHS data must be expanded on food consumption to estimate the intake of various micronutrients. We need to compare it against recommended intake.

47. [Cloudy prospects for India's youth](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Cloudy prospects for India's youth**" published in **The Business Standard** on **15th September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Population and associated issues**

News: India's population is still young with about 55 percent below 30 and over a quarter below 15. However, now it is becoming visible that this dividend is not available for long.

India's billion-strong working age populations have an enormous potential for jobs and economic growth.

However, successive governments have not been able to utilize this potential due to wrong or weak policies and programs. An extremely complex and anti-job-creating maze of labor laws and regulations is prevalent.

What does the data say?

According to **World Bank** data –

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1. The **employment rate** is defined as number of employed divided by the population in the corresponding age category.
2. The employment rate for the 15-24 age groups was 23.2 per cent in India in 2020. It is very low compared to 50.6 per cent in North America, 38.9 per cent in Pakistan and 35.3 per cent in Bangladesh.
3. **The employment rate** for the 15-24 categories had fallen in India from 43.4 per cent in 1994 and 40.5 per cent in 2005 to 23.2 per cent in 2020.

According to the **National Statistical Office (NSO) and Periodic Labour Force Surveys** data, there is a sharp rise in the rate of open unemployment among youth from 5-6 per cent in 2004-05 and 2011-12 to 17-18 per cent in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

The employment rate of women is even poorer. **For example**, the employment rate for female youth had declined from 34.9 per cent in 2004-05 to 13.5 per cent in 2017-18.

Furthermore, the **rate of open unemployment among urban female youth** nearly doubled to 27.2 per cent by 2017-18 from 14.9 per cent in 2004-05.

The data on unemployment shows a declining scenario similarly the data on state education systems in the government schools are also not good.

Annual Survey of Education Reports (ASER) produced by the Pratham Education Foundation focuses on the education of the younger children only.

According to this report –

4. The result for government schools in 2008 was 53.1 per cent but it has fallen down to 44.2 per cent by 2018.
5. This shows that half of the children are not able to pass in the basic tests.
6. The success ratio for basic numeracy for class 5 students dropped from a 34.4 per cent in 2008 to a disastrous 22.7 per cent in 2018.
7. The success ratio for even standard 7 children was only 40 per cent dropped from 65 per cent in 2008.

These data varies across different states.

It is the time for government to come up with policies and proper measures to ensure proper education and employment to its growing population.

48. [The party's over](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The party's over**” published in **The Business Standard** on **15th September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Indian Polity – Electoral Reforms**

News: The Election Commission (EC) has recently moved to delist 86 unrecognized political parties and declare 253 inactive.

This step is appreciated as it will alert future parties before registering just for some gains.

Why is the importance of this step taken by EC?

First, many of these parties are suspected to have been set up to round-trip black money. Therefore, their removal cuts out one source of money laundering.

Second, delisting or inactivating dormant parties prevents the crowding out of the electoral space by non-serious parties.

Third, some parties register with EC for only some benefits.

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For example, candidates belonging to political parties registered by the EC get preference in terms of allotment of free symbols that cannot be used by any other political party in elections across India.

What are the benefits available for recognized national or state political party?

First, recognized state and national parties get two sets of electoral rolls free of cost from the EC. Each candidate contesting general elections also gets a free copy of the electoral rolls.

Second, national parties receive land and buildings from the government to establish their party offices.

Third, national parties can have up to 40 star campaigners and state parties up to 20. The travel and other expenses of such campaigners are not included in the election expenditure of the party's individual candidates.

Fifth, candidates of national parties get free time slots on national and state television and radio.

Sixth, all registered parties whether recognized or not are fully exempted from income tax of received donations, income from property, and other capital gains.

What can be further course of action?

EC should continuously review the state of a large number of political parties that are not actively participating in the democratic process.

Strict scrutiny from EC will discourage people from forming political parties only to take tax concessions and financial gains.

49. [Examining the Dolo scandal](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Examining the Dolo scandal**" published in **The Hindu** on **15th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Government policies for various sectors

News: Recently, a controversy came up regarding the marketing strategies of Micro Labs which is a Bengaluru-based pharmaceutical company.

Micro Labs is the maker of Dolo-650. It was charged of having bribed medical doctors with freebies worth ₹1,000 crore in one year to promote Dolo-650.

Dolo is a paracetamol tablet to help with fever and mild pain.

What are the problems with paracetamol markets In India?

The paracetamol API is mostly imported from China. There has been an upward pricing pressure because of the difficulty of ensuring regular supply from China.

Paracetamols markets in India are full of competitors.

Therefore, The Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO) has established ceiling prices for over 850 medicines which include the brands of paracetamol.

It makes it difficult for pharma companies to offer freebies to doctors in paracetamol marketing.

Still, Micro Labs took this challenge of offering Rs 1000 crore for the promotion of Dolo.

What could be the reason for offering freebies for the marketing of Dolo?

There may be two reasons for offering freebies –

8. To increase higher sales at low margins in order to make the valuation look better.
9. For building their brands by higher over-the-counter sales.

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However, there might be other reasons for giving freebies as well.

What steps have been taken by the government to stop freebies for doctors?

The **Uniform Code of Pharmaceuticals Marketing Practices of 2015** prohibits gifts, payments and hospitality benefits to doctors by the medical representatives. However, this code has been fully voluntary since 2015 and there is no enforcement mechanism.

The **Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance** is meant to enforce the code has also given a clean chit to Micro Labs.

Further, the **Income Tax Act, 1961** disallows deductions for payments to doctors and the tax deducted at source (TDS) is applicable for all payments made to doctors.

The **Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002** also prohibits the disbursement of gifts. It may also lead to cancellation of license if found guilty.

What can be the further course of action?

First, prescriptions should be written without brand names. It should be made the normal practice.

Doctors will then have no incentive to promote particular brands. Pharmaceutical companies also will have no incentive to give freebies to doctors.

Second, there should be a flat dispensing fee in place of incentives for pharmacists. It will prevent pharmacists from recommending a brand name.

50. [The future of old times in India](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The future of old times in India**” published in **The Hindu** on **15th September 2022**.

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

News: India has showed remarkable improvements in life expectancy and fertility rate. But it has brought another emerging challenge of ageing population in India.

India needs to take effort and rebuild its social security scheme to ensure a decent quality of life for the elderly in the near future.

What are the problems with ageing population of India?

According to **National Commission of Population**, share of the elderly (persons aged 60 years and above) in India’s population was close to 9% in 2011 and it is growing fast and may reach 18% by 2036.

According to a recent survey, 30% to 50% of elderly people had symptoms that make them depressed. A large majority of elderly persons living alone are women, especially widows.

Depression is strongly correlated with poverty, poor health, and loneliness.

Cash in the form pension can help to cope with many health issues and avoid loneliness as well.

That is why old-age pensions are a vital part of social security systems around the world.

What steps have been taken by India for its ageing population?

India has important schemes of non-contributory pensions under the **National Social Assistance Program (NSAP)** for the elderly, widowed women and disabled persons.

However, NSAP is only available to elderly people who belong to Below Poverty Line (BPL). The data of BPL lists are also unreliable as they are too old.

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The central contribution to old-age pensions under NSAP is very low at Rs 200 per month for elders and Rs 300 per month for widows since 2006.

However, many states have increased the coverage of social-security pensions beyond NSAP norms using their own funds and schemes.

One of the reasons behind the low coverage of NSAP is that it is based on targets.

What are the problems with targeting or setting limits on social benefits?

Targeting social benefits is always difficult and is based on household rather than on the individuals. It needs to be corrected because there are many good households where elders and widows may face problems.

Therefore, a pension based on individuals can help them to avoid extreme dependence on relatives.

Targeting also involves complicated formalities such as the submission of BPL certificates and other documents.

These formalities often become problems for less-educated and low-income elders.

There are also other issues with NSAP such as lack of proper awareness, eligibility criteria, lack of implementing mechanism and bureaucratic wills.

What can be done to correct this?

A better approach should be to consider all widows and elderly or disabled persons as eligible.

The eligibility can be made self-declared and time-bound verification responsibilities should be placed on the local administration or gram panchayat.

India's social assistance schemes have low budgets and these needs expanding.

For example, the NSAP budget this year was less than 0.05% of India's GDP which is very low compared to the elderly population.

Some states like Odisha and Rajasthan have achieved a near-universal social security pension which is 75%-80% coverage of elderly and widows.

Therefore, other states may also follow this if central government takes efforts to rebuild NSAP.

What can be the further course of action?

India should move from targeted to near-universal pensions as some states have done it.

Social security pension will not be alone sufficient for the elderly as they also need other facilities like health care, disability aids, assistance with daily tasks, etc.

Therefore, the government should research and find possible solutions for its ageing population.

51. [What unites India and the UK on trade isn't all positive](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**What unites India and the UK on trade isn't all positive**” published in **Live Mint** on **15th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations.

Relevance– About trade.

News- The article explains the economic challenges faced by Britain and similarity with India on the trade front.

What are the challenges faced by Britain?

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Britain is facing economic questions like peak inflation rate, high energy bills, higher interest rates.

On political fronts there are increasing calls for a referendum in Scotland. A bill is about to pass in Parliament that seeks to make unilateral arrangements on goods moving between Britain and Northern Ireland, instead of negotiating these disagreements with the EU.

The new PM Truss commitment to cancel a corporate tax hike that would take effect from April 2023. This will impact the fiscal revenue.

The UK had been steadily losing ground to its European partners in terms of both productivity increases and income growth.

According to The Resolution Foundation, the UK performed worse than most European countries from 2007 to 2018 on household spendings with only households in Greece and Cyprus seeing less growth. Incomes rose by 34 percent in France and 27 percent in Germany Compared to the UK.

What is the similarity between India and the UK?

Britain has exited the biggest trade union. India also opted out from RCEP and is seeking clarification before it joins the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.

The UK has fallen behind most of Europe. India is also lagging behind East Asia in per capita income and human development metrics.

Both the UK and India are led by bureaucrats and politicians with a weak understanding of regional supply chains and how essential they are to boosting exports.

52. Parliamentary business and an essential pit stop

Source: The post is based on the article “**Parliamentary business and an essential pit stop**” published in **The Hindu** on **16th September 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committees (DRSC).

News: The recently concluded monsoon session was adjourned sine die. Parliament had only limited legislative time this session and could pass only five pieces of legislation and referred two bills to the Standing Committee. The Lok Sabha’s productivity was 47% and the Rajya Sabha’s productivity was only 42%.

What are Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committees (DRSC)?

Read here: [Departmentally Related Standing Committees \(DRSCs\)](#)

What is the status of DRSC?

The percentage of Bills having been referred to the DRSCs during the tenures of the 14th (2004-2009), 15th (2009-2014) and 16th Lok Sabhas (2014-2019) has been 60%, 71% and 27%, respectively.

Why does the government have to refer the Bill to DRSCs?

The examination of the Bills by the parliamentary committees is more to the benefit of the Government than the Opposition. This is because **a)** The deliberations in these committees mostly add value to the content of the legislation as the Members discuss the provisions of the bill irrespective of their party positions, **b)** Committee members from both the ruling side and the opposition side have some sort of ownership of the bill as they examine the bill, **c)** As in most of

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these committees, the government has a majority and the final decision is always by the process of majority voting.

The Bills which are not being referred to the parliamentary committees are considered **a)** Not examined properly, especially from the perspective of consumers and stakeholders. For instance, the three Farm Bills were passed without being referred to the DRSC and had to be withdrawn later, **b)** Remain just a bureaucratically conceived piece of legislation.

Read more: [The issues faced by MPs in India in initiating reforms on their own and measures for their empowerment](#)

What should be done?

The following changes could be suggested to be made into procedures meant for consideration of Bills.

Compulsory reference of Bills: The process of reference of Bills to these committees compulsory/an automatic process. The Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha have powers to refer Bills to a DRSC of Parliament. An exemption could be made with the specific approval of the Speaker/Chairman after detailed reasons for the same.

Ensure frank and free discussions in DRSCs: During the discussions of the committee meetings, no whip of the party would apply to them.

Fixed timeline for DRSCs to come up with the recommendation and present its report: In case the committee fails to give its recommendation within the approved/extended time, the Bill may be put up before the House concerned directly.

Ensure quality work in the committee: Experts in the field may be invited who could bring with them the necessary domain knowledge and also help introduce the latest developments and trends in that field from worldwide.

Organise committee meetings for discussions between two sessions: It is important for the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs to conduct committee meetings between two sessions to critically analyse the bill within the desired timeframe.

More power to discuss budget proposals: The committees should not limit themselves to discussing just the budget proposals and endorsing them with a few qualifications or amendments. They should come up with suggestions for the Ministry to take up new initiatives and people-friendly measures.

Read more: [The working of DRSCs with suitable examples](#)

53. [The Eastern Economic Forum and India's balancing act](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The Eastern Economic Forum and India's balancing act**” published in **The Hindu** on **16th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India.

Relevance: About Eastern Economic Forum (EEF).

News: Recently, Russia hosted the seventh Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) Vladivostok. The [Prime Minister of India has virtually addressed](#) the Plenary Session.

What is the Eastern Economic Forum?

Read here: [Eastern Economic Forum\(EEF\)](#)

The primary objective of the EEF is to increase the Foreign Direct Investments in the RFE.

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What is the significance of Russia's Far East (RFE)?

The primary objective of the EEF is to increase the Foreign Direct Investments in the RFE. This is because, **a)** The region encompasses one-third of Russia's territory and is **rich with natural resources** such as fish, oil, natural gas, wood, diamonds and other minerals, **b)** The region has a **sparse population** the EEF aims to encourage people to move and work in the Far East. Despite the abundance and availability of materials, procuring and supplying them is an issue due to the unavailability of personnel, **c)** RFE is **geographically placed at a strategic location**. The region is acting as a gateway into Asia. The Russian government has strategically developed the region with fast modernisation of cities that aims of connecting Russia to the Asian trading routes.

Who are the major actors in the Forum? What are their interests?

This year, the Forum aimed at connecting the Far East with the Asia Pacific region.

China: China is promoting the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative and the Polar Sea Route in Russia's Far East (RFE). China's investments in the region account for 90% of the total investments. China is also looking to develop its Heilongjiang province which connects with the RFE.

Russia and China: Russia has been welcoming Chinese investments since 2015. The Trans-Siberian Railway has further helped Russia and China in advancing trade ties.

Both Russia and China share a 4000-kilometre-long border, which enables them to tap into each other's resources with some infrastructural assistance.

South Korea: South Korea has invested in shipbuilding projects, manufacturing of electrical equipment, gas-liquefying plants, agricultural production and fisheries. In 2017, Korea along with the Far East Development Fund announced their intention to inject \$2 billion into the RFE in a span of three years.

Japan: Japan identified eight areas of economic cooperation and pushed private businesses to invest in the development of the RFE. Japan seeks to depend on Russian oil and gas resources. Japan also sees a market for its agro-technologies which have the potential to flourish in the RFE.

The trade ties between Japan and Russia are hindered by the Kuril Islands dispute as they are claimed by both countries.

India: India is keen to deepen its cooperation in energy, pharmaceuticals, maritime connectivity, healthcare, tourism, the diamond industry and the Arctic. In 2019, India also offered a \$1 billion line of credit to develop infrastructure in the RFE. Through the EEF, India aims to establish a strong inter-state interaction with Russia.

Read more: [Explained: Why the Eastern Economic Forum matters for India](#)

What is Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)?

Read here: [IPEF: Indo-Pacific Economic Framework – Explained, pointwise](#)

The IPEF also presents an ideal opportunity for India to act in the region, without being part of the China-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership or other regional groupings like the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Can India balance between the EEF and the IPEF?

India has vested interests in both forums and has worked towards balancing its involvement. India understands the benefits of being involved in the development of the RFE but India also perceives the IPEF as a vital platform to strengthen its presence in the Indo-Pacific region.

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54. [After BCCI vs Supreme Court, it's back to status quo](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**After BCCI vs Supreme Court, it's back to status quo**” published in the **Indian Express** on **16th September 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the recent amendment to BCCI Constitution.

News: Recently, the Supreme Court approved the amendments proposed to the BCCI constitution to give office bearers longer terms.

What are the recent modifications done by the court to BCCI Constitution?

Read here: [BCCI office-bearers can have two terms before cool-off period](#)

What are the concerns associated with the recent judgement?

1) The original 2016 SC order, based on the Justice RM Lodha committee recommendations, wanted the office-bearers to take a mandatory break after every three-year term. According to Justice RM Lodha, the “cooling off period clause” was “the most important pillar of our report as far as governance and structure of BCCI is concerned” to check monopolies and enforce antitrust regulations.

But, with the current judgement, the office-bearers can remain in a state body and the BCCI together for an unbroken stint of 12 years.

2) There have been three different cooling-off periods — three, six and 12 years — in three SC orders since 2016. FIFA's ultimatum to ban Indian football because of recent court interference might make the judges sceptical about wading into sporting arenas.

3) State units continued to be run as private fiefdoms, and cricketing controversies didn't quite end. For instance, Six years later, the original order of the Supreme Court hadn't gotten implemented by the BCCI.

Must read: [SC alters Lodha's BCCI proposals](#)

55. [Abraham Accords have led to greater regional cooperation, expanding opportunities for India](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Abraham Accords have led to greater regional cooperation, expanding opportunities for India**” published in **The Indian Express** on **16th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

Relevance: bilateral relations

News: It has been two years of Abraham Accords. It has helped not only the member nations but has also provided various benefits to India as well.

The article discusses those benefits and highlights the importance of Abraham Accords.

What is Abraham Accord and what are its benefits?

It is collaboration among Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain brokered by the US.

It aims towards normalisation of ties by bringing Israel closer to the Gulf nations and taking forward the peace initiative.

The benefits of this agreement continue to grow, which can be seen by the deepening people-to-people ties and business opportunities.

New joint ventures are also being undertaken in critical sectors such as clean energy, health, innovation, etc.

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It has also worked towards academic collaborations between universities, promoting cultural exchange in the arts field and raising awareness about the shared histories and heritage.

How Abraham Accords has helped India?

Regional connectivity: Abraham Accords has improved the regional connectivity between the member countries. This regional connectivity has also helped Indians.

- For example, the Indian diaspora in the Gulf can now fly directly from the UAE to Israel or from Israel to Bahrain.

Economic opportunities: The Accords have provided for greater regional and multinational cooperation between companies from the UAE, Israel, Bahrain and the United States with the Indian private sector.

Group formation: The Accords has helped in the formation of the I2U2 Group. This group is established by Israel, India, the UAE, and the United States.

What is I2U2 and its benefits?

I2U2 focuses on joint investments in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security between the member countries.

The member countries will try to mobilize private sector capital and expertise to help modernise infrastructure, decarbonise industries, etc. in India.

I2U2 combines the strengths and resources of each member country to find innovative solutions to rising global challenges.

It will also serve as a model for multilateral cooperation with other like-minded countries.

56. [Climate action that runs on cooperative federalism](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Climate action that runs on cooperative federalism**” published in **The Hindu** on **16th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

News: India has decided to buy 5,450 buses with an ambitious target to have 50,000 e-buses on the country’s roads by 2030. It shows India’s efforts towards climate goals.

Rapid electrification is a key pillar of India’s public transportation. This pillar has a potential to reduce India’s pollution and it’s import bill.

What is the current situation of state buses and the problems associated with them?

There are currently around 1,40,000 registered public buses on India’s roads.

Around 40,000 of these buses are at the end of their lifespan and their operation must be immediately stopped.

Most of the buses are owned by State transport undertakings and all these are in poor financial condition.

These buses run in losses due to the subsidised fares. State Transport undertakings pay high prices when they buy the buses in the market.

Furthermore, there are limitations to nation-wide laws on the issue of state governments control on transport, urban governance and pollution control.

However, cooperative federalism can play an important role in tackling these issues.

How cooperative federalism has helped in the decision to buy buses?

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Grand Challenge 1 is a great example of cooperative federalism. Under Grand Challenge 1, a unified tender for 5,450 buses (across five major Indian cities — Kolkata, Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Surat) was issued.

This is for the 1st time that a unified tender to address the challenging issue of climate change, has been issued.

Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL), a nodal agency of the Union government in collaboration with State-led demand and customisation acted as the programme manager in this effort of centralised procurement.

This coordination among central and state governments led to the finding of the low price required to operate the buses.

For example, on a cost-per-kilometre basis, the prices discovered were 40% lower than diesel and 34% less than CNG (without factoring in the subsidy through FAME-II).

What is FAME?

What led to the success of this unified tender?

This change in unified tender was enabled by three key factors a) collaboration, b) pace, and c) transparency.

First, the tender was a fully consultative process. The different contributions by participants helped in influencing the design of future tenders also.

Second, there was a sense of climate urgency that shaped this collaboration.

Third, transparency was the strongest aspect of this tender. There was clarity about the intention to build trust and build a publicly available process that invited bids from automakers and operators.

Therefore, excessive centralization can have limitations and contradict the federal principles enshrined in the Constitution.

How decentralization decision can help in improving the climate conditions?

Indian states and districts vary vastly in their vulnerability to climate impacts.

Decentralized decision-making and locally-led adaptation will help reduce possible damage to lives and livelihoods.

Urban local bodies and gram panchayats can be the heart of climate action and they can be consulted in the decision making process.

However, centralised procurement and programme management can deliver huge transformations in certain areas. Because, states lack size and financial power for electrification of mass mobility.

Although a good start has been made still much work remains to be done to enable the electrification of mass mobility in India.

What can be the further course of action?

The country's shift to clean public transportation will require a range of efforts.

First, it will require increasing the manufacturing capacity of domestic battery production, building out charging infrastructure among others.

Second, effort on cooperative federalism can play an important role to fulfil the ambitious targets for green and inclusive economic development in India.

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57. [A Tale Of American Gullibility And Pakistani Deceit](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**A Tale Of American Gullibility And Pakistani Deceit**” published in **The Times of India** on **16th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

News– The article explains the sale of US military weapons to Pakistan and changing dynamics of US-Pakistan relationship.

Recently the US decided to provide a sustenance package for the Pakistan F-16 fleet. It announced foreign military sales to Pakistan worth \$450 million.

What are the reasons given by US for military sale?

According to the USA, military sales support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the US. It provides interoperability in counterterrorism efforts. It will not alter the basic military balance in the region”.

After Pakistan was designated a **Major Non-Nato Ally** to secure its cooperation on global war on terror, USA sold 36 F-16 in 2006.

Why Trump presidency Changed the US policy?

Trump’s administration accused Pakistan of providing “**safe haven to terrorists**”.

It lashed out at Pakistan for its “**lies and deceit**”.

US suspended \$900 million in aid to Pakistan and froze \$225 million foreign military sale for 2017. It demanded decisive action against groups, including Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network.

In the backdrop of the Balakot incident, the US warned Pakistan about the use of F-16.

Pakistan has a proven record of the misuse of US military equipment against India.

What are the changing dynamics of Pakistan relations with the USA and China?

China has replaced the US as the primary strategic partner of choice for Pakistan.

China accounted for 53% of Pakistan’s arms imports between 2002-21 as compared to 20% from the US.

Washington thinks that military sales to Pakistan do not alter the power balance in the region.

The US image in Pakistan is deteriorating. Imran Khan accused USA hand in his ouster.

What is the strategy of Pakistan?

Pakistan army is concerned about deepening strategic partnership between USA and India. It is trying to improve its relationship with USA.

58. [Strategic autonomy: India’s membership of SCO serves its interests and is not at odds with its other alliances](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Strategic autonomy: India’s membership of SCO serves its interests and is not at odds with its other alliances**” published in **The Times of India** on **16th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Regional and global grouping

Relevance– About SCO

News–The article explains the relevance of SCO for India.

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PM Modi is attending the 22nd summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

What are some facts about SCO?

SCO accounts for 40% of the global population and 30% of GDP.

Majority of SCO members have a pronounced anti-western position.

What is its significance for India and what are the limitations?

SCO is important from the perspective of India's **strategic autonomy**. For example, during the Ukraine crisis, we imported crude oil from both US and Russia.

SCO is a reminder of **pragmatism in foreign policy** that we can have an economic relationship with adversaries. For example, both Japan and Australia, despite being members of Quad, have close economic integration with China.

What are the limitations?

Gains from SCO will be limited on account of China. Given the structural nature of disputes between them, bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the summit will not be successful.

59. [A Civilisational Diplomacy](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “A Civilisational Diplomacy” published in **The Indian Express** on **16th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations.

Relevance– About Foreign policy of India.

News– The article explains the foreign policy choices of India and changing Chinese opinion about our foreign policy.

PM Modi and President Xi Jinping are meeting for the first time in the post-Covid world, at the 22nd Council of Heads of State of the SCO

What is the changing Chinese opinion about foreign policy of India?

The visible change in Chinese public opinion about India is due to **India's principled stand** on the Ukraine crisis and assertion of an **independent foreign policy**.

The Chinese strategic community views Modi as being politically astute in pursuing India's national interests by **balancing relations with major powers**.

Chinese social media voices draw attention to India using media platforms alongside **official diplomacy** to convey Indian viewpoints, and expose the fallacy in the Western arguments.

Many in China also believe that Beijing should have pursued a similar **balanced approach** to the Ukraine conflict.

India's stance on Ukraine has generated a positive mood in China that may help resolve the on-going disputes between India and China.

What are the foreign policy choices of present government?

As per present government policies, both Russia and China are **civilisational states**. Complete weakening of either of them may have implications for India's external security. This view stems from the weakening **Asian civilisation** against western dominance.

What are the implications of these foreign policy choices?

Due to foreign policy choices, India can have good relations with both Russia and China despite both having different world outlook.

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This outlook has enabled India to have a **prudent diplomatic approach**. It denies the charges of India going very close to western powers.

60. [How Supreme Court can redeem itself in India's 65-year battle against electoral corruption](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**How Supreme Court can redeem itself in India's 65-year battle against electoral corruption**” published in **The Print** on **17th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Salient features of representation of people act.

Relevance– About electoral bonds

News– The article explains electoral bonds.

The roots of all political corruption lie in electoral funding. In 2017, electoral Bonds were legalised with the Union Budget taking effect.

The Supreme Court is going to hear this matter very soon.

What is the Supreme Court stand?

In 2019, SC passed an interim order. The interim order was indecisive. Since then, there has been a delay of three and half years in hearing the case.

In his interim order, SC observed that there should be some transparency. They asked political parties to submit the details of donation through these electoral bonds to the Election Commission in a sealed envelope.

How does it work?

A donor goes to the State Bank of India. He buys the electoral equivalent of a bearer cheque or bond. These are given away to the party of their choice. The party would deposit it into a designated bank account

What arguments were given in favour of electoral bonds?

The Union Finance Minister during its introduction conceded that it was a partial reform. It was the first step to resolve the issue of black money in electoral funding.

The parties have incentives in buying electoral bonds through electoral bonds as they were tax-exempt.

What are the issues with electoral bonds?

It brings **anonymity** to electoral funding. It takes away the voters' right to know the source of electoral funding.

Parties make policies in favour of persons purchasing electoral bonds rather than voters who put their faith in these parties.

61. [Eat and learn](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Eat and learn**” published in **The Hindu** on **17th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population

News: Recently, the Tamil Nadu government has come with **free breakfast scheme** for schoolchildren.

This scheme will take care of hunger, the calorific requirements, and energy and micronutrient requirements of the children.

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This breakfast scheme is important for the children as there are many benefits of the breakfast.

What are the benefits of the breakfast for children?

Studies show that there are many benefits of eating breakfast regularly. They are –

5. It improves the student's affecting ability to focus, learn and retain information positively. This leads to the improvement of the performance in the schools.
6. A regular breakfast also takes care of the diet quality like micronutrient sufficiency, anaemia and height and weight issues in children among others.

What can be the further course of action?

Pilferage, poor quality of food, delays in sanctioning funds, and caste-related disruptions should be avoided.

Other states can also learn from Tamil Nadu to enact the free breakfast scheme to ensure the growth and development of the children.

62. [SCO meet highlighted flux in Eurasia; Delhi must help push new connectivity initiatives with region](#)

Source– The post is based on the following articles

“SCO meet highlighted flux in Eurasia; Delhi must help push new connectivity initiatives with region” published in the **Indian Express** on **19th September 2022**.

“Era of war is over” published in **The Hindu** on **19th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Relevance– About SCO Summit

News: Recently, the summit of the [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation](#) in Samarkand concluded with India taking over as chair of the regional forum.

What are the key highlights from the summit?

Read here: [Samarkand Declaration and the SCO Summit](#)

What are the challenges associated with SCO?

1) New lines of fracture within SCO: There is growing unease among the SCO member states at the continuing conflict in Ukraine. Many states, especially the former republics of the Soviet Union, are deeply worried about Russia doing a “Ukraine” on them. So these republics are looking to establish other partnerships, especially with China, Turkey, and India to enhance their strategic autonomy.

2) Lack of direct connectivity with India: India's ability to contribute to peace and prosperity in Eurasia is hampered due to a lack of direct connectivity to the region.

Read more: [The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its stature in the modern world](#)

What should India do as an SCO chair?

a) Despite the tensions, India needs to ensure the participation of all SCO members including China and Pakistan, **b) Improve the connectivity with the Eurasian region:** India must push through new connectivity initiatives with Eurasia. The entry of Iran into the forum opens the door for greater connectivity, **c)** On terrorism, India will have to ensure the SCO walks the talk on building a new consolidated list of terrorist groups.

India will also have to balance its ties, especially as the polarisation between the U.S.-EU coalition and a Russia-China-led combine continues to grow.

63. [Geopolitics without geoeconomics, a fool's errand](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Geopolitics without geoeconomics, a fool's errand**” published in **The Hindu** on **19th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Relevance: Importance of geo-economics for India.

News: India has shown a great desire to be a part of the geopolitical developments in the Indo-Pacific. However, the efforts taken by India seem to be insufficient as India requires shifting from geopolitical to geo-economic policy.

What is the current situation of India in geo-economics?

India's focus is still on geopolitical aspects rather than geo-economics while the advanced economies have moved beyond that.

This is evident from India's decision to stay away from the trade pillar of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and walking out of the negotiations of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

Both agreements provided India with a chance to enter geo-economics and improve its economy in the Indo-Pacific region.

However, these examples show that India is interested only in bilateral trade agreements and not in multilateral or plurilateral agreements. For example, the signing of the free trade agreement (FTA) with the UAE and the signing of Early Harvest Agreements with Australia and the United Kingdom.

What will be the potential impacts on India for neglecting geo-economics?

India has shown a lack of geopolitical interest in the Indo-Pacific region by not joining the trade pillar of IPEF and the decision to stay away from the multilateral trade agreement can affect India's interest in multiple ways.

An advantage for China: India's absence from various regional trading platforms will automatically boost China's geo-economic hegemony in Asia. India-China trade has only increased in the past years despite the increasing tension at the border.

There is a fear that China can misuse its increasing trade ties with India for geopolitical gains.

It was also a great opportunity for India to be the part of trade pillar of IPEF and find an alternative to China's trade as it is impossible to completely end trade ties with China.

Hamper's supply chains: It would be hard for India to integrate itself into the regional and global supply chains without being a part of important regional multilateral trading agreements.

Loses business opportunities: Since the U.S. is looking to find an alternative to China's trade there are some businesses that are moving away from China and shifting to countries like Vietnam. These investments or businesses could have shifted to India if India would have joined multilateral trade agreements such as IPEF.

These businesses and investments are important for India's growth.

Hinders maritime security: India is serious about its maritime security, but it cannot only rely on the military for its security. This also requires involving other countries in Indo-Pacific to create economic stakes in India as it is already done by China.

India's Act East policy will go back to its earlier form – Look East if it does not create economic stakes with other nations.

India has FTA with the ASEAN countries but it is equally important for India to become part of trading arrangements which have major non-regional states. This would help India to become a major part of the region's supply chains.

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Result in economic isolation of India: If India stayed away from joining regional multilateral trading arrangements then it would be economically isolated.

What can be done to improve India's participation in geo economics?

First, India should rethink its geo-economic preferences if it is serious about enhancing its geopolitical influence in the Indo-Pacific region. There is still an opportunity for India to join the trade pillar of IPEF and it should also think to join RECP.

Second, it can also seek to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). The US have walked out of this agreement and China is seeking to join it.

Third, India can start by joining IPEF and CPTPP which China is not a member.

Fourth, India should also actively show its interest in joining the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP). It is led by US and focuses on securing supply chains of critical minerals.

Fifth, India has cleared that IPEF and QUAD are not military agreements. If they are not military agreements then they can be considered as geo-economic agreements that can also help members to pursue their geo-political interests.

64. [About Prison reforms: What numbers don't tell us](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "What numbers don't tell us" published in **The Hindu** on **19th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Prison reforms

Relevance: problems associated with prisoners and solutions for it.

News: The National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) Prison Statistics India Report highlights that 9,180 prisoners are with mental illness, 150 deaths occurred by suicide, and five prisoners with schizophrenia and epilepsy have died.

The report is alarming and there is a need to look into the condition of the prisoners and find solutions for it.

What are the problems with prisoners in India?

Prisons were considered a place for rehabilitation for prisoners but it has become a place of despair, hopelessness and helplessness for prisoners.

Prisons are overcrowded with the high number of undertrial prisoners (70 percent) than convicts. According to the report of NCRB, more than half of those with mental illness were under trial (58.4% were under trial while 41.3% were convicts).

Deathworthy report on mental health and the death penalty reveals that over 60% of death row prisoners had mental illness and they have not been provided treatment.

India's National Mental Health Policy, 2014 considers prisoners a class of people vulnerable to mental ill-health.

What are the reasons for distress among the prisoners?

First, there might be several reasons for the distress such as loss of liberty, loss of close contact with loved ones, loss of autonomy, etc.

Second, violence and overcrowding is generally associated with imprisonment which is a wrong perspective. This also affects the mental health of the prisoners.

Third, there is a fear among the prisoners of each other, and they also lack trust amongst them. What can be the further course of action?

First, there is a need for reform, rehabilitation or reintegration. These will make prisoners confident in their lives, in their choices and in their ability to take decisions and be responsible and accountable for them. The rehabilitation process should be empathetic and caring instead of violence.

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Second, there is also a need to look at social and structural perspectives of the prisoner's mental health along with medical treatments.

65. [Art of giving and our economic aspirations: To be world class, India's top education institutions need its wealthy to donate generously](#)

Source-The post is based on the article “**Art of giving and our economic aspirations: To be world class, India's top education institutions need its wealthy to donate generously**” published in **The Times of India** on **19th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issues related with management and development of education.

Relevance – Higher education

News-This article explains the need for increasing charitable donations to the education sector. What is the present scenario of philanthropy in India?

Cumulative donations in India have grown sixfold to 14750 crores in five years.

Education is the most favoured sector. It received a donation of 9659 crores.

USA case-Charitable donation was 263 times as compared to India. But its GDP is only 7.2 times of the Indian GDP.

Why is there a need for increasing donations to the Education sector?

The recent budget allocation for IITs was \$1.06 billion.

In comparison to IITs, the expenditure of each of the top 30 Chinese universities was in excess of \$1 billion for each. MIT's annual revenue was \$3.9 billion in 2021.

What IITs and other institutes need to get professional about fund-raising?

There is a need for a dedicated alumni office. It has to be staffed by professionals with fund-raising skills

There is a need for building alumni and donor databases, conducting market surveys and programmes. It is required to approach potential donors through sustained campaigns.

What is the case of IIT Bombay?

IT has established a well-staffed alumni office. The office is charged with engaging the alumni community and donors. Recently IIT Bombay heritage foundation raised over 400 crores from donors. This has to be replicated in other Indian institutions as well.

66. [Can Indian universities and colleges take up the task of producing workers for the knowledge society?](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Can Indian universities and colleges take up the task of producing workers for the knowledge society?**” published in **The Indian Express** on **20th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues related to education

Relevance: problems associated with higher educational institutions and ways to solve the problems.

News: The University Grants Commission has recently notified its guidelines for transforming Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) into autonomous institutions.

This will help to transform colleges to either multidisciplinary universities or degree-awarding autonomous institutions by 2035.

It is based on the objectives of the National Education Policy 2020.

However, this transformation will be not enough for improving the education in HEIs and there is more required.

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What is the current situation of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in India?

According to the **Global employability surveys**, less than 10 Indian institutions are in the top 500.

Another survey states that there are a large number of unemployable graduates.

What are the problems associated with Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in India?

Poor teaching methods that are not in line with the relevant skills required by students for employment.

Higher educational institutions in India are mostly state-funded. Thus, they do not suffer in terms of resources when they hire poor quality faculty or when the selected faculty does not upgrade their skills.

UGC has introduced multiple mechanisms such as grading systems, made financial grants dependent on grades obtained in order to improve the condition of educations in HEIs.

However, due to its non-binding nature, Universities are not prevented from free-riding on the success of other linked universities.

Why is ensuring accountability of HEIs utmost important now?

NEP emphasizes that higher educational institutions should become autonomous. But, there is no mechanism available that can ensure accountability.

However, quasi market accountability is present in the market in the form of competition through the Academic Bank of Credits program, Edtech companies, digital learning providers, employer schemes and industry bodies.

Now the monopoly of traditional institutions over content delivery and acting as quality signaling agencies, is on the decline.

This competition will make institutions accountable to learners for not delivering quality educations. Further, this accountability will make it difficult for universities to ask for funds from the government.

Also, formal institutions of learning blocks the free adaptation of learning due to institutional rigidities due to institutional rigidities.

What should be the course of action?

The mode of appointments of teachers in universities has to be re-examined so that universities recruit the best possible candidates. The mechanism should be made binding. If universities do not follow the guidelines, then proper action should be taken against them.

knowledge creation and upgradation must be made participatory. HEIs must adopt an **“Open-Source strategy”** where they can source expertise from different people or experts.

The UGC’s recent proposal of allowing educational institutions **to hire experts as “Professors of Practice”** is an attempt to rectify this problem.

The recruitment criteria set by HEIs can be made flexible which would **allow lateral entries** to those who have expertise in different fields.

The traditional methods of teaching can be taken out of the curriculum of the institutions and more recent methods should be introduced in its place.

67. [Knowing the killer](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“Knowing the killer”** published in **The Hindu** on **20th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Criminal Justice System in India

News: The article discusses the recent SC judgment on the capital punishment.

What has SC said regarding the judgments on death penalty?

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The Supreme Court has laid down that the **death penalty can be imposed only in the “rarest of rare” cases.**

The nature of offence cannot be made the only criteria to decide the “rarest of rare” category. It should also include the person’s **socio-economic background** and his state of mind.

The latest order of a three-judge Bench has referred the issue to a Constitution Bench which will provide a meaningful opportunity to convicts.

What is the current situation on hearing of the death sentence?

Presently, the problem with the convict is that they are only allowed to speak about mitigating circumstances after conviction.

The prosecution takes advantage of it by describing the extent of the crime and the punishment required for it, at the initial stage.

What more has been said by the Court?

Same day sentencing is upheld by various judgments and SC also said in this regard that a meaningful opportunity has to be given to the convict to present mitigating factors.

Therefore, the Constitution Bench may come up with new guidelines. Under which the trial courts themselves can hold a comprehensive investigation into factors before deciding the punishment.

68. [Market forces could play a role in India water security](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Market forces could play a role in India water security**” published in the **mint** on **20th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Government policies for development in various sectors. GS1- Economic Geography

News– The article explains the need for enhancing water use efficiency in India and the roadmap for achieving this target.

Why has the importance of water security increased?

According to a NITI **Aayog report**, 600 million Indians face extreme water stress.

Water demand for irrigation is expected to grow by 14% by 2025, for domestic needs and double for industrial use.

Water efficiency is low in India. A **Global Water Intelligence study** shows that water loss in India is almost at 50%.

What are the best practices for water use efficiency around the world?

Australia Water Efficiency Labeling and standard scheme– It reduces water consumption by promoting use of technologies and products that save water. Products are given a water efficiency rating.

Singapore Mandatory Water Efficiency Management Practices– Commercial entities are required to submit details of their water consumption and water efficiency plan to concerned government department. With this data, water efficiency benchmarks for different sectors are developed.

What should be the further course of action?

India’s star rating programme for energy efficient products has been a successful initiative.

A **water rating system** needs to be developed to measure water consumption by individuals.

Demand at individual level needs to be monitored. We need to fast-track the installation of water meters.

Customers need to pay for water consumption. Prices need to be higher in water-stressed areas to incentivize the saving of water.

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There is a need to generate political will for introducing market methods of demand and supply. The proposed **National Bureau of Water Use Efficiency** needs to be established. A multi-year coordinated effort between government, customers, and businesses is required.

69. [Supreme Court's basic structure doctrine in a new context](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Supreme Court's basic structure doctrine in a new context**” published in **The Indian Express** on **20th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian Constitution

Relevance– About basic structure doctrine

News– The article explains the evolution of basic structure doctrine. It also provides insights into evolution of judicial viewpoint about constitutional amendments.

What are the constitutional provisions related to amendment in the constitution?

The courts can invalidate any executive order or legislative amendment if it violates the fundamental rights. But the constitution is silent on the court's power to decide about the validity of any constitutional amendment.

What are the major judicial decisions related to amending the power of Parliament?

Shankari prasad vs Union of India– SC denied any limitation on amending power of Parliament.

Sajjan Singh vs State of Rajasthan–SC again denied any limitation.

Kesavananda Bharati case–Parliament can amend each and every article. But it is subjected to the basic structure of the constitution.

The Supreme Court was criticized for exceeding its authority as constitutional adjudicator.

Allahabad High Court (1975)– It invalidated the election of Indira Gandhi from her constituency. She had to resign from the PM post.

39th constitutional amendment (1975)– It provided that no election law made by Parliament would apply to the election of a person appointed as Prime Minister.

Indira Gandhi vs Raj Narain (1975)– It upheld the decision of Allahabad High Court. The court stated that free and fair elections were part of the basic structure.

I.R. Coelho case– Supreme Court upheld the kesavananda Bharati judgement. It gave permanent constitutional validity to basic structure doctrine.

Why has it survived?

The basic structure theory was the response of the court to the experience of the working of India's Constitution during its first 25 years.

It has come to stay more because of political compulsions. Initially for a long period, no single political party in India had secured a two-thirds representation in Parliament.

70. [Non-alignment 2.0 has high a chances of success](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Non-alignment 2.0 has high chance of success**” published in the **mint** on **20th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Bilateral, regional and global grouping

Relevance– About non-alignment policy

News– The article explains India foreign policy of non-alignment. It also explains India principle stand at SCO summit in Samarkand and lessons from our position at Samarkand

How India foreign policy of non-alignment was perceived by other countries?

Western powers looked at **India's policy of non-alignment** with suspicion. The reason was that our economy was closed and Russia was the main supplier of arms.

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On the other hand, Russia did not have any issue with our position of **neutrality** in world affairs. Our tilt towards Russia was India's way to protect our **strategic autonomy in world affairs**. It helped India to protect its national interest.

What was our stand during the SCO summit?

During the SCO summit in Samarkand, Our PM advised Putin that, "today's era is not an era of war.

It was an articulation of the long-held policy of India's **principled stand** in world affairs.

The Western world appreciated our position. But it was not rebuke to Russia.

What are the lessons from the SCO summit?

India should take a cue from its stand at SCO. It should be used by our diplomats at various international forums for consolidating global conviction in India neutrality. Recently India been accused of supporting autocratic regimes by western powers.

Non-alignment as the guiding principle of our foreign policy should be guided by proper sense of what is good for the world. It favours not only India but other countries also.

What are the impacts of western sanctions on Russia?

It has raised energy costs and inflated other prices.

The EU is finding ways to decrease its dependence on Russian gas.

Russia needs external buyers for its crude oil to reduce volatility in oil prices.

India as a bulk buyer due to its foreign policy of non-alignment can purchase Russian oil. But it is a very difficult choice for India.

71. [Why we need to build a framework for global digital governance](#)

Source– The post is based on the article "**Why we need to build a framework for global digital governance**" published in **The Indian Express** on **20th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Science and Technology

Relevance– About digital governance

News– The article explains the need for global cooperation in the field of digital governance.

What is the global example of regulation of internet companies?

The European Union passed **General Data Protection Regulation** to protect the privacy of individuals. It has also enacted **Digital Services and Digital Market Acts**.

In the UK, the **Digital Regulation Cooperation Forum** promotes cooperation between different regulatory authorities like financial, telecom and competition regulators.

Why is there a need for regulation of digital economy?

The big digital platforms have become pervasive. It is not easy to find a digital replacement for them.

Digital platforms have now become our **gateway to the internet**. They are now seen as infrastructure.

What is the scope for global minimum digital governance framework?

Digital platform economy is global. Complete convergence of the regulatory system is not possible. But we can have some kind of deal.

Under the G20, the **International Labour Organisation** has already placed a proposal in the employment working group for digital labour platforms to develop an international governance system determining minimum rights and protections for platform workers.

In area of digital taxation, the **OECD facilitated Base Erosion and Profit Shifting** have arrived at a global solution.

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Bretton wood institutions are being proposed as platforms to regulate **digital money** at an international level.

Another area of potential cooperation is enforcement of **anti-trust provisions** that prevent monopoly. Countries are moving from traditional methods of enforcement.

How will it be useful?

A common minimum digital governance framework can become a win-win situation for both governments as well as internet companies.

It will help in striking a balance between reining in Big Tech versus boosting their digital economy. Companies are also burdened with regulatory requirements of the different countries they operate in. It will ease their regulatory burden.

72. [The hijab case and the essential practices doctrine](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“The hijab case and the essential practices doctrine”** published in **The Hindu** on **20th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS – 2 – Indian Constitution — features, amendments, significant provisions.

Relevance: Supreme Court and religious practices.

News: The Supreme Court of India is presently hearing arguments on the correctness of a Karnataka High Court judgment that upheld the ban on the use of the hijab by students in Karnataka.

What are the decisions of the Karnataka High Court on the Hijab ban?

The Karnataka High Court made three primary findings in its judgment.

1) The use of a hijab is not essential to the practice of Islam. Thus, the right to freedom of religion was not violated, **2)** There exists no substantive right to freedom of expression or privacy inside a classroom. This is because the court believed classrooms are “qualified public spaces” where individual rights must give way to the interests of “general discipline and decorum”, **3)** The ban did not come directly out of the government’s order(GO). The GO only called for a uniform dress code to be prescribed by the State or school management committees. Hence, the law did not discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against Muslim students.

Read more: [Hijab not an essential practice of Islam, rules Karnataka High Court](#)

What are the questions before SC on the hijab ban?

a) Whether Muslim women have been discriminated against the ban or not, **b)** Whether the right to freedom of expression exists within the educational institution or not. If the court confirms that freedom of expression exists within the educational institution then the onus shifts to the State to show that the ban is proportionate and legitimate.

A reversal of any of the three findings made by the High Court ought to result in a nullification of the ban.

Must read: [Karnataka High Court Judgment on Hijab – Explained, pointwise](#)

Can the state intervene in matters connected to religion?

B.R. Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly said, “The religious conceptions in this country are so vast that they cover every aspect of life..... It is not necessary that... laws relating to tenancy or laws relating to succession, should be governed by religion.” In short, he said that the state should be allowed to intervene in matters that are connected to religion but are not intrinsically religious.

In a series of cases, the Court determined whether a practice which was religious in nature was also “essential” to that religion. At present, the state also lawfully interferes in the interests of

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social welfare and reform and courts provide constitutional protection to such laws and regulations.

Read more: [The head and heart of secularism](#)

What are the outcomes of the court's interference in religion?

Over time the Court narrowed the extent of safeguards available to religious customs by directly encroaching on the autonomy of religious groups. This is considered as a violation of the **right to ethical independence**.

Sometimes, the court restricts social justice legislations of government as they are encroachment on religion. For example, in 1962, the Court struck down a Bombay law that prohibited excommunications made by the Dai of the Dawoodi Bohra community

For now, any Court hearing a matter touching upon a matter of faith has the task of acting not merely as an expert on law but also as an expert on religion.

Read more: [Education should be priority, not banning of hijab](#)

73. [For State Of The Nation, Look At States Of The Nation](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"For State Of The Nation, Look At States Of The Nation"** published in **The Times of India** on **21st September 2022**.

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

Relevance: Role of Niti Aayog in Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047.

News: In the Independence Day speech, PM set the tone for a Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047. He also said 'When the states grow India grows.' Niti Aayog, with its mandate to actualise cooperative federalism, is a perfect platform for the national development agenda.

How can Niti Aayog help in making Viksit Bharat?

The medium between states to implement best practices

States have varying capacities in driving transformational and inclusive growth. But Vision 2047 requires strong and agile institutions with an overall development strategy, setting sectoral targets and bringing together technology, enterprise and efficient management for policy formulation and implementation.

Niti Aayog can act as a medium for states to learn from each other through sharing of their best practices. For example,

Project Excel is a Gujarat government initiative to empower women, youth, orphans, minority communities and marginalised groups by promoting entrepreneurship, farm value chain interventions, etc.

The **Farmer Registration and Unified Beneficiary Information System (FRUITS)** facilitates faster and targeted delivery of agriculture-related services to farmers in Karnataka.

Enhancing cooperative federalism

With the help of Niti Aayog, state planning departments can reinvent themselves as State Institutions for Transformation (SIT). SITs would identify critical growth drivers and play a vital role in facilitating stakeholder consultations for focussed efforts that balance sustainable growth with social development while addressing climate concerns.

Such SITs will be key to achieving a medium-term vision of SDG 2030 and a longer-term vision of India@100. For example, Karnataka set up the State Institute for Transforming Karnataka (SITK).

Read more: [NITI Aayog has been instrumental in promoting competitive and cooperative federalism.](#)

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Building State Economic Transformation Unit (SETU)

Niti Aayog has begun a State Support Mission (SSM) that will act as a multidisciplinary ecosystem to amplify the impact of existing programmes and initiate cutting-edge projects to catalyse the development strategies of states. The SSM would also focus on providing strategic insights to collectively achieve India's vision of a \$5 trillion economy.

In this, Niti Aayog would also play a vital role in **a)** Scaling available technologies for the effective delivery of social welfare projects, **b)** Support states in raising resources for infrastructure needs, **c)** Establish monitoring systems to facilitate the transition from outlays to outcomes for major government schemes.

Offers Three-way partnership

IIM or IIT will be designated as a Lead Institution to help scale State Institutions for Transformations (SIT). Thus, it would be a three-way partnership between the state, a Lead Institution, and Niti Aayog, each bringing to the fore their complementing competencies for achieving our larger socio-economic growth objectives.

Read more: [Reforming the NITI Aayog](#)

To help India achieve the PM's vision of becoming an economic superpower, its incredible diversity, demographic dividend and cooperative federalism can play a strategic role. Niti Aayog will play a crucial role in making PM's vision a reality.

74. [Death Penalty](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Life and death: The Supreme Court's initiative to raise the bar on capital punishment is welcome**” published in **The Indian Express** and “**The death penalty must always be under debate**” in the **mint** on **21th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Fundamental rights provided by Indian constitution

Relevance– About death penalty

News– The article explains the judicial position on death sentence. It also provides arguments against death sentence.

What is recent Supreme Court decision on death penalty?

The court decided to frame uniform rules for trial courts while giving death sentences. It asked a five-judge bench to set out norms.

It expressed the need for giving a person convicted of capital offence a meaningful opportunity to argue for **mitigating circumstances**.

It suggested that the court might not only consider the particular context of a crime. It should consider other factors like birth, privileges, psychology, social and educational background of the convict person.

What are arguments against death penalty?

India's criminal justice system faces the issue of discrimination against those belonging to particular caste, religion and class.

A study in 2016 found that 76 per cent of such prisoners belonged to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, other backward classes or religious minorities. Three-fourths were from economically vulnerable sections.

Another 2020 Project 39A study of trial court judgments showed that in Delhi, 60% of death sentences, awarded by trial courts between 2000 and 2013, were converted into acquittals or commutation of sentences by the High Court.

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Sound legal reasoning have not been provided by courts while awarding death sentences. The same study also showed that 72 per cent of all cases where Delhi trial courts awarded the death penalty from 2000 to 2015 cited “**collective conscience of the society**” as an influencing factor. The **2015 Law Commission Report on Death Penalty** recommended abolition of death sentence except in terror-related cases. The report noted the global trend that over 144 countries have either in law or practice abolished the death sentence.

What is the need of the day?

This case is a crucial opportunity to bring consistency into practice. We need to ensure that those facing capital punishment get a fair, humane, and just trial opportunity.

There is a need for a **better-balanced approach** to capital punishment. We need to rethink the wisdom of capital punishment.

75. [Positioning India in a chaotic world](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Positioning India in a chaotic world**” published in **The Hindu** on **21st September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance– India foreign policy

News-The article explains India ‘s new version of non-aligned foreign policy. It also explains the changing geopolitical scenario and the need to re-look at our foreign policy priorities.

What is the new version of non-alignment?

It reflects a desire to be part of two blocs and open association with all.

It represents a **new version of non-alignment** that looks for an **independent path in world affairs**. Rather than **non-alignment of past**, it is **multiple engagements** with others.

During the SCO summit, India advised Russia that it is not an **era of war** but an era of **democracy, dialogue and diplomacy**. He also praised both Russia and Ukraine for evacuation of Indian students. It shows our new version of foreign policy.

A test case will be India’s relation with Iran. Us has threatened to put sanctions on India if it engages with Iran.

In recent times, India foreign policy appears to be passive rather than active. India abstained from voting in the UN on the Ukraine issue. During the crisis in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, India did not engage proactively.

What should be our new strategy in the changed strategic scenario?

India is facing the confluence of new situations and threats, which often interests.

We need to have a re-look at our understanding of regional and international tensions.

We need to have a new paradigm of thought. But we should not completely abandon our past priority of remaining independent of conflicting blocs.

What should be India’s strategy to deal with China?

China represents a near-term threat. We should not think that the relationship will always remain adversarial. We should leave our door open for improvement in the longer term.

We should not overlook the fact that the primary conflict between India and China is **civilizational and not territorial**.

Along with long-term improvement, we should manage relations with China in the near-term in the context of growing Russia-China closeness. We need to manage relationships with both Russia and China.

Why do we need to have a re-look at the nuclear dimension?

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There is a need for reconsideration in the context of the Ukraine-Russia conflict. There are concerns about the possible use of nuclear weapons.

There is growing sophistication of Chinese and Pakistan nuclear forces.

76. [A blow for dignity](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**A blow for dignity**” published in **The Hindu** on **21th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Vulnerable sections

Relevance– About conversion therapy

News– The article explains the prevailing practice of conversion therapy in India and the legal framework to deal with this inhumane practice.

What are steps taken by various bodies to stop the practice of forceful conversion?

Recently Madras High Court in **S. Sushma vs Commissioner of Police** prohibited conversion therapy in Tamil Nadu.

The National Medical Commission directed all State Medical Commissions to ban conversion.

The Supreme Court in **Navtej Singh Johar** decriminalized homosexuality.

What is conversion therapy?

It is a range of dangerous practices that falsely claim to change a person’s sexual orientation.

It consists of diverse methods like counselling, correctional rape, shock therapy and electro-convulsion.

What are the limitations of the existing legal framework?

There is no express provision in Indian law restricting conversion therapy. Only **civil liability** can be attached to doctors, who practice conversion therapy.

Only forceful conversion is considered illegal. It continues to take place through other forms.

What is the way forward?

Our constitution promises **dignity** to every citizen. Practices like conversion therapy denies dignity to an individual.

There is a need for stringent and effective legislation that bans the practice of conversion therapy.

There is a need to put **criminal liability** on persons who indulge in this practice.

Our constitution promises dignity to every citizen. Practices like conversion therapy denies dignity to an individual.

77. [Weighing Quad against SCO](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Weighing Quad against SCO**” published in **The Indian Express** on **21th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance– About India foreign policy

News-The article explains the India Indo-pacific policy. It also explains India having multiple alignment with all major powers to maintain its strategic autonomy.

What is Indo-pacific policy?

China’s aggression and expansionist policies are behind India’s Indo-Pacific stand.

Belt and Road initiative and growing Chinese presence in India neighborhood increased India apprehension.

PM Modi shared his **vision of Indo-Pacific** at Shangri-La dialogue in Singapore in June 2018. He claimed that it includes other nations also who are not part of this geography, but who have a stake in it.

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In the initial stage India was not comfortable with the anti-Chinese stance of the USA. Quad meetings were upgraded to ministerial level only after the Galwan attack in 2020.

What is the current foreign policy of India?

India continues to believe in **plurilateralism**. Along with Quad, it is also a member of SCO. It is also part of two trilaterals, India-Russia-China and India-USA-Japan.

It wants to engage with competing powers like USA, Russia, China at the same time. It supports the **multipolar world**.

India has reservations against past **western hegemony** and **western dominated international order**.

According to S. Jaishankar, the world's norms are imposed by western powers. These norms, institutions and practices are responsible for western domination. These institutions need to be dismantled.

BRICS partners share the same objective with India. They want to dismantle the world order shaped by multilateral institutions set up by western powers. China is challenging western hegemony by changing the narrative through its cultural heritage.

Why does Russia matter to India?

- Dependence on Russia for military reasons. More than two-thirds of its weapon comes from Russia.
- To balance China.

This is the reason for India's participation in the Vostok military exercise.

What will decide the future course of India relations with the west?

- Western sanctions will weaken Russia to such an extent that it will move closer to China. If Russia loses the Ukraine war, China will be the only major non-western power in the region.
- Chinese foreign policy for India will also matter. If China continues to maintain its aggressive behavior against India, India will go closer to Quad than SCO.

78. [Telcos want seven sections of the Telegraph Act 1885 repealed or modified](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "Telcos want seven sections of the Telegraph Act 1885 repealed or modified" published in **The Business Standard** on **21st September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Industries and issues linked to industrial policies**

News: Telecommunications companies (telcos) have petitioned the Union government to repeal and amend certain Sections of the Indian Telegraph Act (ITA) of 1885.

Through the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), telecom operators have identified seven Sections that require repeal/repurposing and strengthening.

Which sections do telecommunication companies want to be repealed or amended?

Section 27: If a telegraph officer transmits any message on which the charge prescribed by the Union government has not been paid, the section provides for imprisonment/fine. Telcos want it to be repealed.

Reason: The section has become irrelevant. Because human intervention is no longer required for transmission, due to technological advancements.

Section 28: Telegraph officer will be held guilty of any misconduct that leads to delay or disruption in the correct transmission of any message.

Reason: This section has become irrelevant because misconduct is governed in accordance with the present employment laws and policies.

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Section 30: It provides for imprisonment/fine or both if a person fraudulently retains, removes, and holds the message without any reason.

Reasons: There is no human intervention so this section becomes irrelevant.

Section 29A: The COAI has asked to recreate this section to address the risk of tower frauds (where documents are forged). Current law imposes a fine of only Rs 50.

Recommendations: COAI has proposed to introduce a minimum penalty of Rs 1 lakh and/or imprisonment of six months for the first offence and Rs 5 lakh and/or imprisonment up to two years for each subsequent offence.

It has also recommended that the offence should be made cognisable and non-bailable.

Section 20: This section deals with offences relating to establishing, maintaining, or working unauthorised telegraph without proper licence or authorisation from the government. Telcos demand that this section should be amended.

Recommendations: They say that the punishment should be made cognisable and non-bailable. Presently it is non-bailable and non-cognisable with a fine which may extend to only Rs 1,000 which make it easy for fraudsters to escape.

Section 23A: this section deals with offences related to intrusion into signal rooms, trespass on the telegraph office or causing obstruction in the services. Telcos want amendment to this section.

Recommendation: The offence should be made non-bailable and cognizable. They have asked that the penalty should be raised to Rs 1 crore per offence. The fine should be paid to the affected telco or telecom licensee.

Currently, such violations only impose a penalty of up to Rs 5,000 and are bailable.

Section 25A: This section covers damages made to all kinds of infrastructure such as optical fibre cable, etc., created by telcos for delivery of their services to customers. Telcos want amendment in this section.

Recommendations: They have recommended that penalty should be increased proportionately to the loss or damage suffered by the telecom service provider/licensee.

Currently, there is a maximum fine of Rs 1000 for such damage.

79. A risky new status quo – On India-China Border Related Issues

Source: The post is based on an article “A risky new status quo” published in **The Hindu** on **21st September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its Neighborhood

News: China and India’s discussion on demilitarization of some conflict points have made a little progress. But it doesn’t mean that the threat is reduced.

China and India have agreed to completely disengage from Patrolling Point 15 (PP15). This will create a demilitarized buffer zone. However, even after demilitarizing India faces many risks.

What are the risks present for India?

Buffer zone: The buffer zone created by demilitarizing reduces India’s ability to patrol its own territory.

The buffer zone and Depsang’s status both suit China’s objectives because they limit India’s military activities near the LAC. This has led to China’s invasion in 2020.

Military Disengagement: Demilitarizing has not led to a diminishing military threat at the border. This is evident from building of permanent military infrastructure from both countries near the border.

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China has left India behind in building roads, helipads, and communications nodes. Therefore, coming to status quo is nearly impossible.

Tension at LAC: China still claims Arunachal Pradesh as its own territory. The growing military build-up of China can increase pressure anywhere at LAC.

There is also the possibility of war between the two nations.

Prioritizing land border: The land border has become the highest priority in India's military competition with China.

India has reassigned one of three Pakistan-facing Strike Corps to the China front along with its newest artillery, fighter jets, and drones to the China border. This has led away India's attention from Indian Ocean region.

Although India has capabilities in the oceanic region such as indigenously-built aircraft carrier, cruise missile-equipped fighters but these were initiated before the border crisis.

The dominating power in Asia will be determined by the dominating forces in the Indian Ocean region. Therefore, India needs to reorganize its priorities.

However, disengagement is still helpful for India.

How the disengagement will be helpful for India?

The disengagement at PP15 has the potential to improve the trap set by China.

This will help India to reduce its focus on military preparedness at the border and work towards long-term military modernization across the Indian Ocean region.

However, prioritizing other issues such as Atmanirbharta in defense industry at the expense of modernization of the military poses a threat to India.

What can be further course of action?

India needs a long-term growth in its capabilities (military, policies, etc.) to face the challenge posed by China in the Indian Ocean region.

This requires a rational strategic assessment and the political will to balance military preparedness with modernisation.

80. [How western media's bias against India can be corrected](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "How western media's bias against India can be corrected" published in **The Indian Express** on **22nd September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

Relevance: Global media and issues associated with it

News: There has been an increase in spreading the wrong information about India by the writers and editors of other countries.

What are the issues with the articles being published?

A report titled "An Analysis of Global Media Coverage of Events in India" has taken an in-depth review of more than 3,000 India-related articles published by global newspapers.

They have found a consistent pattern of emphasizing political controversies in India with sensational headlines.

These include keywords such as hate, fear, violence, riot, mob, Hindu, and Kashmir.

This has led a negative image of India among its readers globally and it also shows that a small controversy in India can lead to an undesired result.

These analyses show that there is an increase in the importance of India in the global news.

The report also found that there has been an increase in the digital readership of these global media.

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For example, the Indian readership of the New York Times increased by 22% while there has been declined in the global readership by 8%. This has been due to the controversial topics written in the newspaper.

Further, global media is looking to India as a topic for its growth and they have also made digital investments in it.

India's significance as a subject of global media interest can rise even further with India assuming the presidency of the G20 this December.

What is the present condition of India in global media and what needs to be done?

The present condition of India shows that India is far from establishing a strong global media voice that can stand at an equal level with the established global media.

Therefore, strong global media is needed to correct the wrong understanding of India democracy and stereotypical perspective of the socio-cultural diversity of India.

81. Ambit of fraternity and wages of oblivion

Source– The **post** is based on the article **“Ambit of fraternity and wages of oblivion”** published in **The Hindu** on **22th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian constitution

News– The article explains the idea of fraternity in India. It also talks about our track record in promoting this ideal.

What is fraternity?

The idea of fraternity is based on the view that people have responsibilities to each other. It was defined after the French Revolution in the saying ‘Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you’.

However, the definition is still vague and the idea of fraternity is not clearly understood. It is generally seen as an emotion rather than a principle.

What is the idea of fraternity provided by the Indian constitution?

According to Ambedkar, the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy.

The practical shape of the ideals was introduced by the **42nd constitutional amendment act**. It introduced fundamental duties. **Article 51A(e)** says that it is the duty of every citizen to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood.

Responsibility for bringing these ideals lies with individuals and not with the State.

According to the Preamble of India, the **dignity of individual and unity of nation** both necessitate fraternity.

What are different shapes of inequality?

It takes different forms. One. On the one hand, there is economic inequality. On the other hand, there is religious, social, and regional inequality.

What were the concerns of our founding fathers?

Primary concerns of our constitution makers were related to integration of units that formed the Indian Republic.

B.R. Ambedkar talks about conditions that are necessary for a successful Working Democracy. These are absence of glaring inequalities; presence of an opposition; equality of law and administration; observance of constitutional morality; avoidance of tyranny of majority over minority; a functioning of moral order in society, and public conscience.

What are the issues that need introspection?

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There is evidence of regional diversity, assertion of linguistic identity and emergence of diverging political orientations.

The role of social and political leaders in promoting fraternity has been dismal.

82. [Approach to death penalty: Why Supreme Court has decided to settle differences among judgments](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Approach to death penalty: Why Supreme Court has decided to settle differences among judgments**” published in **The Indian Express** on **22th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Fundamental rights provided by the Indian constitution

Relevance– Capital Punishment

News– The article explains conflicting judgements about sentencing hearings of the death penalty. It also explains the difference of opinion on whether after conviction for capital punishment there should be a separate hearing on the issue of sentence.

What are the different legal positions?

Section 235 of CrPC– It requires a judge to hear the accused after conviction on the question of sentence, and then pass the sentence.

Bachhan Singh case– Capital punishment will be awarded in the “rarest of the rare” cases. Court also stressed that a separate sentencing hearing would be held for awarding the death sentence.

Mithu vs State of Punjab– Supreme Court reiterated its earlier position on separate sentence hearing.

What are the different rulings on when the separate hearing should take place?

Recent three-judge decisions have ruled that same-day sentencing in capital offences violates the **principles of natural justice**.

A 2020 study by **National Law University**, Delhi found that in 40% of cases in surveyed states, sentencing hearings took place on the same day.

Dattaraya v State of Maharashtra (2020)– Supreme Court commuted the death sentence to life imprisonment on the grounds that an adequate sentencing hearing was not held. Court observed that **Section 235(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure** enables the accused to make an effective representation against the death sentence, by placing mitigating circumstances before the Court. But it has not been done.

What is an adequate sentencing hearing?

It is meaningful, real and effective hearing for the accused before awarding the death sentence. Judiciary is required to consider not just factors that necessitate awarding the highest sentence, but also the mitigating circumstances.

What are some facts related to mitigating circumstances?

In ‘**Manoj & others v. State of Madhya Pradesh**’, the Supreme Court addressed the lack of a legal framework or institutional capacity to handle death penalty sentencing. It acknowledged the **arbitrariness and subjective patterns** in awarding the death sentence.

Death penalty sentence is largely driven by the crime in question and not the circumstances of the accused. For example, the Supreme Court’s 1983 ruling in ‘**Machhi Singh And Others vs The State of Punjab**’ introduced “**collective conscience**” into the capital sentencing framework and laid down five categories.

For further reading- <https://blog.forumias.com/death-penalty/>

83. [A great show: SC allowing live-streaming of constitution bench hearings is a milestone in democratic journey](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**A great show: SC allowing live-streaming of constitution bench hearings is a milestone in democratic journey**” published in **The Times of India** on **22nd September 2022**.

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

Relevance: About live-streaming of constitution bench hearings.

News: Recently SC decided to live-stream constitution bench hearings.

What are the advantages of live-streaming of constitution bench hearings?

It is considered a **milestone in India’s democratic journey** because **a)** Everyone can watch and learn about judicial proceedings, decisions etc. There by increasing transparency and greater access to the justice system, **b)** Creates more interest in crucial matters that define India’s governance, **c)** Create greater accountability for SC judges and lawyers, **d)** Live-streaming is a great enabler for litigants who are unable to attend court, and **e)** It not just increase legal literacy but potentially enhance the public’s continuous engagement with the Constitution and laws.

Positive systemic corrections can be made: A 2017 study by researchers at Northwestern University of archives of the audio proceedings of the US Supreme Court showed that judicial interactions at oral argument are highly gendered, with women being interrupted at disproportionate rates by their male colleagues.

– The US Supreme Court then said that the gendered disruptions identified by the study had been addressed and now Justices ask questions according to seniority instead of interrupting in a random way.

Read more: [Digitisation will ensure speedy, efficient delivery of justice](#)

What are the concerns of live-streaming of constitution bench hearings?

Ex-CJI had termed live-streaming a “double-edged sword.” This is because **a)** Judges might be a frequent target of public ire, or a target of social media trolls, **b)** Publicity-savvy lawyers will probably deploy showmanship even more than they do now, **c)** Some mischievously edited footage of SC proceedings may also appear. This will spread disinformation among the public, and **d)** A 2018 paper that studied the Brazilian Supreme Court concluded that justices behave like politicians when given free television time, they act to maximize their individual exposure.

About the history of live-streaming court proceedings

Top courts globally, for example, the International Criminal Court, the UK Supreme Court, have long allowed live-streaming.

In 2018, India’s SC allowed live-streaming. But nothing happened until the pandemic intervened. Last year, SC released model rules for live-streaming court proceedings. Subsequently, Orissa, Gujarat, Karnataka and some other HCs have shown court proceedings to great effect.

Read more: [SC releases draft model rules for live-streaming and Recording of court proceedings](#)

What should be done in future?

With videoconferencing apps allowing almost glitch-free live-streaming, subordinate courts should also be asked to operate in hybrid mode. This will spare witnesses and litigants from personal appearances and minimise adjournments.

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84. [What should India's FTA agenda be?](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**What should India's FTA agenda be?**” published in the **Business Standard** on **22nd September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Relevance: About India's FTA agenda.

News: A view emerged that free trade agreements (FTAs) had not served India well. But this view is flawed.

In 2012, India signed trade agreements with Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, ASEAN, Japan and South Korea.

After a long gap, India has returned to the FTA negotiating table. Agreements have been signed with the UAE and Australia, and negotiations are at various stages of conclusion with the UK, Canada and the EU.

What are the concerns about India's FTA agenda?

Little effect on India's trade: FTAs accounted for 16% of India's trade in 2000 and 18.5% of it now. However, they are not a disaster for the Indian industry.

Major trading partners remain non-FTA countries: The US, China and the EU are still out of India's FTA agenda.

Withdraw from key FTAs: India withdrew from a key agreement with much of Asia — the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership or RCEP — in 2019. By dropping out of RCEP India has limited its access to Asia, the most dynamic part of the world economy.

Limited goods and services: Indian FTAs are inherently limited, leaving out many of the highest consumption items or imposing extended tariffs with long adjustment periods. On the other hand, ASEAN, China, South Korea and Japan have much wider and deeper FTAs.

Low participation in global value chains (GVCs): By excluding many items from the agreements, India limited the extent of the market and our ability to participate in various supply chains.

Impacts of simplistic thinking: While negotiating, India like exports and dislikes imports. By having this thought, India failed to understand that “a tax on imports is a tax on exports”.

For instance, the auto industry has suppliers that cascade down six tiers, where inefficiencies at any stage make higher tiers less competitive. Indian auto industry claims to be the most competitive location in the world for making small cars. But India argues vigorously against the inclusion of auto sector in FTAs with the UK and EU.

Read more: [New paradigm: FTAs, multilateral exposure limited to supply chains, governance](#)

What should be India's FTA agenda in future?

Sign essential FTAs: India needs FTAs with countries and areas that either matter to India today or will matter in the future. For instance, India should sign FTAs with **a)** Top current export markets such as the US, EU and Bangladesh, **b)** Top future export markets namely, Africa and Latin America, and **c)** Join the newly-minted Indo-Pacific Economic Framework as it provides access to the US, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Vietnam and excludes China.

Expand India's FTA agenda ambition: India should **a) Focus on zero-for-zero agreements:** These agreements usually exclude zero items and often apply zero tariffs in both directions, **b)** India should have **greater confidence in its own capabilities**. For instance, India must include automobiles and auto components in all the FTAs.

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Increase India's competitiveness: India should use FTAs to force competitiveness on firms. Firms, in turn, must force change in areas such as infrastructure, regulation and ease of doing business that reduce competitiveness.

Integrate trade and industrial policy: Production-linked incentive scheme is India's key industrial policy. So, India should ensure all items covered by PLI are explicitly included in every FTA.

Capitalise on China+1 strategy: The world is looking for China+1 supply resilience. So, India should capitalise on that by including not only sectors that India is competitive in now such as white goods, textiles and garments, chemicals and pharmaceuticals but also sectors India can do well in future. This includes sectors such as e-commerce, electric vehicles, and data privacy.

Read more: [Concerns of Indian players should be taken care of while crafting FTAs](#)

85. [Analysing the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan conflict](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "[Analysing the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan conflict](#)" published in **The Hindu** on **23rd September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Important International Developments and their effect on India**

News: The recent clash between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan has killed around 100 people. A ceasefire was agreed which was brokered by Russia.

Both countries have a dispute over the 1,000-km long border.

What are the issues between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan?

One of the reasons behind the clash between the two countries is the border which is present from the Soviet-era. The borders of the two republics were divided under Joseph Stalin's leadership.

Moreover, the creation of the Soviet Union saw the large-scale redistribution of livestock to collective and state farms. The Tajikistan territory saw their livestock increase with scarce grazing land.

Therefore, agreements were signed between the two nations over the utilisation of Kyrgyzstan territory by the Tajikistan's livestock.

However, the collapse of the Soviet Union led the dissolution of the then existing water and land agreements. It created multiple smaller independent farms which led to an increase in water consumption patterns among the farmers of both nations.

Both countries share multiple water channels due to which small scale conflicts occur practically every year during the crucial irrigation period.

There have been regular talks to solve these issues. However, one of the crucial points of disagreement is over the map which should be used for demarcation purposes.

Almost 1000 km of area of border is of dispute between the two nations.

What can be further course of action?

First, the resolution of the conflict will require groups to agree upon a common map.

Second, the international community will have to make efforts to solve the dispute by involving elders in the communities.

Third, the informal small-scale governance mechanisms would also have to be further strengthened through a joint effort by both the countries.

86. How China can be held accountable

Source: The post is based on an article “**How China can be held accountable**” published in **The Indian Express** on **23rd September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its neighborhood

News:

There are around 10 million people forced into mass forced labour and living in internment camps in the western region of Xinjiang in the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

This has led to the human rights issue concerning international importance.

However, there are multiple arguments that have been presented by different parties in the Uyghur’s case.

What is the Uyghur issue?

Chinese government is carrying persecution of Uyghurs in the guise of counter-terrorism and counter-extremism strategies in the Xinjiang region, as per many reports.

There have been credible indications of violations of reproductive rights through the coercive enforcement of family planning policies since 2017.

Why is it difficult to prove the persecution of Uyghurs as a genocide?

Bosnian Genocide case: It is very difficult to prove this allegation as seen from the verdict of International Court of Justice in the Bosnian Genocide case.

Definition of Human Rights Violation: Human rights defenders have argued that detention of an entire ethnic minority in camp-like and slave labour conditions cannot be called a violation of human rights.

Lack of data: United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) also accepted the discriminatory detention of members of Uyghur as crimes against humanity. However, she admitted that “a lack of government data” disabled the OHCHR from concluding violations of reproductive rights. Therefore, she has recommended in her report that the Chinese government should take proper steps to release all those detained in training centres, prisons or detention facilities.

PRC is not a member of the 2002 International Criminal Court treaty (the Rome Treaty). ICC’s jurisdiction over crimes against humanity requires a “nexus to armed conflict”. The crimes during peacetime do not come under its jurisdiction.

What international law actions are possible against China?

The 2019 ICC pre-trial chamber in the Myanmar-Bangladesh case concerning the Rohingyas gives some hope for the Uyghur’s issue. In the case the ICC has said that the Court may exercise jurisdiction over crime when part of the criminal conduct takes place on the territory of a State Party.

Rodney Dixon who presented the Uyghur matter to the ICC has argued that evidence shows that Chinese officials are coming onto Tajikistan territory (ICC party) and targeting, arresting and deporting Uyghurs back into China.

Therefore, those officials should be investigated by ICC and further investigation should be made with the officials of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan regarding Uyghurs.

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87. [Telecom Bill: Innovation-unfriendly provisions must be revised](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Telecom Bill: Innovation-unfriendly provisions must be revised” published in **The Business Standard** on **23rd September 2022**. **Syllabus: GS 2**

Relevance: India Telecommunications Bill and the issues associated with it

News: The draft of India Telecommunications Bill, 2022 was released by the Department of Telecommunications recently.

Telecommunications Bill, 2022 is an attempt to consolidate three outdated laws — the Indian Telegraph Act of 1885, the Wireless Telegraphy Act of 1933, and the Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act of 1950.

What are the provisions in the bill?

The Bill proposes that the default mechanism for spectrum allocation in the telecom sector will be through auction.

It also specifies the limited administrative exceptions to this rule which may include the “backhaul” spectrum necessary for efficient 5G services.

However, there are some unfriendly aspects to the current draft that are not in the national interest.

What are the problems with the draft bill?

First, Over-the-Top (OTT) apps that help in communication are being brought within the ambit of communication services in the Bill.

Second, this may be in response to some telecom firms that have lost a considerable amount of voice revenue to other forms of communication. This is backward-looking.

Third, Data-based calling and communication have replaced old-style voice calling everywhere. Therefore, firms should not seek to recover this lost revenue and the bill should not seek to help them.

Fourth, the provisions to give subjective powers to the government to waive fees, charges and penalties for the consumer’s interest and for fair competition are also puzzling. This should only be done in exceptional circumstances.

What can be the course of action?

It is also unnecessary to weaken the powers and responsibilities of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in the final law.

This would centralise all powers with the government and reduce the checks and balances in the system.

This centralization is not good for the telecom sectors as it provides administrative discretion to bureaucrats and politicians.

However, it is expected that these unfriendly provisions in the bill will be removed in the course of the consultation process.

88. [Managing sports – sports administration in India](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Managing sports**” published in **The Hindu** on **23th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Statutory and regulatory bodies

Relevance– Sports administration in India

News– The article explains the issues faced by sports administration in India and ways to resolve the issue.

What are the issues faced by sports administration in India?

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There are frequent resignations by sports administrators. Recently acting president Olympic Association of India, who assumed charge in July, resigned.

The IOC is complaining that elections are not being held. It will not accept an acting or interim President.

IOC could ban India if elections are not held by December.

Indian athletes will not be able to represent India at sports events if the IOC takes action.

What needs to be done?

Officials across athlete bodies need to accept the **National Sports Development Code** that was introduced by the central government in 2011.

The code puts a limit on tenure and age of sports administration. It stops the capture of sports administration by few people, especially politicians.

The sports administration should make way for new administrators with fresh ideas. It should allow more former international sportspersons in key administrative posts.

89. Indian TV channel's hate speech ecosystem and what the SC gets wrong about it

Source– The post is based on the article **“Indian TV channel's hate speech ecosystem and what the SC gets wrong about it”** published in **The Indian Express** on **23th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian judiciary and fundamental rights.

Relevance– Hate speech

News– The court explains the recent Supreme court intervention to check hate speech on visual media and issues related to court intervention.

What was the Supreme Court observation?

Recently the Supreme Court pulled up visual media for spreading hate speech and the role of anchors during TV debates.

Judges have proposed that guidelines like Vishakha can be put up until the government comes up with a new law.

What are the issues with judicial intervention on hate speech?

The first issue is related to Article 19. The Supreme Court has upheld the primacy of Article 19 and warned against state overreach in Romesh Thappar vs. The State of Madras, 1950 and Shreya Singhal vs. Union of India, 2015 cases. Any overarching law or guidelines to regulate hate speech can violate the letter and spirit of Article 19.

Several IPC provisions meant to check hate speech including Section 153 (A) or 295 (A) are used by the state and its agencies to curb dissent.

The political economy of TV news thrives on hate speech today more than ever. There is little cost to pay for hate speech. There are few incentives for TV at prime time to be fair and accurate.

Judicial intervention is unlikely to work.

90. The cow and the city: How Maldharis challenge Gujarat's ideas of urbanisation

Source– The post is based on the article **“The cow and the city: How Maldharis challenge Gujarat's ideas of urbanisation”** published in **The Indian Express** on **23th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Urbanisation

Relevance– Urbanisation

9 PM Compilation for the Month of September, 2022

News– The article explains the commonly held assumption about urbanisation in India and contradictions that emerges from such type of assumption.

What is the controversy related to the issue of stray cattle?

In April, the Gujarat assembly passed the Cattle Control (Keeping and Movement) in Urban Areas Bill, which requires cattle owners to obtain licences for their animals and restricts their movement on urban roads.

The Maldharis, who own most of the cattle in urban Gujarat, are opposing the bill. The law has been withdrawn due to their opposition.

What was the rationale behind the introduction of such a bill?

Firstly, for the urban middle class, stray cattle are a longstanding problem that obstructs the smooth flow of traffic. It undermines road safety and tarnishes their desired image of a global city.

Secondly, Indian policymakers have been influenced by western notions of urbanisation. It assumes 2 things:

- 1) Urbanisation involves a physical break between the city and the village.
- 2) Urban and the rural are mutually exclusive domains consisting of opposite physical forms. The former is associated with **industrialisation** and the latter is related to **agrarian underdevelopment**.

It entails the dilution of community identity and the weakening of caste and community networks.

91. Semiconductor shortage in Russia: India's Russia Problem Will Grow

Source: The post is based on the article “**India's Russia Problem Will Grow**” published in **The Times of India** on **23rd September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

Relevance: Semiconductor shortage in Russia and India's defence capability.

News: Russia has recently ordered its first mobilisation since World War II to bolster its invasion of Ukraine. This shows that the war is not going according to plan for Moscow. But this will hamper Russia's defence production capabilities and its ties with India.

Why Russia is facing challenges in the Ukraine crisis?

Russia is facing the **inability to access semiconductor chips** for defence platforms. After the Ukraine crisis, the US quickly banned selling semiconductors used in defence systems to Russia. Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, also banned the export of items through the export control list provided by the US. Russia also does not have the infrastructure to manufacture these chips domestically.

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

What are the issues with Russia's present defence production?

Ukraine has put out an alleged shopping list of Russian defence sector desperate to purchase. A US-based media company found **a)** Lack of complexity in Russian equipment that college students majoring in electrical engineering could reverse engineer and build most of the electronics used, **b)** An examination of the remnants of the missiles Russia launched on Ukraine showed the usage of older technology parts with elementary GPS systems. Sometimes Russia even used chips taken out of dishwashers and refrigerators. Old versions of navigation systems used in Russian-guided missiles make them miss their mark.

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

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How military mobilisation and the Russia-Ukraine war will hamper India's defence capabilities? India is the largest importer of Russian weaponry in the world. It is unlikely that the West will remove high-tech sanctions.

This has impacted India's defence capabilities. For instance, **a)** Russia has delayed the delivery of two Talwar-class stealth frigates for up to six months, **b)** There is a short-term delay in the supply of S-400 Triumf missile systems and spares for Kilo-class submarines, MiG-29 fighters and Kamov Mi-17 military transport helicopters.

What Russia can do to improve its semiconductor productivity?

1) Russia could use chips from western manufacturers by indirectly sourcing them, **2)** Russia can approach China and obtain the chips from them.

Read more: [What is the controversial 'Butterfly Mine' Russia has allegedly used in Ukraine?](#)

What India should do to improve its defence capability?

a) India must prepare for a sharp drop in Russia's ability to deliver on defence purchase orders, **b)** Russian technology is dated, and the chips would come from the black market or China. So, India must **1)** Diversify its weaponry in the short term, **2)** Focus on local manufacturing over the long term, and **3)** Utilise partnerships with the US, Japan, Australia, France, and Israel to secure defence equipment and chip supplies.

92. [Food waste: Be part of the solution and not the problem](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Food waste: Be part of the solution and not the problem**" published in the **Livemint** on **23rd September 2022**.

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

Relevance: Food wastage and necessary steps.

News: Almost 2.5 billion tonnes of food produced annually goes unconsumed. On the other hand, about 870 million people globally are undernourished. Growing more food isn't necessary to end world hunger; reducing just 50% of food loss or waste could end it.

What are the various reasons for increasing food wastage?

1) According to a study, only 35% of consumers say they fully understand the difference between terms such as "best before", "consume by" and "expiry date" seen on date labels.

2) Organizations are not paying enough attention to influence the entire food chain to reduce waste. Demand-driven production isn't trickling down the entire food chain. This is because procurement agents and supply chains have very different performance goals.

Overall the cost associated with food waste is around 5.6% of total sales for organizations. Apart from the financial implications, food waste is a significant emitter of greenhouse gases, generating 8-10% of global emissions.

Along with raging food-price inflation and persistently high energy prices, food loss and waste constitute one of the most urgent and intimidating challenges in society.

Read more: [UNEP releases "Food Waste Index Report 2021"](#)

What should be done to reduce food waste?

Engage consumers and employees in managing food waste: The world organisations need to bolster awareness-related initiatives. For instance, Unilever's Use-Up Day campaign aims to cut food waste by one-third by encouraging consumers to use ingredients they already have at least once a week.

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Ensuring comprehensible labelling: There is an urgent need for comprehensive labelling. Companies should also use information technology to promote waste avoidance among consumers.

Collaborate across the entire industry value chain: This can be done by **1)** Building visible, agile and intelligent supply chains to enable transparency and strengthen the collaboration and data exchange with value-chain partners, **2)** Using Internet-of-Things (IoT) solutions in cold chains can help organizations harness data-driven insights, enhance traceability and monitor the quality of perishables, **3)** Boosting local supply chains, **4)** Regionalizing and localizing the supplier base.

Monitor and report food waste-related benchmarks: Organizations need to set food waste reduction goals, establish relevant metrics, track and report progress against them. This will also help in reporting waste volumes and attaching a dollar value to it.

For instance, Sodexo has implemented a data-driven food-waste prevention programme that has already cut the organization's food wastage by around half.

Prevent of food waste occurrence: Organizations at every stage of the food value chain need to manage waste better. Further, technology can also help in tracking and assessing food waste and enabling action at the right time, while enlisting consumers for the task of waste reduction.

Read more: [The overlooked case for food losses and waste](#)

Food waste is everyone's problem. Everyone is part of the food-waste problem and everyone could be part of the solution.

93. [Internal democracy – The ECI is right in rejecting the notion of 'leader for life' in political parties](#)

Source: The post is based on the articles “**Internal democracy – The ECI is right in rejecting the notion of 'leader for life' in political parties**” and “**Should the Election Commission insist on inner-party elections**” published in **The Hindu** on **23rd September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2: Electoral Reforms.

Relevance: About internal democracy of political parties.

News: Recently, a political party in Andhra Pradesh reportedly elected their present leader as their president for life. The ECI says such a step is inherently anti-democratic and rejected the idea of a 'permanent president' for a party.

What is the legal position on conducting internal elections within political parties?

There is no law that mandates elections within political parties. Nothing in **Article 324, section 29A of Representation of People Act, 1951** regulates the internal functioning of parties.

Political parties are nowhere mentioned in the constitution. The definition of political parties was given in **anti-defection law**, for the first time. All rules and regulations apply more to candidates than to political parties in India.

What are the directions of ECI on the internal democracy of political parties?

The commission said that **a)** No individual should be elected leader for life, **b)** Any party that participates in a democratic process, and wants to govern and legislate, should include a formal and periodic election of office-bearers.

Read more: [Issues in Electoral Funding in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

Why ensuring the internal democracy of political parties is challenging?

Nature of political parties in India: For instance, India has **1)** Structured, cadre-based organisations that function towards an ideological goal or a principle. For Example, Bharatiya

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Janata Party, Communist parties, etc. **2)** More loosely structured collections of individuals with different strands of opinion functions within an association that has core ideals. For example, the Congress party, **3)** Some other parties still reflect social or regional cleavages and so on.

Family politics and leader-driven politics: The fragmentation of India's polity into a federalised, multi-party system has also given way to the domination of "charismatic" individuals or their families. These parties' support and financing structures necessitate a centralised control by a single coterie or a family.

So, these parties do not conduct internal elections to secure their leadership. Even if they do, they lack sufficient contestation and only favourite leaders get promoted over the populist leaders. This reaffirms the dominance of the high command.

The election is seen as a zero-sum game: Political parties are reluctant to allow internal contest, fearing that this could foster disunity, as opposed to nomination and consensus-building on leadership.

For example, the election system in U.K. and U.S. are such that it leaves some negative feelings among party members, due to internal contestation, even after the elections.

The ECI lacks statutory power to enforce internal democracy: The ECI has periodically used guidelines issued for the registration of parties under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 to remind parties to conduct elections and to ensure that their leadership is renewed, changed or re-elected every five years. But the commission does not have any statutory power to enforce internal democracy in parties or to mandate elections.

Read more: [Election Commission pushes for electoral reforms](#)

What are different viewpoints about state funding of elections?

Instead of state funding of elections, state funding of political parties can be considered.

Currently, political parties depend on funding from outside sources. The system favours the donors rather than voters. Corporates pressurize the political parties to have their favourable policy regime.

The law commission in its 1999 report also recommended it. The formula of state funding of elections is debatable. One objective criterion is the state providing some money to political parties for each vote polled in their favour.

What are the possible options to ensure the internal democracy of political parties?

ECI could act as a regulator. Rather than having a new law, ECI needs to re-interpret the existing laws.

ECI should try some milder options rather than taking harsh steps like deregistering the political parties.

94. [Why telling Russia to abandon war is in India's interest](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Why telling Russia to abandon war is in India's interest**" published in the **Indian Express** on **24th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

Relevance: Russian war and India's defence capability.

News: Russian President has taken a decision for "partial mobilisation". Russia aims to mobilize as many as 3 lakh reservists — individuals who have completed their mandatory conscript service.

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What does India say to Russia about war?

Recently, the Indian Prime Minister met the Russian President on the margins of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Samarkand in Uzbekistan. He stressed that today's era is not of war, but an era of democracy, diplomacy and dialogue.

Indian PM said, "It is not for revenge against the West, or for opposing the West against the East. It is a collective time for our sovereign equal states to cope together with challenges we face."

Days later, the French President and US National Security Advisor(NSA) supported Modi's comments and asked the Russian President to end the war on Ukraine immediately. The US NSA even said that All countries should follow the principle of the Indian PM.

View of China on the Ukraine crisis: For the first time, China signalled in SCO meeting that it is seeking to distance itself from Russian actions. This might weaken the Russia-China axis, which has been a worry for the West, particularly for India.

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

Why Russia wants mobilisation, and what are the challenges faced by Russian defence production?

Read here: [Semiconductor shortage in Russia: India's Russia Problem Will Grow](#)

US institute of war has said that "partial mobilization...reflected many problems Russia faces in its faltering invasion of Ukraine that Moscow is unlikely to be able to resolve in the coming months". It also predicted that the "mobilization will not deprive Ukraine of the opportunity to liberate more of its occupied territory into and through the winter."

Why does India want Russia to end its war?

India is dependent on Russia for 60 to 70% of its defence requirements, and Russian arms supplies are under severe stress due to war. This resulted in the delay in Russian arms supply to India and Russia started using dated pieces of equipment in Russian devices.

This is a cause of worry for India as India still has "two friction points" along the LAC in eastern Ladakh and a stalemate at Depsang plains and at Charding La nullah in Demchok.

For the third winter, India mobilised about 60,000 troops along the India-China border. So, ending the war in Ukraine is India's high priority as well.

Read more: [What is the controversial 'Butterfly Mine' Russia has allegedly used in Ukraine?](#)

95. [The success of the novel PM SHRI schools scheme will depend on the quality of educators](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**The success of the novel PM SHRI schools scheme will depend on the quality of educators**" published in **The Indian Express** on **24th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to education

Relevance: Goals of PM SHRI scheme and challenges with the Indian education system

News: The goals of [PM SHRI schools](#) are enough to bridge the education gap caused by the pandemic if implemented properly. However, there are also challenges associated with it.

What are the goals of PM SHRI schools and how can they be useful?

PM SHRI schools promise to enclose all aspects of the NEP.

Medium: PM SHRI schools can become a medium to bring change brought by the new education policies (NEP and NCF). These schools will need to find the solution of learning losses caused due to pandemic and ensure fruitful outcomes that can help the nation's economy.

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Mentoring: Every region will have PM SHRI schools that will mentor other schools in their areas. It will also have range of learning experiences, good infrastructure among others.

Teaching methods: These schools will include a variety of pedagogies and assessment systems along with vocational education.

Employment: These schools will provide linkages with counselors and local industry to provide employment opportunities to its students.

Environment friendly: The schools will be energy-efficient with natural farming patches, equipped with rainwater harvesting systems and will enable the study of traditional environment-friendly practices.

Career guidance: Career guidance and mentoring will be provided by the alumni and parents will also be trained to become home mentors.

Community centers: The school will become community centres after the regular hours and converge with existing schemes like PM Poshan, Samagrah Shiksha and Ayushman Bharat. The goals of PM SHRI look encouraging but improving the quality of education is challenging in countries like India that have large socio-economic gaps.

What are the problems associated with the current education system?

First, poor status, low salaries and inadequate working conditions discourage talented people from entering the teaching profession.

Second, there is also lack of investment in high-quality teachers, training and resource materials along with the lack in teacher training schools in India.

Therefore, there is need for teacher training programme to train the educators in the pedagogical practices proposed by the NEP

96. [In 2022, We Get That 1885 Feeling – on draft Telecommunication Bill, 2022](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**In 2022, We Get That 1885 Feeling**” published in **The Times of India** on **24th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

Relevance: **Telecommunication Bill 2022 and problems associated with it.**

News: The government has recently come up with a draft of Telecommunication Bill, 2022.

The draft bills look similar to the colonial Telegraph Act of 1885 and there are many other problems associated with the draft bill

What are the problems associated with the [draft Telecommunication Bill, 2022](#)?

OTT: The provision to include OTT can weaken technical protections available to users. It can even lead to smaller online service providers such as Telegram or Signal not offering services in India.

Further, regulation of OTT platform can lead to the same problem of CERT-In cyber security. It led to the closure of Indian servers by several global VPN providers

SC Judgments: The draft has ignored recent judgment in the domain of privacy protection and freedom of expression.

For example, the first and second **Puttaswamy judgments** required surveillance reform.

It provided disapproval of systems of mass surveillance and the requirement of judicial supervision.

But clause 51 of the bill allows GoI to direct any service provider to provide any information for the arrested person even without any civil or criminal proceedings.

Further, **Shreya Singhal judgment** was related to freedom of expression which provided that there should be disclosure of orders to block website.

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The recent **Anuradha Bhasin judgment** deals with the safeguards for internet shutdowns. Therefore, it seems that the bill has ignored all these judgments related to privacy protection and freedom of expression.

Net Neutrality: There is no mention of net neutrality in the draft bill.

Wordings: The wordings of Clause 53 and clause 24(2) are same as the wording of Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.

What can be the further course of action?

First, the draft focuses only on growth in connectivity and the constitutional objective in the regulation has not been given attention.

Therefore, there is a need to look into the constitutional aspect in the regulation of telecommunication.

Second, there should have been more focus on the democratic quality of connectivity.

97. The Global South's assertion in geopolitics

Source- The post is based on the article **"The Global South's assertion in geopolitics"** published in **The Hindu** on **24th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

News- The article explains the changing international politics. It tells about the strategy of major powers in changing geopolitics. It also explains the global south strategy to maintain its neutrality.

What is the present geopolitical scenario?

Case of USA- The United States wants to maintain its primacy in the international system.

The **US's national security documents** mention its strategic interest. It wants to curb China's rise, weaken Russia's capabilities, maintain good relations with Europe. It also advocates for building satellite alliances with countries which conform to U.S. interests and values.

Case of China- China has emerged as an economic power. It wants to challenge US primacy through building counter institutions like AIIB.

Case of Russia- Russia with its military capability has the capacity to challenge the USA in global politics. Russia aggression against Ukraine is a watershed moment in geopolitics.

It is used by the USA to maintain its primacy in global affairs. Europe is now firmly behind the USA. The increasing **Sino-Russia strategic partnership without limits** is a threat to the west.

Case of global south- The countries of the south especially India and China are being blamed for failing sanctions against Russia.

Southern countries want a quick and peaceful solution to the Ukraine conflict. They oppose the sanctions against Russia.

They are advocating **neutrality**. Their reason for neutrality is their dependence on Russia for oil and energy needs. They also have memories of colonialism and recent interventions such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

What steps are being taken by major powers to maintain their global status?

China is expanding military footprints in Asian countries. It is following **expansionary policy** in the neighbourhood. It is also violating the maritime zone in South China Sea and other water bodies.

The US response against neutrality has been to pressurise the southern countries that are not following the sanction regime. Recently the US Congress passed a bill to punish African countries that engage with Russia.

What is the strategy of Southern countries to maintain neutrality?

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African Foreign Minister, in a press Conference with U.S. Secretary of State said no African country could be bullied and described this U.S. Bill as offensive legislation. She called for diplomacy.

China is waiving debt owed by 17 African countries as India did in 2003.

Stronger countries of the Global South such as India have used their leverage to negotiate with multiple sides. India increased oil purchases from Russia.

It has a military **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)** with the U.S. At the same time, it has developed the **International North-South Transport Corridor** connecting Russia and India via central Asia and Iran with three sanctioned states.

It participates in military exercises such as the **U.S.-led RIMPAC** and **Russian led Vostok** exercises.

The South's choices are extending slowly to geoeconomics. The fear of the U.S. strategy of freezing dollar reserves has made the South cautious. This is leading the South to gradually find ways of bypassing the dollar in bilateral trade by using local currencies. They are using currency swap arrangements.

98. [What ails Indian higher education: Government's licence-permit raj](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**What ails Indian higher education: Government's licence-permit raj**" published in **The Indian Express** on **26th September 2022**.

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

News: **The public institutions have managed to provide quality education to the growing nationals but there are many problems associated with them.**

How did Higher Educational Institutions change?

Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) have changed a lot from before. HEIs were mostly public institutions till 2003. Today, around 70 percent of the students studying higher education enroll themselves in private HEIs, due to the implementation of Mandal Commission report.

What are the problems associated with HEIs?

Vacant posts: Around 30 per cent posts were vacant in central universities and 40 per cent posts were vacant only for professors in December 2021.

There is a worse condition in the state universities. **For example**, 62 per cent posts were vacant in Odisha and two universities had no teachers at all. Around 25 per cent of college posts in Delhi were totally vacant in December 2021.

Appointment: The appointment of faculties goes through a long chain from financial, bureaucratic or judicial hurdles.

Further, temporary and ad hoc professors are burdened with a full-time routine on a fixed salary which is far below normal salary scales. Furthermore, there are regular breaks from their work.

Budget: The discontinuance of Five-Year Plans deprived public universities of their secured development grants.

The budget for central universities rose by 6.6 per cent in the year 2022, which is nominal if adjusted for inflation. While the condition of State HEIs funding is worse.

Originally, the state government used to pay for salaries and maintenance for the universities while central government used to pay for development through UGC.

Today, UGC is not doing the required task as funding schemes are mostly suspended.

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RUSA funds: The Education Ministry administers the Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA). The RUSA funds were not sufficient. It left the universities with incomplete projects and unemployed staff.

Institute of Eminence (IoE): The Institute of Eminence (IoE) status was awarded to Jadavpur and Anna universities. The IoE tag entitles public HEIs to Rs 1,000 crore. But due to various bureaucratic hurdles the award has not yet been given.

Freedom of operation: There are also another channels for resource mobilisation that can be taken by public universities but this requires freedom of operation. But the Centre and state governments are not ready to give this freedom.

It is necessary to give universities freedom of operations as can be seen from the Jadavpur university. It helped the university to get IoE award as well as University with Potential for Excellence award.

[99. How to fix India's broken police forces, CBI and IB](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "How to fix India's broken police forces, CBI and IB" published in **The Indian Express** on **26th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Police Reforms

News: Supreme Court gave Prakash Singh judgment on 22nd September, 2006. This judgment was a landmark judgment that brought police reforms in the country.

This judgment led 22nd September known as Police Reforms Day.

However, Justice Thomas Committee recorded that states have shown— "indifference to the issue of police reforms". The statement depicts the dismal state of police reform implementation.

Why is there a need for the police reforms?

Colonial legacy: The Prime Minister of India has recently called for ending the colonial laws that are still present in India.

The Police Act of 1861 which mostly governs the functioning of police even today is a symbol of colonial rule.

The British followed the Irish model of governance of police. The model enables the executive to have complete authority over the police. It has not been changed even after seven decades of Independence.

Economy: India's economic development can be faster if the country did not have challenges to its internal security.

According to the **Institute for Economics and Peace**, violence cost the country 7 per cent of its GDP in 2020.

Therefore, economic development depends on proper law and order and we can have good law and order only if we have professional police.

Political leaders: There are political leaders in the Parliament that have criminal backgrounds.

According to the **Association of Democratic Reforms**, the percentage of such people was 24 per cent in 2004, 30 per cent in 2009, 34 per cent in 2014 and 43 per cent in the last election held in 2019.

Therefore, it becomes difficult for police to take action against them and people with such backgrounds harms our democratic values.

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Internal security: The police force is unable to deal with the internal security challenges in India.

Internal security challenges in J & K, Maoists problem, insurgencies in North East are present from many years. We do not have a proper internal security doctrine to solve these issues.

Lack of trust: There is a lack of trust on the police especially from lower strata of the society.

This can only change if police are made free from political and financial influences.

Organized crimes: There has been an increase in organized crimes such as arms and drugs trafficking across the borders. Cybercrimes are also increasing.

These crimes require a high level of expertise from the police and it can only be possible if police are made free from political influences.

Lack of infrastructure: There is a lack of infrastructure in the police department which is also one of the reasons for their poor performance.

Infrastructures such as human resources, transport, communications and forensics need improvement.

Poor job and housing conditions: The **National Police Commission** had recommended 100 per cent family accommodation for all non-gazetted police personnel. But the satisfaction level is hardly 31.24 per cent.

According to the **Status of Policing in India Report, 2019**, an average policeman works for 14 hours a day and does not get any weekly off. These all create mental and health problems to police.

Therefore, police should have 12-hour shifts and gradually aim to achieve eight-hour shifts.

Adopting technology: There is a scope for technological adoption in the functioning of the police. Therefore, adopting future technologies in police will help to fulfil grassroots policing requirements and will help in faster functioning of the police.

Statutory provisions: There are various central organizations that need to have statutory support.

For example,

1. CBI was created on the basis of a resolution passed on April 1, 1963. It derives power to investigate from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.
2. The Intelligence Bureau was set up through an administrative order in 1887. It also needs a statutory basis.

100. [Soft power, the new race every country wants to win](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Soft power, the new race every country wants to win**” published in **The Hindu** on **26th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 –

Relevance: India’s performance in sports and challenges associated with it.

News:

Soft power is defined as power of attraction between the countries through culture, political ideas, and policies rather than military powers.

India is heading towards soft power and it can be seen from the gold medal won by Neeraj Chopra in the Olympics. Further, Indian athletes have also won 61 medals including 22 golds at Common Wealth Games (CWG), 2022.

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This can encourage India to become a great geopolitical actor also. However, there is still more to be done by India to improve its status in sports.

How sports have helped in improving soft power of China?

China uses its superiority in sports to build people-to-people relations with other countries. **For example**, athletes from African countries such as Madagascar are trained in swimming, badminton, table tennis, etc. in China.

This helps China to create a positive impact on a wider population which also result in better formal relations between the countries.

However, India has inadequately performed in sports when compared to China.

How has India performed in Olympics and what are the reasons associated with that performance?

Performance: India won seven medals in Tokyo Olympic games which was the highest number of medals won in the history of Olympic games in India.

India has one of the world's poorest population-to-medal ratios in the Olympics. India has won only 35 medals at the Olympics till now.

Reasons: One of the reasons for the poor performance of India is that there is relatively low and little exposure of Indians to sports at the elementary school level.

Competent coach, adequate funding and sports academics are another major issue faced by sports in India.

A Parliamentary report provided that India spends only three paise per day per capita on sports while China spends ₹6.1 per day per capita.

What steps have been taken by the government?

The Ministry of Sports launched the **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)** to improve India's performance at the Olympics and Paralympics in 2014.

This scheme helps in extra monetary assistance and training from the best national and international coaches.

However, there are other highlights of the report which shows that India needs to improve its sports in becoming a soft power.

What does different report highlight?

NITI Aayog report came up with a **20-point plan** to improve India's Olympics performance in 2016.

- The report highlighted that India lacks a favorable atmosphere for sports to enhance the skills of early-stage athletes.
- It recommended that efforts should be made at the family, community to school, regional academies, State and national levels to improve things.

The **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** has claimed that the digital viewers of Tokyo Olympic Games increased by 74 per cent from the viewers of Rio 2016.

- This shows that there is a great opportunity for India to use such events as a platform to enhance its soft power.

What steps can be further taken by India to increase the country's sporting performance and soft power?

First, India should concentrate on forming MoUs with nations that excel in specific sports. The aim should be to train Indian players overseas.

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- **For example**, Australia and the United Kingdom can assist us in swimming while African countries can assist in running.

Second, TOPS has showed that focusing on a few sports is beneficial for India to enhance its sporting abilities and standing.

- India should increase the number of athletes under TOPS and at least 500 athletes should be trained to promote a competitive climate.

Third, private investment needs to be used to develop infrastructure.

- The Government should also work on a public-private partnership (PPP) model to create basic sporting infrastructure at the district level which is recommended by NITI Aayog,

Fourth, the Government must also separate politics from sports. Former players rather than politicians should be chosen to lead sports organisations.

101. [Over the top – on Telecommunication Bill 2022](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Over the top**” published in **The Hindu** on **26th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Fundamental Rights

Relevance: Telecommunication Bill 2022 and problems associated with it.

News: The draft telecommunication Bill provides for new definition for telecommunication.

The new definition includes everything from broadcasting services to electronic mail, from voice mail to voice, video and data communication services, and that the Government may notify separately.

However, bringing these services under regulation will be a threat to user’s privacy and data security.

What are the privacy related issues associated with the bill?

SC has said that right to privacy is a fundamental right. But the draft bill has failed to acknowledge it. This can be seen from the various provisions of the drafts.

For example,

3. The Government has the powers to prevent a message from being transmitted on the occurrence of any public emergency or in the interest of public safety.
4. Another clause in the draft Bill requires a license entity to provide information of the person to whom it provides services.

A similar clause under the IT rules was brought in last year.

It required messaging apps to enable the identification of the first originator of the information on its computer resource. However, it has been challenged in the Court.

It brings us to the question of whether this is technically possible without breaking encryption and making all communications vulnerable.

These provisions in the absence of data protection law may create problems for the people.

Therefore, the Government needs to upgrade its thinking on users and privacy and this draft needs to be dropped.

102. [Reformed multilateralism](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**A ground plan for India’s reformed multilateralism**” published in **The Hindu** and “**A renewed multilateralism**” in the **Business Standard** on **26th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance– About multilateralism

News– The article explains the need for “**reformed multilateralism**”. It tells the importance of having multilateral institutions. It also explains India’s effort for reformed multilateralism.

United Nations General Assembly meetings are going to take place this month.

The other important events that are taking place next month are the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Washington and the Conference of the Parties on climate change in Egypt. In November, the G20 summit is being held in Indonesia.

These events are important from the perspective of India’s agenda of “**reformed multilateralism**”.

What is “reformed multilateralism”?

It calls for reforms in the UNSC. It should be a more inclusive organization that shows contemporary global realities.

It calls for reforming institutions of global governance. They should incorporate institutional accountability and be more representative of developing countries.

What are the weaknesses shown by UN led multilateralism?

COVID19– It shows the weakness of UN led multilateralism. Countries closed their borders and supply chains were disrupted. Vaccines were available to a few countries.

Ukraine war– It has not been successful in preventing wars. Russia-Ukraine conflict is a recent example.

China rise– Its rise and aggression in South China shows the limitation of UN-multilateralism. China’s growing dominance and increasing isolation of Russia and Iran could lead to Chinese led multilateral institutions that excludes west.

China’s control of multilateral organizations is only increasing. The most recent example is the unofficial pressure China exerted on the former UN’s human rights chief. It wanted to stop the release of a report by the UN Human Rights Council on the condition of Uyghurs in China.

What are the major global areas that requires multilateralism?

Digital transition– It will affect all sectors of the global economy, including manufacturing, and will largely determine the future global distribution of taxes, profits, and wages.

Some countries will seek to retain their technological edge. The recent example is the US trying to restrict the sharing of microchip technology with Chinese manufacturers.

Different jurisdictions will have different approaches to privacy and internet governance. It is important that the multilateralism of the 21st century focuses on preventing the control over data, technology.

India is proposing a third way between the **private sector-led US model** and the **state-dominated model of the People’s Republic of China**. The Indian approach is to permit domestic digital innovation and profit-making within a structural framework developed by the state. It seeks to ensure equitable access and a level-playing field.

Climate crisis– The multilateral efforts in this field have largely focused on blaming the historical emitters of the west. This is not the right approach.

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There is a need to understand which sectors and companies can handle the threats and opportunities represented associated with global green transitions.

The success for countries across the world on this front will depend on availability of financing for green transition.

Green projects in developing countries suffer from multiple financing constraints. Overall risk appetite for green projects in developing countries is low. Currency fluctuations have kept costs high.

Yet, multilateral development banks have been slow to adapt their lending to this new era. Rather than giving grants to individual governments, MDBs need to start focusing on supporting private investment through new mechanisms.

All the shareholders from the US to China to India agree on the need for such mechanisms. The only opposition is the bureaucrats and management of the MDBs. A recent report to the Indonesian G20 presidency underlined the need to change MDB operating structures in a timely manner.

There is a need for creation of a new green lending-focused multilateral institution.

What are efforts by India for reformed multilateralism?

Mr. Jaishankar's hosting of a ministerial meeting of the G4 (Brazil, India, Germany and Japan)

There is another high-level meeting of the Indian delegation with the L.69 Group for reforming UNSC.

Beyond the UN, India participation in plurilateral meetings of the Quad, IBSA, BRICS, CELAC and other trilateral formats, such as India-France-Australia, India-France-the United Arab Emirates and India-Indonesia-Australia underlines India's search for new frameworks of global governance.

103. [Making criminals of peaceful protesters diminishes Indian democracy](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Making criminals of peaceful protesters diminishes Indian democracy**” published in **The Indian Express** on **26th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Fundamental Rights

Relevance– About right to protest

News– The article explains the shortcomings in new rules framed under **new Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act 2022** . It also explains the reason for the decreasing level of peaceful protest in India.

What are the new rules?

Rules have just been framed for the **new Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act 2022** which allows policemen to record the biometrics of those arrested and even if merely detained. Those arrested for violating Section 144, are exempted, but only if they have no other offence registered against them.

Under the new law, the police can store your biometrics till you are acquitted. But for deleting the biometrics, we need an order from a magistrate.

Why is it a dangerous precedent?

The police have no respect for laws. Section 66A of the IT Act was struck down by the Supreme Court seven years ago. The police continue arresting people under this law.

The police's treatment of peaceful protesters depends on the orders they get and their own prejudices.

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To protest peacefully is a fundamental right in a democracy. Our Constitution guarantees it. The Supreme Court has upheld it more than once. To treat peaceful protesters as criminals is not good for democracy.

What are the reasons for lack of peaceful protest in recent years?

In recent years there were few protest like protests against Dalit scholar Rohith Vemula's suicide in 2016, the kisan long march in Maharashtra in 2018, the anti CAA/NRC protests across cities in 2019-2020, and the farmers' protests in Delhi in 2020-21. However, these were restricted to specific sections.

There has been the criminalisation of peaceful protest. Earlier protesters were let off in a couple of hours, with no charges filed. But now criminal cases have been filed against peaceful protesters.

For those who want to organise silent demonstrations outside designated places, taking police permission is a very hectic task.

There are biases in the system. Only ruling party supporters are given special favour for holding protests.

104. [Could constitutional monarchy crack a democratic conundrum?](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Could constitutional monarchy crack a democratic conundrum?**” published in the **mint** on **27th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian Polity

Relevance– Threats to democracy

News– The article explains the relevance of constitutional monarchy in context of emergence of demagogues across democracies in the world. It also explains the need to be cautious about blind faith on constitutional monarchs for checking demagogues.

What are arguments against constitutional monarchy?

It is an old institution. It has lost its relevance in current times.

Concept of monarchy is against the democratic **principles of equality** and elected head of states.

Monarchy is **ceremonial and symbolic**. It is not very different from **Republicanism**.

It does not enjoy any executive authority and puts a fiscal burden on society.

According to Merriam-Webster, a demagogue is a leader who makes use of popular prejudices and false claims and promises in order to gain power.

What are the arguments in support of constitutional monarchy?

Biggest threat to democracy today comes from **demagogues** and not constitutional monarchs.

Far rights leaders are emerging across the world. They are assuming absolute powers by leveraging the electoral system.

Plato also warned about this weakness of democracy.

The US constitution also recognizes this weakness. It has introduced a system of **checks and balances** and **separation of powers** to guard against demagogues.

Constitutional monarchs enjoys **legitimacy and popularity** among the masses. They can act as a stabilizing role in democracy. They can act as bulwark against demagogues.

What are the arguments against it?

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If people don't find constitutional monarchs useful, they can lose popular support and legitimacy. It will result in abolition of the institution.

Constitutional monarchy may usurp power from Parliament. They can assume absolute powers.

Constitutional monarchy may not be a magical solution. They can act as **institutional bulwark** against threats to democracy.

105. [Samarkand: a miniature of an emerging world](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Samarkand: a miniature of an emerging world**” published in **The Hindu** on **27th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance– About Emerging world order

News– The article explains the current global situation. It also tells about the new developments at the SCO summit in Samarkand and its implications for future world order.

What is the current global situation?

Russia is on the back foot because of the Ukraine war.

China cannot take position against Russia because of the Taiwan issue. It had to strike a deal with Russia on Taiwan in return for supporting Russia in the Ukraine war.

The USA wants closer relations with democracies. A counter coalition against QUAD (Red QUAD) may emerge in Indo-pacific.

What is the stand of India against its adversaries?

Given the present situation, it is a possibility that Russia would be a part of its opposing party.

Therefore, India told Russia to end the Ukraine war. PM Modi said that democracy and diplomacy should be the way forward. India spoke about the looming oil crisis and disrupted supply chain due to war. Putin said that he understood India's concern and promised to end the conflict. He blamed Ukraine for the continuation of war.

However, India has not been much vocal against China. India should have engaged with China which occupied territories across LAC. But India was silent.

India would have pulled Pakistan over cross border terrorism. India only demanded transit and trade access to Afghanistan and Central Asia. The Pakistan PM claimed that he discussed the Kashmir issue with China and received assurance of support. But China was silent.

China and Russia welcomed India's Chairmanship of the SCO and extended their support. It was nothing but a formality.

By questioning Russia on the continuation of the war, which positioned India on the right side of history in a world order divided between democracies and autocracies.

India made this clear at the SCO summit that it cannot be with China or Russia in the new dispensation.

What are the indications of developments at the Samarkand summit?

Samarkand summit shows the world order that may emerge in the future.

The Quad may be the forum that will enable India to protect its interests in the Indo-Pacific.

China-Russia-Iran-Pakistan axis will dominate SCO.

Ripple effects of the SCO summit were evident in the present UNGA session. Both Russia and USA supported the expansion of UNSC. Russia supported India membership of UNSC.

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106. [Death penalty: Deciding the rarest of the rare](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Death penalty: Deciding the rarest of the rare**” published in **The Indian Express** on **27th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Fundamental rights provided by Indian constitution

News– The article explains the current framework for providing capital punishment. It also explains the weakness of this framework.

Recently Supreme Court acknowledged the need for re-examining the fundamental aspects of death penalty.

What is the Bachan Singh case?

Supreme Court proposed sentencing framework for death penalty. It asked courts to weigh aggravating and mitigating circumstances. It introduced “**rarest of rare**” category of case for capital punishment.

What are the concerns with this framework?

Different court approaches– The courts have taken differing approaches in which factors are relevant to sentencing and how best to bring in factors relevant to punishment.

The courts have different opinions about the weightage sentencing factors must receive, and the contentious role of public opinion.

Accused in death penalty cases are mostly poor. They cannot afford quality legal representation. They don't have the resources to put before the Court meaningful mitigation information.

Santosh Kumar Bariyar v State of Maharashtra (2002)– SC judge expressed concern about the lack of uniformity in death penalty sentencing.

Channu Lal Verma v State of Chhattisgarh (2018)– SC judge Called for a relook at the constitutional possibility of the death penalty because of the arbitrariness in the process.

The **Lethal Lottery in 2008** and the **262nd Law Commission of India Report in 2015** also found shortcomings in the present framework.

What are examples that show contradictions in the Supreme Court's approach?

Manoj & Ors v. State of MP– SC set in place practical guidelines to ensure that courts have sufficient material on the accused before delivering a sentence of death at every stage of the judicial process.

Manoj Pratap Singh v. State of Rajasthan– SC does not find it useful for courts to have sufficient material on the accused.

What is the way forward?

The accused need to be given time and resources to gather and present such information in every single case and at every judicial stage.

We are required to remove the deep suspicion and biases faced by the accused person.

For further readings–

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107. [On reservations for EWS: a test for law and justice](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**On reservations for EWS: a test for law and justice**” published in **The Hindu** on **28th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 –

News: The Supreme Court has reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas challenging the validity of the 103rd constitutional amendment.

What is 103rd constitutional amendment act?

However, this act has been challenged in the SC and various arguments have been put forward for the opposition.

Why this act has been challenged in the Supreme Court?

According to the petitioners, the amendment violates the Constitution’s basic structure. They believe that the amendment destroys the Constitution’s idea of equal opportunity.

Whereas, the government argues that the Constitution demands equality and there are multiple ways of providing equality. The govt. says that the power to amend include a power to decide how to guarantee equal status to all persons.

What was the rationale behind the reservation?

Reservations were **first introduced by some of the princely states** as an alleviative measure. At that time almost all government posts in the British India government were filled by the privileged castes. Thus, a system of reservations was introduced denominating communities as “Backward Classes”.

There were debates over reservations when the Constitution was being drafted. The Constitution makers saw reservation as a tool that will help assimilate the depressed class to rise and be equal with the privileged class into public life. Marc Galanter has called this a compensatory discrimination principle.

The rationale remained the same behind the introduction of the **1st Constitution’s amendment** in 1951 which allowed the state to make special provisions beyond reservations in public employment.

SC in the **State of Kerala v. N. M. Thomas (1975)** case held that reservations based on social and educational backwardness, ought to be seen as an intrinsic facet of the idea of equality.

Therefore, it seems that 103rd amendment act has not served the purpose of reservation.

How does 103rd amendment is against the idea of equality defined in the Constitution?

Reservations based on the economic criteria doesn’t place people into a definite group requiring special privileges.

This would eventually lead to dominant caste to retain their position in the administration.

Therefore, 103rd amendment act infringes the purpose of equality defined by the Constitution.

108. [Permanent membership of the UNSC is another story](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Permanent membership of the UNSC is another story**” published in **The Hindu** on **28th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

Relevance: issues and challenges associated with the permanent membership of UNSC.

Context: There are talks about the India becoming a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

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UNSC remains the only exclusive club, where none of the new emerging countries has entered. Otherwise, even the exclusive **Nuclear Club** has been breached by India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel.

India's External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar has also called for the reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

What are the concerns associated with veto power?

The right to vote with permanent UNSC members has been a cause of concern for other countries. This power has been used frequently to block any attempt that goes against any of the permanent UNSC members. For example;

Western members have used their privileged position to protect Israel when the Palestinian question was being discussed.

Veto power was also used to prevent sanctions being imposed on the apartheid regime of South Africa.

The Russia has cast more vetoes than the three western members of UN. However, many times it has gone in favor of India as well. For example, Russia has helped India on many occasions on the question of Kashmir. Russia also helped India by vetoing unfavorable resolutions during the war of Bangladesh liberation in 1971.

However, considering the present situation, India cannot be sure of help from Russia in future on Kashmir issue or any other unfavorable occasion.

India cannot expect that Britain or America will cast a negative vote against Pakistan.

China is already hostile towards India. It can be seen in the Chinese blockade on the UNSC resolution against confirmed Pakistani terrorists in the sanctions list.

What are the challenges with permanent membership to India in UNSC?

None of the P-5 countries want any new member to be added to UNSC.

Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean are unrepresented in the permanent category at present. However, Africa is looking for two permanent seats and they are yet to decide which two African countries will be included.

There are four declared candidates for permanent membership: India, Japan, Brazil and Germany, called the G-4. There are concerns over the opposition of G-4 permanent membership. For example, China will not support India nor will it ever support Japan. Italy will oppose Germany.

Lastly, even if India is elected for permanent membership with full support, there will other countries along with India entering into the group.

What are the other challenges in the expansion of UNSC?

The UN charter will be amended if any new members are added in the UNSC. Amending the charter involves two-thirds of the total membership of the U N including the votes of P-5.

There is also an **enemy clause**, present in Article 107 of the charter and there will be difficulty in amending this clause. The P-5 members will always oppose the enemy nations.

What can be the course of action?

A group of experts has suggested that **a new category of semi-permanent members** should be created.

Countries would be **elected for a period of eight to 10 years** and would be eligible for re-election. India should also give serious consideration to this idea.

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Some experts are of the opinion that **India should not accept permanent membership** without the right of veto.

While some say that even a permanent membership without veto will be tremendously helpful in protecting our interests.

109. [Energising India-Nepal ties, the hydropower way](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Energising India-Nepal ties, the hydropower way**” published in **The Hindu** on **28th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- India and its neighborhood relations

Relevance– India Nepal hydro diplomacy

News– The article explains the potential of the West and East Seti River projects for India and Nepal. It also talks about the steps needed for the successful completion of the project.

Recently, Nepal signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with India to develop 1200 MW West Seti and EastSeti River (SR6) projects.

What is the historical background of the project?

The project was conceived in the early 80s.

The Australian company was engaged in developing the project during 1997-2011.

In 2011 project was handed over to a Chinese company. China withdrew from project in 2018

It was then remodeled by Nepal as the East and West-Seti-river joint project.

What is the potential of the project?

Improvement in relations– It can provide India the much-needed leverage in future hydropower cooperation. India is already involved in the Mahakali Treaty (6,480 MW), the Upper Karnali Project (900 MW) and the Arun Three projects (900 MW) in western and eastern Nepal.

The project has the potential to enhance cross-border power exchanges between the two Countries.

Countering China– It will also help India minimise the geopolitical influence of China and firm its presence in Nepal. West Seti Hydroelectric Project was a major Chinese venture under the Belt and Road Initiative.

Benefits to Nepal- Nepal’s electricity exports to India are expected to increase foreign exchange and address the power shortage. It is estimated that if the hydropower potential is fully harnessed, Nepal can generate revenue of 1,069 billion rupees per year in 2045 by **exporting electricity to India**.

Benefits to India– The West Seti Hydroelectric Project can provide an alternative to address power deficits in India.

What steps need to be taken?

New options and alternatives need to be explored. Project costs have increased. There is a need for a careful study of investment scenarios, distribution, and transmission networks, and the cost of resettlement and rehabilitation, at the preliminary stage.

Nepal is concerned that the electricity rates and supply from India is inadequate to meet the rising demands. This needs to be taken care of.

The project can also be extended to other regional partners under the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) framework for cross-border energy cooperation. A cross-border energy market that includes Nepal, Bhutan and north eastern states of India can be created.

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110. [The Lalit Effect](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The Lalit Effect**” published in **The Times of India** on **28th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian Judiciary

Relevance– Challenges before judicial system

News– The article explains the issues of frequent adjournment pleas and frivolous PILs in higher courts of the country.

Chief Justice UU Lalit has increased the matters listed daily. It has led to an increase of adjournment pleas by lawyers.

What are the rules related to adjournment pleas by courts?

Civil cases– Civil Procedure Code stipulates a maximum of three adjournments while hearing a case.

Criminal cases– Criminal Procedure Code instructs judicial officers to hear trials and inquiries on a day-to-day basis. It stipulates that a lawyer engaged in another court cannot be a ground for adjournment.

What are the issues faced by the judicial system?

Adjournment pleas– Adjournments are taken for reasons like lawyers being busy in other courts. It leads to judicial delays.

In 2017, a government panel on speeding up commercial disputes found the three-adjournment rule violated in 50% of civil cases.

Frivolous PILs– These are diversionary for constitutional courts.

Recently, Bombay HC dismissed a PIL seeking a ban on advertisements of non-vegetarian foods. The court asked the petitioners why they wish to encroach on others rights.

111. [Matter of degrees: UGC should think more on allowing four-year undergraduates to enrol for PhDs](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Matter of degrees: UGC should think more on allowing four-year undergraduates to enrol for PhDs**” published in **The Times of India** on **29th September 2022**.

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

Relevance: About UGC’s decision to allow UG Degree holders to enrol PhD.

News: UGC is set to allow four-year undergraduate degree holders to enrol for PhD programmes.

What are the impacts of the UGC decision?

Advantages: **a) In sync with global standards**: A number of foreign universities allow undergraduates to skip the postgraduate stage and enrol directly for PhD, **b) It will save time and money for students**.

Disadvantages: **a) Dilutes the requirement of mandatory publication of a research paper before the award of a PhD**, **b) Quantitatively it will produce more PhDs**. For instance, in 2019, the US had 55,000 doctoral recipients. The same year, India had 2 lakh scholars enrolled for PhD and 39,000 doctoral recipients, **c) PG course helps students do a deeper study of the discipline and also in research – because a dissertation has to be written. This will be diluted**, **d) Many PhDs will go on to teach undergraduate and PG students and inadequate knowledge of the core discipline will impair teaching standards**.

Read more: [Phase 2 of Visvesvaraya PhD Scheme launched by IT Minister](#)

What UGC needs to do?

Firstly, UGC must ensure that PhD coursework also integrates parts of the PG curriculum.

Secondly, the same yardstick shouldn't apply across disciplines: A doctoral student can focus on the thesis rather than a research paper but mandatory publication in a quality Scopus-indexed journal could prod the scholar to aim higher.

A UGC study in the top-ranked central university and an IIT found that 75% of the university submissions weren't in Scopus journals, but the opposite was true for IITs. This is because there are around 30,000 Scopus-indexed journals in STEM and related fields against 14,000 for humanities and social sciences.

So, the UGC should understand that a PG degree may be important in some disciplines before a PhD and not so much in others.

Read more: [\[Kurukshetra September Summary\] Education for Tribals – Explained, pointwise](#)

112. [False dichotomies of education that we must strive to overcome](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**False dichotomies of education that we must strive to overcome**” published in the **Livemint** on **29th September 2022**.

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

Relevance: To balance various dichotomies of education.

News: Education should develop children's capacity to question things in society or their capacity to contribute constructively. But in reality, education institutions focus far too much on the capacity to question instead of their contribution.

Good education must account for all these matters, and not make choices between them because these are false choices.

What are the false dichotomies the education should avoid and why?

Freedom versus discipline: In schools, discipline and freedom are seen as opposites. Educators often choose discipline, as it is easier to handle students. This is educationally ineffective, and potentially creates lifelong problems for students.

Memorization versus understanding: Memory plays an important role in developing conceptual understanding, as does practice in creativity. An educational approach that relies on one alone cannot achieve its goals.

Knowledge versus skills: Education today focuses on acquiring knowledge in children's subjects. But they fail to develop their skills and capacities to process and use that knowledge. For instance, the development of an ability to communicate, or think critically, takes a back seat to soaking knowledge and content in courses.

Education for employability and employment versus a liberal education: Education that does not emphasize general capacities of critical thinking and education that ignores economic goals of productive livelihood undermines both citizenship and the individual.

Educators are facing challenges in providing liberal education which also equally develops capacities such that students can find gainful employment.

Read more: [\[Kurukshetra September Summary\] Education for Tribals – Explained, pointwise](#)

Collaboration versus competition: Institutions function as formal structures of the curriculum. But they do not focus on the practices and cultures which promote collaboration during competition. Thus making children failed to face the competition of various sorts they face in a reality.

Common-size-fits-all versus the contextual: In any education system, some matters have to be common across the system, while some must be entirely contextual. For any society to function as one unit there are common things that must be learnt. But there are contextual matters specific to areas, places, cultures and more. It is this balance between the common and the contextual that education policies must achieve.

But providing complete autonomy on everything is as dysfunctional for societies and communities as a deeply hierarchical, tightly prescriptive approach.

Love and affection for students versus a distanced professional approach: Education is at its core a matter of relationships, particularly between teachers and students. Both love and distanced approach should be practised on various situations.

Read more: [The controversy over NAAC's system for assessing higher education](#)

So overall a good education requires not dichotomies, but a consistent endeavour to balance and achieve complementary ends, both in theory and in practice.

113. [In nature's warning signs, a nudge to riparian states](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “In nature's warning signs, a nudge to riparian states” published in **The Hindu** on **29th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance– Hydro Diplomacy

News–The article explains the challenges faced by India due to frequent floods in trans-boundary rivers. It also explains the international mechanism to mitigate trans-boundary river floods.

Nearly a third part of Pakistan was impacted by floods. In June this year, Assam also faced floods.

There is a lack of transparency in sharing hydrological information between states which aggravates the flooding.

What is customary international law

In accordance with customary international law, no state can use its territory in a manner that causes harm to another state while using a shared natural resource. It means that there is a binding obligation on all states not to release water to cause floods in other countries.

What are challenges for India in case of Brahmaputra River?

Assam faces frequent floods in Brahmaputra River.

China dam construction activities on Brahmaputra is cause of concern for India.

There is no comprehensive **basin-level mechanism** to deal with water management of Brahmaputra.

Neither India or China are party to the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (UNWC) 1997** or the **United**

Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) water convention. Both have provisions for flood mitigation.

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There was an MoU with China in 2013 with a view to sharing hydrological information during the flood season. But the MoU does not allow India access to urbanization and deforestation activities on the Chinese side of the river basin.

What is the case with flooding in Gandak and Kosi rivers?

Floods in Gandak and Kosi rivers that are shared by India and Nepal are frequent phenomena.

The intensity has increased because of glacial retreat and heavy seasonal precipitation.

Both rivers are covered under **India-Nepal Kosi agreement, 1954** to check floods in the river basin.

What is the way forward?

India can become a party either to UNWC or water convention. It could lay the groundwork for a bilateral treaty on Brahmaputra with China. India should not insist on insertion of dispute settlement mechanism provisions.

With Nepal, it is important that the two neighbors view the river basins as single entities. It will help in facilitating an integrated approach for improved basin and flood risk management.

114. [Globe-changing reverberations of the Ukraine war](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Globe-changing reverberations of the Ukraine war**” published in **The Hindu** on **29th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance– Global impacts of Ukrainian crisis

News– The article explains the impacts of Russia-Ukraine powers. It also explains the response of major powers and its implications for future world order.

Big powers have always feared being surrounded. Russia has always felt vulnerable on its western front.

What are the impacts of the Ukraine war?

Russia had poor strategy and weak logistics. It has paid a heavy price militarily, economically and diplomatically.

There are more losses of human life than during the 10-year Afghanistan intervention.

There is huge devastation in Ukraine. Around 10 million people have crossed to neighbouring countries and 7 million people displaced internally.

What is Russia’s response?

Ukraine counter-offensive has retaken a 6500 square kilometres area and forced Russian forces to retreat to the Kharkiv border.

It has led Putin to announce referendums in occupied areas. Putin is planning to mobilise more focus. He is threatening to use nuclear weapons. Mr. Putin now interprets the current war as an existential struggle in which Russia would make use “of all weapon systems available to us”.

What will be the consequences for the future?

Ukraine will continue to remain hostile.

Putin’s objective of ensuring Russia’s security will remain elusive. He will suffer reputational damage both in Russia and at global level.

It will be beneficial to the west if war continues.

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Rivalries between west and Russia would be sharper than during the cold war. The threat of nuclear weapons will increase as the treaty on non-proliferation will come under huge stress.

The strength of nationalism, based on ethnicity, culture, religion, history and language, will grow.

The Ukraine war will lead to major economic shifts. States suffering from western sanctions will try to set up alternative financial and monetary platforms beyond the control of Washington.

There will be increased protectionism and retreat from globalization. It will impact world growth.

Where does China and India stand?

China- It will continue to have a closer relationship with Russia.

India- It will be a setback for India's vision of a multi-polar world order. It will have security implications for India as we have closer collaboration with Russia in areas of space, nuclear energy and defense.

115. [Eye of the State – on draft Telecommunication Bill](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**Eye of the State**” published in **The Indian Express** on **29th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Fundamental rights

Relevance- Surveillance powers of state

News- The article explains the vast surveillance power provided to the State by the draft Telecommunication Bill and its impact on fundamental rights enjoyed by citizens.

What are the provisions of the draft Telecommunication Bill that provides for state surveillance?

Clause 24(2)- It provides that application of surveillance will extend to OTT communication services like Telegram, Whatsapp. This will violate the privacy of users.

Clause 3 and 4- It requires licensing of telecommunication services.

Clause 23- It provides power to the government to prescribe standards. It will result in more regulations. It may lead to requirements for service providers like local registration and hosting of data. Smaller service providers may find it difficult due to compliance cost and privacy concerns.

Law enforcement agencies are provided more powers on vague grounds like-

Clause 25- It provides for extensive powers to the government like taking over the control, suspending the operation and even managing telecommunications services for reasons of “**national security**”. The term “national security” is not clearly defined and it is a vague term.

Clause 34- Providing false information by users may lead to their prosecution.

Clause 51- It requires service providers to supply user information to authorised officers for civil or criminal proceedings.

What are other challenges related to state surveillance?

There is a lack of data protection law.

State continues with **unauthorised surveillance**.

Bombay High Court noted in one of the cases that premier investigating agencies like the CBI have used interception orders that neither have sanction of law nor issued for legitimate aim.

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116. [India's national priorities are best served domestically](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**India’s national priorities are best served domestically**” published in **The Business Standard** on **29th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

Relevance: domestic challenges in India

News: India has been involving greatly into international summits and meetings. But it does not serve much of India’s interest and there is need for India to change its priorities.

Why do international meetings do not serve the nation’s interest?

A lot of time spent on the international meetings and the cost of time spent is not at par with the returns.

For example, The Indian PM called for better supply chains and full transit rights at this SCO summit but Pakistan won’t allow surface transit rights to India via its territory.

China blocked a joint move by India and the US to blacklist the Lashkar-e-Taiba militant Sajid Mir under the 1267 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council.

Further India is also going to head the G20 presidency.

But due the declining relations with China and Pakistan it is doubtful whether the heads of Pak and China will attend the meeting in India.

Therefore, India should focus more on resolving domestic challenges.

What are the domestic issues in India?

Unequal growth: The southern states are growing faster than those in the north. This may lead to serious disputes between India’s southern and northern states over the sharing of centrally-raised revenues.

Delimitation of constituencies: The delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies was last done on the basis of the 2001 census and is due for a review in 2026.

SC cases: Supreme Court is struggling with issues which may be resolved by ruling political parties at the Centre and the states.

For example, issues such as places of religious worship, quotas in government jobs for the economically weaker sections, etc.

Electricity: The state electricity corporations are also suffering with distribution losses by the high levels of subsidies provided in several states.

According to the Reserve Bank of India’s July 2022 report, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Jharkhand are fiscally vulnerable. Another issue is the range of non-merit subsidies such as fertilizer subsidies.

What can be the course of action?

First, all such subsidies can be withdrawn and may be distributed as universal basic income.

Second, the repeated extensions and appointments of officials by the central government need course of correction.

Third, the central government needs to discuss the disputable issues with the state governments like it did for GST.

Therefore, India should try to resolve domestic challenges first rather than indulging in international meetings.

117. [G-20 presidency is an opportunity to position India as the voice of the Global South](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**G-20 presidency is an opportunity to position India as the voice of the Global South**” published in **The Indian Express** on **29th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Important International Institutions

Relevance: G20 and opportunities for India

News: India is about to take the presidency of G20. Its presidency will play a great role in putting forward Global South.

Recently external affairs minister S Jaishankar has called India the **Voice of Global South**.

However, there are many concerns as India’s official outlook has also changed with time.

How has India’s official outlook change?

India has been inactive in the Group of 77 (G-77). It is now a 134-member group of developing economies.

India last hosted a G-77 meeting in New Delhi in the 1980s whereas Pakistan has been more active within this group and currently chairs it.

On the other hand, India was busy with forum like G-7 plus, BRICS, SCO and trilaterals and quadrilaterals like Quad, etc.

Several factors seem to have contributed to a change in Indian official outlook.

What are the factors responsible for the change in Indian official outlook?

First, the unwillingness of the P-5 (the US, Russia, China, France and UK) to reform UN governance and let India into the UN Security Council.

Second, Western deglobalization and disinterest in the reform of multilateral financial and trade organizations (IMF, WB & WTO).

Third, failure on the part of the US, EU, China and Japan to address the problem of fixing external debt burden of developing countries.

Fourth, the deadlines on climate change.

Fifth, the East-West power struggle brought by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and imposing huge costs on developing economies.

What are the concerns with the present G20 meeting in Indonesia?

Indonesia is currently hosting G-20 summit.

It is unlikely that Russia and the US will come together in the G-20 meeting. If the Indonesia summit fails, G-20 might enter a non-functional phase.

Therefore, taking the presidency of G20 will be an opportunity for India to fix many issues.

How G20’s presidency will be an opportunity for India?

In the past few meetings, the G20 has not played any significant role. For example, it failed to step in and help the Covid-afflicted world.

Therefore, India may be taking over the chairmanship of a paralyzed group and it will be an opportunity for India to breathe life in the group through North-South dialogue.

G20 will also be a great opportunity for India to showcase its tourist destinations to the world and promote tourism.

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India's focus on reform of multilateralism, international finance and trade, climate change, developing country external debt, etc. were last seen in the pre-globalisation India era of the G-77.

India can raise these issues back on the global platform (G20). It will make a low-income developing country like India the Voice of the Global South.

However, India needs to regain the trust of other developing countries, especially in Africa and South and Southeast Asia to once again play this role effectively.

What can be the course of action?

Indian foreign policy has been on the lines with the Western policies. Therefore, there is a need to stay in the South and raise the developmental concerns of the Global South.

118. [Rediscovering the Bay of Bengal](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "Rediscovering the Bay of Bengal" published in **The Hindu** on **29th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its Neighborhood

News: India has also opened the **Centre for Bay of Bengal Studies (CBS)** at Nalanda University. This shows India's commitment towards constructive efforts by forming connections and setting up platforms for all in the Bay of Bengal.

The Bay of Bengal (the Bay) is experiencing an increase in geo-economic, geopolitical, and geo-cultural activity. It can play a key role in shaping the maritime order in Asia.

How CBS will be an advantage?

It will offer collaborations in areas such as geo-economics and geopolitics, ecology, trade and connectivity, maritime security, maritime law and blue economy. It will lead to generation of opportunities for the Bay region.

This will strengthen India's overall framework for maritime engagement.

Further, it will also advance sustainable economic growth for all countries by promoting closer maritime ties.

What is the importance of the Bay of Bengal?

Commercial hub: The Bay has been a major commerce hub for the Indian Ocean. It created a channel between the East and the West in terms for trade and culture.

Security: It also acts as lifeline for global economic security and energy security.

Environment: The Bay also provides an opportunity for greater regional cooperation in the environmentally friendly exploration of marine and energy resources.

Biodiversity: The Bay has a biodiverse marine environment with many rare and endangered marine species and mangroves.

Geopolitical changes: The increasing interest towards Indo-Pacific and realignment of global economic and military power towards Asia has increased the significance of Bay region.

However, there have been many changes in the Bay in the recent times.

What changes or problems have come up in the Bay?

Population growth, altered land use, excessive resource exploitation, salinization, and sea level rise.

Non-traditional dangers including terrorism and climate change.

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There has been species extinction due to the careless exploitation of the maritime environment which has led to problem of biodiversity.

These have led to the formation of a dead zone and the mangrove trees that protect the shore from the natural hazards are under more threat than ever.

Therefore, actions are required to preserve the Bay.

What can be the course of action?

First, a more focused and interdisciplinary study is required on these issues.

CBS has given the nation a unique interdisciplinary research center devoted to Bay-focused teaching, research, and capacity building.

Second, it is essential that maritime neighbors develop a partnership and cooperate because maritime domains are interrelated and interdependent.

A few concerns that need immediate attention are – expanding cooperation in maritime safety and security, enhancing cooperation on maritime connectivity and the ease of maritime transit, among others.

Third, there is a need for regional marine entities to balance opportunities and goals on a national, regional, and international scale.

Fourth, countries in the region will need to mobilize incentives and investments, manage oceanic affairs more effectively, and support people as they switch to alternative lifestyles.

119. [Democracy in Kashmir: Indira's failure, Vajpayee's success](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Democracy in Kashmir: Indira's failure, Vajpayee's success**” published in **The Indian Express** on **29th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

Relevance: concerns associated with Jammu and Kashmir

News: Elections in Jammu and Kashmir is due for the past four years. It has been under direct administration of the Union government since Article 370 was revoked.

What were changes brought by revoking Article 370?

Jammu and Kashmir was transformed from a state to the union territory by the Union Parliament.

The new UT was given limited powers along the line of lines Delhi assembly.

The central government made further more changes in the UT.

For example, State subject certificates were replaced with domicile certificates which allowed voting and property rights to a temporary as well as long-time residents.

It altered land laws and affected forest rights, allocated mining rights to industry from outside the state, removed the right to free education up to the post-graduate level.

The latest changes were to revise the delimitation of electoral constituencies as ordered by the reorganisation act.

However, there are still many problems with Jammu and Kashmir.

What are the problems present in Jammu and Kashmir?

Voter's list: Jammu and Kashmir administration began to revise the voters' list after the delimitation commission submitted its report.

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However, in the absence of recent census 2020 it is difficult to understand how the voters' list was prepared.

New laws: Jammu along with Kashmir has also suffered from the result of the new domicile certificates, land laws and industrial policies.

Delimitation commission: there are also allegations that the delimitation of electoral constituency by the delimitation commission has not been fair to the Kashmiri population.

Border dispute: J&K shares border with Pakistan and there have been wars which has disturbed the area.

Insurgency: There has been increase in the insurgency within the Kashmir valley and targeted attack on Pundits, panchayat officials and the police still continue.

Therefore, there is a need for a free and fair assembly election especially that which allows civil society observers.

How past government has helped in free and fair election in Kashmir?

Atal Bihari Vajpayee government ensured free and fair elections in 2002 when the insurgency was at its height.

The elections were followed by new policies of non-interference in state governance along with peace negotiations with armed groups as well as Pakistan.

Vajpayee government followed by Manmohan Singh government led to a sharp fall in attacks and casualties and the restoration of a functioning government.

The peace-building years of 2002-2012 also laid the foundation for India to use the UN's Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to target Pakistan-based terrorists.

Therefore, there is a need to revise the current policy of the government.

What can be further course of action?

First, a free and fair election in 2023 can help to restore peace in J&K.

Second, the strongest confidence-building measure would be to restore statehood prior to elections and stop the implementation of the delimitation commission's recommendations.

120. [After the floods, Bengaluru needs to clean up its act](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "After the floods, Bengaluru needs to clean up its act" published in **The Hindu** on **30th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

Relevance: concerns associated with corruption and measures to tackle them

News: Bengaluru's floods have gone but they have left difficulties for the people. Difficulties such as flying of the dust in the air.

According to the various analyses rainfall has been expected to increase to an average of 1,000 mm per annum from the current 650 mm per annum.

The flood like situation in Bengaluru is generally blamed on builders, migrant, lack of spatial planning, etc.

However, these are not only the cause of flooding in Bengaluru.

There are other structural issues such as corruption also involved with the government that became the cause of flooding.

How does corruption affect the system?

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Corruption reduces the economic growth. It transfers excessive wealth to the undeserving.

It also leads to people who are against the anti-corruption process reforms. The corrupt often use the honest to fulfil their agendas. For example, abound.

A government plays a major role in reducing and increasing corruption. For example, it can make bye-laws so complex that the strictest law-abiding citizen cannot comply with them.

These complex laws provide corrupt officials and politicians to freedom to bend them. These types of laws also provide opportunities for agents who bypass the rigidities of the system.

These agents work parallelly with the government officials and people generally do not complain about them.

The legal definition of corruption enables many in a corrupt system to escape punishment. Indian law recognises only corrupt acts by public servants to be 'acts of corruption' under the law.

It gives the way to private corruption. Many government actions are outsourced to private agents who collect handling fees on behalf of the government.

For example, builder's agents openly asking for bribes. Therefore, corruption can also be blamed for the Bengaluru floods.

Moreover, e-governance mechanism has not helped to reduce corruption.

How has e-governance not been effective in controlling corruption?

E-Governance is often not the effective solution as claimed. E-enabled systems only relocate the place of corruption and they do not solve the problem.

When large databases, such as land records are moved to paperless systems, they become vulnerable to manipulation.

This leads to shifting of power from land administrators to the one who possesses the digital signature.

Therefore, data entry operator becomes an important and corruptible person in the system.

What can be the course of action?

First, there should be regular assessments and evaluations of ongoing anti-corruption measures. They help in alerting new corruption opportunities.

Second, there is a need for a genuine law of whistle-blower protection.

- It assures honest citizens, politicians, bureaucrats and judges of protection, as they otherwise fear the adverse consequences for disclosing illegal activities.
- Confidence-assuring whistle-blower protection measures can lead to exposure of more corruption, particularly at higher levels.

Third, there has to be a conscious move towards promoting ethical behaviour.

Fourth, there is a need for good leadership in order to make anti-corruption strategies successful.

121. [How dreams of freedom are shattered for working women in small-town India](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "How dreams of freedom are shattered for working women in small-town India" published in **The Indian Express** on **30th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

Relevance: problems associated with the employment of women

News: Urban cities are the hope of social and economic independence for young girls.

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However, the murder of 19-year-old Ankita Bhandari in Uttarakhand has shattered the dreams of many young girls all over the country.

This has generated a fresh wave of anxiety and fear in the minds of girls who have such dreams.

Why do young girls migrate to urban cities and what are the problems associated with it?

They generally migrate in the search of employment. Some girls require to support their family with their incomes.

However, migration to big cities is a hard task for those coming from the economically weaker section of society. There are difficulties in finding jobs and places to stay.

Therefore, service sector jobs in small towns are the only option to for such women. However, there are other concerns associated with employment of women.

What are concerns associated with the employment of women?

Low participation: There has been low participation and a decline in women's employment.

However, in urban areas there has been a long-term trend of more women in employment but there is discrimination.

Discrimination: Women's employment shows concentration in a few occupational segments and sectors.

This shows the broader discriminatory components of the urban labour market and the manner of women's exclusion/inclusion in urban employment.

Education: There is also more focus on the employment of younger aged girls who are educated.

Therefore, those women who migrate and are not educated end up with domestic work and informal services which are highly unregulated.

Low wages: These women are further forced to face the gender discrimination and their jobs also do not pay them. Those jobs are temporary but serve a purpose for them to earn and support their families.

Accessibility: According to Centre for Women's Development Studies, many women reported their difficulty in accessing employment in urban areas.

Lack of awareness and laws: There is also lack of awareness of rights of women and laws on sexual harassment which leaves women on the hands of the employers.

There are other issues such as lack of adequate information of the job, conditions of work among others are the problems faced by the women.

There were also report on non-uniform wage rates, the absence of defined working hours, incidences of violence and harassment including sexual harassment.

Society: Girls often face many challenges like convincing their families and societies to migrate in the search of jobs.

All of these factors force young women to put up with hostile workspaces and insecure working conditions.

Further, such crimes will also discourage their hope to attain self-dependency and economic freedom.

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122. [Keep up pressure: India-US teaming up on Pacific Islands will trouble China. That's welcome](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Keep up pressure: India-US teaming up on Pacific Islands will trouble China. That's welcome**” published in **The Times of India** on **30th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Relevance: About India-China relations.

News: The troop disengagement process in eastern Ladakh remains incomplete and China continues to block UN sanctions against Pakistan-based terrorists. Despite that, China's ambassador to India has recently said that the border situation is “switching to normalised management and control” and bilateral ties have shown positive momentum.

This shows China's subtle overtures to India due to the pressure on China by the US in East Asia.

What are the advantages China gained in delayed disengagement?

China has achieved their near-term objectives by delayed disengagement such as **a)** Along the LAC most of the disengagement buffer zones coming up on the Indian side, **b)** China has further bolstered its infrastructure on its side.

Read more: [Disengagement on Line of Actual Control is a welcome start, but normalization of India-China relations is a long way off](#)

How China is approaching Pacific Islands?

China has been slowly peeling away the islands. For instance, **a)** Kiribati and the Solomon Islands switched recognition from Taiwan to Beijing, **b)** Kiribati pulled out of the Pacific Island Forum earlier this year on China's instructions.

What India should do if China is looking for peace?

China will talk about cooperation with India whenever it is in a tight spot strategically but will revert to an aggressive posture when the pressure eases. So, **a)** India should stick to its position that there can be no normalisation until China drops its aggressive behaviour, **b)** India should keep up the pressure by teaming up with the US to counter China's growing influence among the Pacific Island nations, and **c)** India should boost our defence infrastructure along the LAC.

Read more: [Explained: 2 years after Galwan clash, where India-China relations stand today](#)

123. [Vacation pe vacation: No major country has their top court going on long holidays. Neither should Supreme Court](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Vacation pe vacation: No major country has their top court going on long holidays. Neither should Supreme Court**” published in **The Times of India** on **1st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Functioning of Supreme Court

Relevance: concerns associated with vacation of courts

News: The article discusses the issue of too many vacations in the Indian Courts.

Excessive work is not only bad for family relationships but it also affects productivity. Therefore, many organizations mandatorily require employees to take annual leave.

However, there is a difference between individual leave and vacation.

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Vacation means shutting down completely and organizations other than courts rarely go on vacation and there are individual leaves given in those organization.

Who decides vacations for Supreme Court (SC)?

The 1958 statute tells that vacation means such periods during a year fixed by SC rules with the prior approval of the President.

The current rule followed by SC for vacation is Supreme Court Rules, 2013 and Chief Justice of India (CJI) issues notifications for the vacation every year. For example, as per the recent notification, "The Chief Justice of India has directed that the Supreme Court will be closed for the annual Summer Vacation from Monday, the 23rd May, 2022 to Sunday, the 10th July, 2022 (both days inclusive)."

There are separate provisions for vacations in High Courts.

What are the findings of the Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System (2003)?

Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System (2003) was headed by Justice Malimath. It had a section on court vacations. The findings of the committee were:

There are no governmental organizations in the country except courts and schools that have vacation.

Schools can be considered for the vacations as there are students studying but vacation in courts is not understood.

There are many countries in the world that do not have vacations in the courts.

For example, France and the US. Judges don't have vacation, but they can take holidays without affecting the function of the court.

Even in India the subordinate criminal courts do not have any vacation. But the subordinate civil courts, High Courts and the Supreme Court have vacations.

The concept of vacation is originated from colonial rules. Judges at that time came from England, a place colder compared to a India and the summer of India was unbearable to them.

Therefore, a vacation system was introduced so that those judges can go back to England in summer for several weeks. It is not required now.

However, there are different suggestion and steps taken by the Chief Justices.

What were the steps taken by Chief Justices?

CJI Justice Lodha in 2014 sought to eliminate vacations. CJI Justice Thakur, in 2016, appealed to HCs to not go on vacations. CJ of Allahabad High Court, Justice Chandrachud voluntarily gave up summer vacation.

What can be the course of action?

Arrears Committee and 230th Report of Law Commission recommended for a shorter duration in the vacation.

However, the recommendation does not hold any importance as complete vacations for courts are not needed.

There is a need to fix days of annual leave for the judges so that they also get time from the work.

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124. [Letting go of a chance to democratise telecom services](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Letting go of a chance to democratise telecom services**” published in **The Hindu** on **1st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian Polity

Relevance– Regulation of telecommunication services in India

News-There is a need to resolve the issues with the new Telecommunication Bill, 2022.

What are the issues with the new bill?

Repackaging–

It is repackaging of **Telegraph Act, 1885** in the guise of legislative advancements.

It will lead to centralisation of power through a **new licensing regime**.

Inclusion of OTT platforms–

It includes online communication service providers within the ambit of telecommunication service. This move is to provide a level playing field to OTT platforms with telcos.

The argument about **the same services, and same rules** for both OTT platforms and telcos is a flawed one. Telecom operators act as gatekeepers to the underlying broadband infrastructure. OTT.

services can only be accessed through telco-controlled infrastructure.

Services provided by OTT platforms are diverse like social networking and video calling. They act as aggregators of these services.

Privacy related issues–

The central government by exercising its powers to issue a license may put a requirement on such online service providers to store data locally in India

The requirement of interception under the act is not conducive for end-to-end encryption provided by OTT platforms. This will harm the privacy enjoyed by users of these platforms.

These rules are in stark contrast with the recommendations by the Supreme Court in its right to privacy decision in 2017 and the **Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee Report on data protection**.

Suspension of internet services–

Clause 24(2)(b) of the Telecom Bill provides specific power for suspension of Internet services. The clause does not solve any of the issues that exist with the current framework for Internet shutdowns in India, specifically the **Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017**.

Frequent internet shutdown has a chilling effect on fundamental rights enjoyed by citizens. There are high economic costs associated with it.

Missed opportunity–

The bill is missing an opportunity to set global standards by not introducing principles of net neutrality in the Telecom Bill.

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125. [Punish vandals: Needed: smart law on property damaged in protests](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Punish vandals: Needed: smart law on property damaged in protests**” published in **The Times of India** on **1st October 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 damages to public and private property and limiting them.

News: Recently, the Kerala high court directing Popular Front of India (PFI) to deposit Rs 5.2 crore for damages incurred during the banned outfit’s flash hartal is a rare case of speedy remedial action.

How damages to public and private property is handled in India?

Those damaging public and private property must be effectively deterred.

Government actions

Central government: The government enacted the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984. The government introduced an amendment bill in 2015. The bill suggested placing the burden of proof on the accused, fixing responsibility on organisations and office-bearers, and pegging the fine as the market value of public property damaged.

State government: Some states have enacted their own laws. But they vary from state to state. For instance, Kerala enacted a law in 2019 to recover damages for private property destruction but left out public property. In contrast, UP’s 2020 law enables recovery of damages for both public and private property.

Judicial actions

The Supreme Court’s 2009 guidelines prescribed a fair procedure. High Courts were empowered to initiate suo motu proceedings and appoint a judicial officer as Claims Commissioner.

What are the concerns associated with various laws regarding damages to public and private property?

a) The Centre’s law, Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984, is outdated and narrowly focused on criminal prosecution, **b)** The state governments did not implement the law effectively. For example, the SC found great divergence from due process in the recovery of damages from anti-CAA protesters and directed UP to follow this law properly.

What needs to be done to limit the damages to public and private property?

a) Uniform central legislation that ensures time-bound inquiry into damages, recovery of assets and criminal prosecution of rioters is needed, **b)** The government also need to fix the fault of police officers and government negligence in preventing violence.

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General

Studies

Paper – 3

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General Studies - 3

1. [Precision farming needs to be promoted to get more output with less exploitation of natural resources](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Precision farming needs to be promoted to get more output with less exploitation of natural resources**” published in the **Indian Express** on **5th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints.

Relevance: About India’s farming activities.

News: Humans are over-exploiting planet’s natural resource endowment. This may boomerang and threaten the very existence of humanity.

What are the challenges in current farming methods?

a) Lands are degrading, especially the topsoil that is crucial for providing us with food, animal feed and fibre, **b)** Groundwater is depleting and its quality is becoming poorer with the increasing use of chemical fertilisers and other industrial waste, **c)** Air human breathe is polluted. When stubble burning peaks in farmers’ fields in Punjab and Haryana it is difficult to even breathe in a city like Delhi.

The extreme weather events such as the recent heat waves in Europe and Asia alongside droughts and floods in other areas exacerbate these issues even more.

Why there is an imbalance between people and the planet?

In 1804, for the first time in history, the human population touched one billion. The next billion was added in 123 years with the count touching two billion by 1927. Several major breakthroughs in medical science ensured that the next billion was added in just 33 years by 1960.

Thereafter, humanity progressed even faster. For instance, it took only 12 years to reach six to seven billion in 2010, and another 12 years to touch eight billion in 2022.

This created a huge imbalance between the demands of people and the capacity of this planet to supply them in a sustainable manner.

Read more: [What is Zero Budget Natural Farming?](#)

What is the role of natural/organic farming in correcting this imbalance?

Many governments, religious organisations, and some NGOs believe that organic/natural farming is the only way to correct this imbalance. Most of the studies conducted by ICAR in India show that with the adoption of natural farming yields go down for major staple crops like wheat and rice by as much as 30 to 50%. But the yields recover back to normal levels after some time.

Organic farming in India: Sikkim was declared an organic state, etc. The Indian government has initiated a major programme on natural farming along the Ganga, five kilometres on each side of its banks. Many states like Andhra Pradesh are also scaling up natural farming.

Must read: [Natural Farming – process, advantages and challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

Why does India need to focus on farming?

Sri Lanka wanted to get rid of chemical fertilisers but facing an economic challenge. India is going to be the most populous country on the planet in 2023. So, India needs a proper policy decision with better and more scientific evidence if India wants to avoid a Sri Lanka-like fiasco.

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What should be done to improve farming activities?

Focus on precision farming: It can give India “more from less”. The innovations and developments in GIS (Geographical Information System), AIML (Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning) can use enormous data and bring about precision in farming.

Reduction of subsidies: In India, there is a culture of free power, free water, almost 80 to 90% subsidy on urea, and so on. These subsidy policies may have been good in the 1960s or the 1970s when the country was hugely food deficit. But now these subsidies have to be reduced.

2. [The road to energy atmanirbharta](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The road to energy atmanirbharta**” published in **The Indian Express** on **5th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy – energy

Relevance: steps that can be taken by India to achieve Energy Atmanirbharta.

News: This article discusses about the steps that can be taken by India to achieve ‘Energy Atmanirbharta’ by 2040.

The Prime Minister has called for “Energy Atmanirbharta” by 2040 recently.

What are the requirements needed for India to achieve Energy Atmanirbharta by 2040?

First, India should be clear with the definition of Atmanirbharta. It means self-reliance not self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency should not be our goal as energy self-sufficiency is infeasible and uneconomic.

Second, we should prioritize access to fossil fuels because the transition to a green energy system is a lengthy, time taking and costly process. There is a **low probability of finding substantive, additional domestic resources of hydrocarbons**, even if India is able to enhance domestic exploration, it may be **difficult to produce them on commercially viable terms**. Therefore, our policy must continue to emphasize affordable and secure access to oil and gas.

Third, prioritize access to the **building blocks of green energy**. We have ambitious targets for renewables. However, minerals/components (copper, cobalt, lithium, semiconductor chips etc.) required to build EVs, solar panels, wind turbines and batteries are concentrated in countries that are not on the same political page with India. For example, 38 per cent of copper is produced from Chile and Peru. China controls 47 per cent of copper smelting and 42 per cent of copper refining. Therefore, India must remove the obstacles to domestic mining and develop strategies to manage the international market dynamics.

Fourth, In a recent example of Germany, it faced the LNG supply problem because it was not connected by a pipeline built by Spain. Therefore, it became possible for Russia to weaponize the gas supply.

Thus, infrastructure development is needed. GAIL is investing in the development of a national gas pipeline grid. In addition to it India must expand its strategic petroleum reserves to cover at least 30 days of consumption.

Fifth, offering green incentives to encourage private participation. **For example**, investors response was encouraging after the government’s production-linked incentive scheme (PLI) offers benefits for investment in green energy.

Private capital can help meet net carbon zero targets of the country.

Sixth, In the face of high gas prices, Europe is enjoying the disproportionately positive benefits of demand management. This must be corrected. Energy usage norms must be standardised and tightened. Legislation should be properly enacted to ensure compliance.

Seventh, retraining and upskilling.

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The nature of jobs and their location will change with the gradual transition to a green energy system. Therefore, the requirements for training/skilling should be anticipated and delivered.

Eighth, energy diplomacy. Our diplomats should add energy to their diplomacy. This is because of our dependence on the international energy supply chains. Success in navigating economic and geopolitical uncertainties will depend greatly on skillful diplomacy.

Ninth, holistic governance. The current energy governance requires proper administration. Institutions should be created to facilitate integrated energy planning and implementation.

3. [Heavy debt burdens are the real issues in our debate over freebies](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Heavy debt burdens are the real issues in our debate over freebies**” published in **The Live Mint** on **5th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy

News: This article discusses the measures that can be adopted to achieve the fiscal deficit target.

The Centre never logged a fiscal deficit ratio of less than 3% after 2007-08 and all states combined had logged less than 3% after 2004-05.

This is because, the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) rules cap the deficit at 3% of gross state domestic product. It requires special permission to go beyond this level.

What are the rules needed to be adopted to check the fiscal deficit?

There are rules needed to cap the deficit as well as ensure transparency.

First, we need a rule that is binding on both the Centre and states. The Reserve Bank of India can be made the care taker to ensure that access to the debt market for states and center closes beyond a prescribed level.

Second, Contingent liabilities must be counted as a part of the fiscal deficit—both of the Centre and states. This will deliver transparency and ensure that debt doesn't build up outside budgets.

Third, guarantees by the government to any publicly-owned entity should be banned. Because, it creates an environment of not taking responsibility for performance and the entity will be forced to operate on commercial terms. If guarantees are gone, they will have to borrow money from the financial system based on their strength and performance.

Fourth, to ensure a certain amount is spent as a capital expenditure a certain portion of the borrowing should be set aside by a rule. This will ensure that the government is building infrastructure. The Finance Commission must strongly mandate the level of capex at 20% or 25%.

4. [A new dawn for nuclear energy](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**A new dawn for nuclear energy**” published in **The Business Standard** on **5th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Energy

News: This article discusses about the issues related with nuclear energy and the position of India in the nuclear power generation.

What is discouraging nuclear energy?

The accidents at Three Mile Island in the US (1979), Chernobyl in the USSR (1986), and particularly Fukushima in Japan (2011) raised a concern for the use on nuclear energy.

But researchers found that stopping nuclear energy production contributed to more deaths in Japan than the accident itself.

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While conventional big nuclear plants have faced difficulties, progress has taken place with small plants.

Submarines and aircraft carriers in the West have used numerous small nuclear plants for decades. Their safety record has been perfect.

Can costs of setting-up nuclear power become low?

It will require **assembly line manufacturing** for making it at a low cost.

Under present calculations, if 12 modules are installed giving a 600 MW plant, the cost of electricity (under first world conditions) is estimated at between \$41 and \$65 per MWh.

In India, both costs (nuclear and renewables) will be higher because of the country risk and the difficulties of the financial system.

Competition, innovation, learning that comes from scale, and manufacturing on assembly lines will all contribute to gains in the cost structure.

What is the situation in India in nuclear power generation?

In India nuclear generation has not worked out well.

The state sector faces problems and progress requires importing nuclear reactors made by private companies.

The economics of large-scale nuclear plants that can be imported from the West is unattractive. Electricity system in India has envisaged a combination of renewables and storage to get to zero emissions.

These things could change if SMR technology gets on a time trend of declining prices.

If it works well then firms in India will see these new SMRs as components that can fit in their business planning.

An SMR is just a cylinder, 23-metre-high and 4.5-metre-wide, which generates 50 MW, which could be put in the corner of a factory.

5. [We may have to recalibrate the country's decarbonization effort](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“We may have to recalibrate the country's decarbonization effort”** published in **The Live Mint** on **6th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Pollution and climate change

Relevance: problems associated in achieving net zero emission.

News: India faces challenge of raising economic growth, achieving decent living standards for all, and lowering carbon emissions simultaneously.

What is the current situation and challenges with India in achieving net zero emission?

Reducing emissions

Target: The latest announced NDC by India aims to increase non-fossil-fuel-based capacity to 50% of overall installed capacity by 2030.

Challenge: The emissions depend on the energy generated not on the installed capacity. Thus, the target of 50% generation might have been better, although tough because of the challenges of land and infrastructure availability and grid stability.

Target: India also pledged at CoP-26 to cut the country's emission intensity of gross domestic product (GDP) by 45% from its 2005 level. It is an increase of 40% over the earlier commitment.

Challenge: This would mean lowering emissions across all polluting sectors, especially energy (thermal power and transportation). It accounts for the highest share (about 60%) of India's total greenhouse gas emissions.

The emission from manufacturing sector is about 20% and the efficiency of our coal-based plants is way below global standards.

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Renewable and Green Energy

Target: Adopting renewable (solar, hydro, and wind etc.) energies is also a challenging task.

Challenges: **1)** domestic availability of raw materials, **2)** cost competitiveness, **3)** access to technology and scalability, **4)** increasing geopolitical conflicts and supply chain disruptions, **5)** availability of green hydrogen, indigenous raw material for batteries and technology.

Solutions: **1)** Having resilient, homegrown manufacturing bases with scalability and cost-competitiveness. **2)** Incentivize green manufacturing which would create jobs as well, **3)** A sharper focus on new sectors such as solar modules, batteries and cell manufacturing.

Decarbonizing Industries

Target: Decarbonizing conventional smoke emitting industries will also be challenging. Crisil's analysis shows that only five sectors (iron and steel, cement, refining, non-ferrous metals, and chemicals) account for about 70% of all industrial emissions.

They also emit a higher intensity of non-CO₂ gases (such as SO_x, NO_x, mercury and methane) and, hence, are hard-to-abate sectors.

Solutions: Green hydrogen-based direct reduced iron (DRI) processes along with the use of renewable energy will eliminate production of blast furnace slag and fly ash.

Recently the cement producers have announced green capital expenditure to meet 100% of their power requirement through renewables.

Challenges: Hydrogen is green only if produced from solar, wind or biofuel sources of energy. Now, the problem is that India's cumulative solar and wind capacity is about 114GW currently. It is too little to meet the goal of 5 million tonnes per annum of green hydrogen generation by 2030, which was announced in the country's Green Hydrogen Policy.

What can be further course of action?

The efforts are needed on indigenous green technology to cut cost, improve scalability and ensure faster adoption.

Financial support either from government or from private investment or negotiations with advanced economies for climate action funds is needed.

There is a crucial need for a holistic, national decarbonization vision that lays out practical goals and guides implementation especially by using our local technological skills.

6. [Fixing the quality problem of Make in India](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "Fixing the quality problem of Make in India" published in **The Business Standard** on **6th September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Industries and industrial policies**

News: There are lots of programmes and incentives announced by the government of India to make India a global manufacturing hub. However, there are many challenges in achieving this goal.

Production-linked incentive schemes are an attempt to make Indian an attractive global manufacturing hub. However, the question arises, would these policies be more successful compared to the previous attempts.

Why is it important for India to become a global manufacturing hub?

First, the recent geo-political tension and supply chain disruption has made compulsory to reduce its dependence on China.

Second, it is not possible to find a solution to rising unemployment without focusing on the manufacturing sector. Manufacturing sectors play an important role in job creation.

What are the challenges, in front of India, in becoming a global manufacturing hub?

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First, India has tried to reduce its dependence on China but the progress made by India is not upto the mark. It has not been able to attract big global strategic manufacturing investment.

Second, India's dependence on China for inputs and manufactured goods has also increased.

Third, there are infrastructure issues, like, the cost and ease of doing business, high taxes as well as frequent policy changes.

Fourth, there are also **regulatory failures in enforcing quality consciousness** among manufacturers. Indian government and regulators have adopted lower manufacturing standards than developed countries. But they have not been able to enforce even those low standards.

For example, Indian automobile manufacturers export products with higher safety norms and at a cheaper price than the ones they sell in the domestic market.

Indian drug makers exporting medicines build and operate manufacturing facilities that pass the US Food and Drug Administration's inspections, but the same medicines sold in the domestic market have far less regulatory scrutiny and made in factories with fewer quality controls.

The excuse often given for lower quality standards is that stricter norms could increase costs sharply, which is a baseless point.

It is often the taxes and infrastructure issues that add to the costs rather than higher quality standards.

Why don't the government and manufacturers in the country focus on producing uniformly higher quality products?

Indian manufacturers did not have to worry about quality before the liberalization.

After the economic reforms of 1991, there was a large gap between what the Indian consumer expected and what consumers in developed markets demanded.

The Indian middle-class consumer often accepted products that their counterparts in developed countries rejected.

This was one of the reasons of adopting low quality standard by Indian manufacturers but the quality is critical in becoming a major manufacturing hub.

India needs to enforce stringent quality norms for goods produced within the country for both domestic and international consumers if it wants to become a manufacturing hub.

7. [Dangerous divergence](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Dangerous divergence**" published in **The Business Standard** on **6th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Inequality in India

News: This article discusses the measures that can be taken to address the regional inequality in India.

Economists have been arguing for a long time that there will be a convergence "convergence", in which similar economic units such as states will eventually converge in output and related indicators, removing inequality.

However, in recent times Indian states have provided little evidence of convergence.

There is a need to address the degree of regional inequality in India else this inequality will pose a major challenge to India's unitary and federal structure.

Data suggests that the richer states, such as those in the south of India, are between 3 to 4 times as wealthy in terms of per capita income compared to populated states of north and east-central India.

Inflation also hits the citizens of poorer states more than it does those in richer states.

How can this inequality be reduced?

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There can be fiscal transfers from the richer states to the poorer ones but there are political issues related to it.

There is a hope that dynamic leadership in the poorer states will bring a business-led change but the problem is that there are other states available to investors for investing.

Public spending might focus on **building up human capital in the poorer regions** rather than on consumption subsidies. But this too will not work unless the returns to human capital in these regions are clear and demonstrable.

Another solution is to enable and protect **internal migration**.

Internal migration acts as a safety valve and equalizes the returns to labor and human capital allocation across regions.

8. [Gorbachev, macro-economics, and Gandhi](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“Gorbachev, macro-economics, and Gandhi”** published in **The Hindu** on **6th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy – Growth and development.

Relevance: About the capitalist model and its alternative.

News: Recently, Mikhail Gorbachev passed away. He has been for his role in ending the ideological conflict between communism and capitalism.

About Mikhail Gorbachev’s political and economic decisions

Economic policy: Gorbachev favoured a slow transition to a “mixed economy” like the Indian model and had even approached Rajiv Gandhi for advice.

With his concepts of perestroika and glasnost, Gorbachev wanted to save common citizens from being oppressed by powerful people.

Political decisions: He also brought down the Iron Curtain and ended the Cold War between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev also helped to bring the world back from the nuclear precipice.

Read more: [Why Rajiv Gandhi hailed Mikhail Gorbachev as ‘crusader of peace’](#)

How did Russia evolve after Mikhail Gorbachev’s Presidency?

Boris Yeltsin: He took power after Gorbachev. During his regime, “big bang” capitalisation was imposed on Russia by U.S. economists. Instead of the Indian model, the “Washington economics” model prevailed.

Note: After 1991, India itself opened up its economy to the US model.

Vladimir Putin: Under him, Russia again moves towards authoritarianism.

Is the capitalist model the best?

No, overall life expectancy is a good measure of the well-being of a nation’s citizens. This is because, when all citizens are well-nourished when public health systems function well, and when violence in society is low, an average person lives longer.

International comparisons reveal that GDP per capita is an insufficient contributor to longevity. Many countries with substantially lower incomes outperform the U.S. in life expectancy.

For example, Cuba is one place above the U.S. in longevity tables even though its income per capita is just 14% of U.S. incomes.

What is the impact on Russia due to the capitalist model?

The big bang capitalist reforms of the Russian economy in 1991 and 1994, life expectancy fell from 64 to 57 years. Many Russian deaths were caused by suicides, alcohol poisoning, homicides, and heart attacks brought upon by despair with joblessness and hopelessness, created by wholesale privatisation of the economy and disruption of social safety nets.

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What are the basis of the capitalist model, and what are the challenges?
It is founded on two fundamental ideas.

The ideology of “property rights” outdoing human rights

In this, whosoever owns more shares in a property must have a greater say. Thus, one dollar owned gives one vote in governance, and a million dollars, one million votes.

This is visible by the **a)** Creation of international tribunals which adjudicate disputes between foreign investors in countries and the governments (representing the interests of millions and billions of people) of those countries, **b)** Global trade rules, and national financial and trade regulations also favour the needs of financial investors, making it easier for them to enter and exit. But the governments stopping human migrants from searching for better opportunities across national borders.

On the other hand, the democratic principle of “human rights” requires that every human being, black or white, or whether billionaire or pauper, has an equal vote in governance.

Read more: [Humanity matters, capitalism needs an upgrade](#)

Hardin’s “Tragedy of the Commons”

It says that communities cannot manage shared resources; therefore, a common property must be privatised for its protection. When a public resource is privatised, those who already have wealth can buy it. Those with more wealth will win and become even wealthier. Thus, inequalities will increase.

What is an alternative to the capitalist model India should follow?

Follow Gandhi’s ethical economics: Concepts of free trade, financial freedom, and privatisation, promoted by macroeconomists, are not good solutions for India’s billion citizens struggling for resilience in their lives.

India’s economic governance must be guided by Mahatma Gandhi’s calculus, with principles of human rights and community management, to realise the promise of our commons, and provide “poorna swaraj” to all citizens.

Read more: [It’s time for the world to reform capitalism from within](#)

9. [Bengaluru today ... Waterlogged plush areas of India’s tech capital are another grim warning to all cities](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Bengaluru today ... Waterlogged plush areas of India’s tech capital are another grim warning to all cities**” published in **The Times of India** on **7th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Disaster and disaster management.

Relevance: About flooding in Bengaluru.

News: Two days of heavy rain in Bengaluru left many areas waterlogged in the city. This again highlights the economic boom, poor urban planning and real estate greed in Indian cities.

How did development led to flooding in Bengaluru?

Before the IT boom, Bengaluru was as much a city of lakes and tanks with interconnected channels as it was a city of parks.

An intricate ecosystem meant for irrigation underwent a rapid change in character with the pace of the city’s development. This led to rise in land prices and scarcity of land.

Many water channels have been choked by concrete from all sides. Few lakes and tanks have been filled up without dredging for years. Changing rainfall patterns aggravated this vulnerability.

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Read more: [\[Yojana October Summary\] The Himalayan Floods – Explained, pointwise](#)

What is the status of other Indian cities on flooding?

Hyderabad, another city of lakes and tanks, is regularly hit by waterlogging, including “flash floods”.

Cities with rivers flowing through them like Mumbai, Chennai and Delhi also face the risks spawned by rapidly depleted floodplains.

Read more: [Urban governance and urban floods: Storm warnings of a megacity collapse](#)

What should be done to avoid flooding in Bengaluru and other Indian cities?

Creation of stormwater drainages: In recent flooding in Bengaluru, areas which underwent stormwater drainage repair did not get waterlogged. So, other cities have to implement such systems and repair them regularly.

Decentralisation of power: Megacities like Bengaluru generating thousands of crores in revenue have not to be micromanaged by a state government. Decentralising governance and devolving powers are key to the new planning and development paradigm.

Bad/corrupt planning and political machinations should be avoided at all costs.

Read more: [Explained: What are flash floods and why they may increase in the next few years](#)

10. [Revidi culture debate: Why we need freebies in India](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Revidi culture debate: Why we need freebies in India**” published in **The Indian Express** on **7th September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Government policies for betterment of vulnerable sections**

News: **Freebies have often been in debate for a while and there is an argument that SC (Supreme Court) and EC (Election Commission) must step in to check these. The article discusses the importance of freebies and the requirement of SC and EC intervention.**

Is judicial or SC intervention required to tackle the issue of freebies?

Promises made by the political parties can be **divided into two types:** Promises made before the elections are announced and those made after.

The government cannot announce new schemes after the declaration of poll dates because of the model code of conduct. However, the promises made in the manifestos do not attract the model code of conduct.

Thus, the **EC cannot question the manifestos as they are perfectly legal**, even if the promises are infeasible.

SC judgment: The SC in its judgment accepted that the promises in manifestos cannot be taken as corrupt practice under the RP Act. However, SC directed the EC to frame guidelines with regard to the content of manifestos in consultation with all the recognized political parties.

However, political parties argued that it is their right and duty towards the voters to make promises through their manifestos. Thus, status-quo maintained. Therefore, neither the EC nor the SC should get involved in this legal and legitimate democratic instrument.

If the promises are unrealistic and absurd it is the duty of the media and opposition to expose them.

The matters of economic policy lie in the hands of elected representatives and neither the EC nor the SC should intervene in the political domain of the legislature.

Why freebies are important?

Rising inequalities: Oxfam’s 2022 annual report on inequality in India shows –

1. The number of poor doubled to 134 million as its dollar billionaires’ wealth doubled.

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2. The richest 1 per cent have amassed 51.5 per cent of the total wealth while the bottom 60 per cent of the population a mere 5 per cent.
3. The reduced funding to local administrations due to the growing privatization in the health and education sectors has further increased inequalities.

Corporate tax cuts: The government recently reduced corporate tax rates for domestic companies resulting in a loss of 1.5 lakh crore, as per oxfam report. To compensate for the shortfall in direct taxes indirect taxes were increased during the pandemic. This led to a rise in fuel prices impacting the prices of essential commodities such as foodgrain.

Fundamental responsibility of state: According to the World Food Program, our nation is home to a quarter of the world's undernourished people. Providing its citizens with food, education and employment is the most fundamental responsibility of a democratic state.

Socio-economic benefits: Promises like cheap foodgrains and free items of utility have been useful for our society. For example, Starvation deaths haven't occurred since Rs 1-2 kg rice was introduced. The distribution of bicycles had improved enrollment and retention of girls in schools in Bihar. Employment guarantee schemes have brought visible relief to the rural poor.

11. [What our new telecom regulatory law should look like](#)

Source – The post is based on the article “**What our new telecom regulatory law should look like**” published in **the Mint** on **7th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Infrastructure

News– The article gives suggestions related to the newly proposed regulatory system by the government of India for the telecommunications sector.

What is the current regulatory structure in the telecommunication sector?

It is regulated by **Telegraph Act, 1985**. It is the colonial era legislation which has been interpreted many times. Its meaning has been extended well beyond the original intent and license has become its predominant feature.

Government has come up with a consultation paper to develop a new regulatory framework that emphasizes on **simplification, comprehensibility** and **regulatory certainty** to promote investment.

What are the suggestions that can be incorporated in the proposed regulatory structure ?

(a) Government should do away with the **license regime**. It should encode regulatory obligation into the law.

(b) Authorization to provide a service should be granted through a simple approval letter that incorporates by reference the provisions of law and specific rules that will apply.

(c) We need to do away with licenses that are redundant. It refers to the service that is no longer required or can be provided through software more efficiently. One example is Audiotex license that regulates conference call services.

(d) We need to simplify the complex set of categories and sub-categories for the services provided by the telecom sector. We need to categorize telecom companies solely based on whether they **provide carriage or access service**. For example;

Carriage service provider-They build and maintain the infrastructure of telecom networks that connects operators in different locations. They should be authorized to provide service to telecom service providers and not directly to customers.

Access service provider-They should be authorized to deal with customers. They can be further divided by function whether they provide only data service or both voice and data service.

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(e) All these regulations should be **technology neutral** by design to save them from becoming redundant on technology change. The regulatory distinction between plain voice service and voice over internet protocol should be removed so that they can be freely converted to each other.

12. Meaning of being fifth

Source – The post is based on the article “**Meaning of being fifth**” published in **The Times of India** on **7th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3-Indian economy – Growth and development

News-Article explains the growth pattern of Indian economy and other economic indicators over a three year period from 2019 to 2022.

India has overtaken the United Kingdom to become fifth largest economy. The economy has followed V-shaped recovery after COVID-19.

The growth in the Indian economy is the highest at 3.83% in three year period.

What is the impact of fiscal boost following COVID-19?

Countries across the world expanded fiscal spending enormously following Covid. It led to high increase in inflation, but prevented a major decline in GDP growth.

India is an outlier among these countries as three year growth is highest even when inflation over the last one year is almost the same. Other countries’ growth was driven exclusively by fiscal spending and India’s growth was driven both by fiscal spending as well as supply side measures.

What is the situation of various components of GDP?

Three engines of growth- These are represented by consumption, investment, and export. Over last year indicators have grown respectively at 26%, 20%, and 15%. Over a three-year period, they have grown respectively at 9%, 20%, and 3.6%. Collectively all these three have grown by 22%.

Fiscal policy must continue to be supportive of growth as all economies are still emerging from COVID shock.

Higher **capital expenditure** is the need of the day as it has multiplier effects and it does not lead to higher inflation.

The rise in imports at 37% over last year can be explained by the fact that oil contributes about a quarter of India’s imports, which doubled over the last year. Increase in oil import bill contributes about two third of 37% increase in imports over the last year.

Fears about rising current account deficit are overestimated. India has faced a macroeconomic crisis only when faced with a Current Account Deficit to GDP ratio greater than 2.5% combined with double digit inflation and very high fiscal deficit. With moderate inflation, comfortable tax revenue, there is no danger of impending macro-instability due to high CAD.

What needs to be done to boost the economy?

We need to implement completely the reforms announced as part of Atamirbhār Bharat, labour law reforms and privatization to boost the economic efficiency.

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13. Unproductive fertiliser policy

Source– The post is based on the article “**Unproductive fertiliser policy**” published in **the Business Standard** on **7th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS-3 – Agriculture

News–The article explains about the issues related to the “one nation, one fertiliser policy”. The new policy mandates fertiliser product of different companies to be marketed under single brand name of “Bharat”.

What are the issues related to the new fertiliser policy?

Although all fertilisers carry a subsidy of almost 80 to 90%, it does not justify government claims to their brand value.

First, it denies opportunities to companies to create their own market space through brand promotion.

Second, it impinges upon farmer rights to buy the fertiliser of their choice.

Third, it is unclear whether this step conforms to provision of law concerning brands and trademarks.

Fourth, it creates disincentive for fertiliser companies to take up field programmes to introduce efficient methods of nutrient application as part of their market promotion activities.

Fifth, the instructions to the fertiliser company to carry on bags the logo of the new scheme called PM Bhartiya Janurvarak Pariyojna has political connotations.

What are the government arguments in support of policy?

Present system results in higher subsidy outgo, especially the freight subsidy by encouraging criss-cross movement of fertiliser from one state to another.

But the argument is flawed as the Fertiliser Control Order, 1985 has enough provisions to curb such practices.

What should be done?

It should provide direct subsidies to farmers. The database and infrastructure for direct benefit transfer already exist with the government. The government should not further mess up with fertiliser sector.

14. The supply side is back on policy radars across much of the world

Source– The post is based on the article “**The supply side is back on policy radars across much of the world**” published in **the Mint** on **7th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS-3 – Indian economy and issues related to growth

News– There is increased focus of central banks and economies towards the sharp increase in inflation and supply side constraints faced by economies across the world. These were the main focus areas of recently held central bankers meeting at Jackson Hole.

What was the practice followed by central bankers to conduct monetary policy in recent times?

Main focus area of monetary policy, especially in advanced economies, has been to manage aggregate demand.

It has been assumed that the supply side would easily adapt to change in aggregate demand as the rise of China expanded labor supply and productive capacity on a global scale.

Temporary supply side disruptions were ignored as steady inflationary expectation and responsive supply side would not lead to higher wages and higher prices.

The moderate level of inflation ensured that the government could provide fiscal stimulus to boost the economy.

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How has the scenario changed in the last two years?

Many of the monetary policy assumptions have been challenged due to supply side disruptions, rising energy prices and issues related to food shortage.

The situation may persist due to geopolitical tensions and rising protectionism across the world. The prominent economist and bankers are talking about rising inflationary pressure and supply side constraints.

What are the important questions raised by the current scenario?

Whether the rigid supply side situation will persist and rise of protectionist sentiment will lead to loss of resilience for the world economy as a whole.

Second is related to supply shocks as the world will learn to adapt to climate change and transition to new forms of mobility, energy and living.

Third is related to the actual micro structure of the economy. Recently the shortage of semiconductors has upset the production of car companies across the world. The complex supply chain across world is vulnerable to shocks even if one link of chain breaks

15. For a stronger economy: We need economic reforms beyond liberalisation

Source: The post is based on an article **“For a stronger economy: We need economic reforms beyond liberalisation”** published in **The Indian Express** on **7th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy – Liberalization

News: The Indian economy was expected to collapse due to the pandemic. Appropriate counter-cyclical policy enabled the recovery and it worked because reforms had reached a threshold of adequacy.

New reforms and measures are required to tackle current economic situation.

What new reforms are required from India?

Liberalization has reached a point of diminishing returns and new reforms are needed to overcome the current economic situation.

The focus should be on adopting the measures that currently favor India.

These include a) the digitization, where India has a comparative advantage, b) supply chain diversification, c) moving to a net zero economy and d) using green initiatives as a source of investment and innovation.

Attention should also be given to a) developing skills and capabilities, b) improving employability, c) improving infrastructure, d) reducing logistics and other business costs through better Centre-state coordination, e) enhancing the quality of governance and counter-cyclical regulation with good incentives, f) improve data use and privacy g) functioning of courts and police.

Why should banks not be privatized?

There is a recommendation to privatise most public sector banks (PSBs).

There is an argument that PSBs drain taxpayers' money but this argument is based on the experience of last decade. PSBs were doing better than private banks in 2000s.

NPA rose because PSBs were pushed to lend to infrastructure where there are inherent asset liability mismatches.

However, after some recent measures, like improvements in governance of PSBs and risk-based lending profiles, NPA ratios have decreased. Even social schemes are now financed through direct subsidies by the government which has benefitted PSBs.

PSBs are trusted by people throughout out the country and it is evident from the opening of 1.7 trillion Jan Dhan accounts.

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PSBs can gain advantage in low-cost deposit deposits through many co-lending opportunities and partnerships.

Private banks alone cannot increase credit when lending from PSBs has slowed.

PSBs should be allowed to compete and raise resources on their own and only those PSBs which are weak can be privatized.

Why rupee should not be made completely market determined?

There are recommendations that the rupee should be completely market-determined. Also, it should be allowed to sink under foreign outflows since this would benefit exporters.

However, the effect of exchange rate depreciation is reflected faster in Indian imports. Because, they are dominated by dollar-denominated commodities such as crude oil.

Indian exporters have little market power and they are forced to bear the cost of depreciation.

Studies show that exporters do not gain from currency volatility and the gain that is earned is usually temporary.

The fall in the exchange rate of the rupee from about Rs 8 in the 1990s to about Rs 80 currently has not brought about a sustained rise in exports.

Lower volatility in the real exchange rate helps both gainers and losers when there are changes in the value of the rupee. The positive and negative deviations from equilibrium real rates are harmful.

Only a fraction of the foreign portfolio flows (FPI) that look for trading benefits gain from volatility. Some rupee volatility is good and encourages firms to hedge currency risks.

16. Policy balance: Higher trade and fiscal deficits can create risks

Source: The post is based on the article “**Policy balance: Higher trade and fiscal deficits can create risks**” published in the **Business Standard** on **8th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Relevance: falling exports and rising imports.

News: Recent data shows India’s exports declined marginally in August on a year-on-year basis, while it contracted by about 9% sequentially. Indian exporters have also reported a shift in demand for low-value products.

What are the reasons for the falling exports and rising imports?

Falling Exports: **a)** Global economy is slowing rapidly, which is affecting demand, **b)** Higher energy prices are upsetting household budgets in many parts of the world, compressing demand for other goods, **c)** Higher interest rates and tightening financial conditions, particularly in the US Federal Reserve, has also affecting exports from India.

Rising imports: **a)** Imports have remained sticky, partly because of higher crude oil prices, **b)** The ongoing recovery in the Indian economy is also pushing up demand for foreign goods.

What are the impacts on the Indian economy due to falling exports and rising imports?

All this resulted in a **widening trade deficit and current account deficit (CAD)** in India. Most economists expect the current account deficit (CAD) forecasts for the year to 3.5 to 4% of gross domestic product compared to 1.2% in the last fiscal year.

What are the opportunities for the Indian economy?

A rise in Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs): FPIs have returned to Indian capital markets after aggressive selling in recent months. But, their participation is anchored on global conditions.

This is because, **a)** Sustained rate hikes by large central banks and tightening financial conditions affected FPI flows to risky assets, such as emerging market equities.

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Reduction in commodity prices: Slower global growth could soften commodity prices.

What are the challenges for the Indian economy?

Geopolitical factors and rising energy prices: Sustained disruption in gas supply from Russia could again push up energy prices.

Higher “twin deficits”: The government at present have a higher fiscal deficit. Along with the CAD, higher “twin deficits” are always a risk for macro stability. This makes the financing of CAD more difficult.

What should be done to avoid the twin deficits?

The government should use the buoyancy in tax collection to improve the fiscal position, and the RBI can focus on CAD.

Visible adjustments in both fiscal and current account positions will help strengthen macroeconomic stability, support economic activity, and boost investor confidence.

17. [The plight of India’s flooded tech capital is striking. But Bengaluru’s predicament is unfortunately not unique.](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“The plight of India’s flooded tech capital is striking. But Bengaluru’s predicament is unfortunately not unique”** published in **The Indian Express** on **8th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Disaster and disaster management

Relevance– About flooding in Indian cities

News-The article explains about the recent flooding in Bengaluru and reasons that led to the current predicament.

The official blamed extreme weather conditions and state government blamed unplanned development and maladministration for current situation.

These types of scenes were witnessed earlier in other cities of India like Kochi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai.

What are the reasons behind these flooding events?

A large number of wetland that soaked up the rainwater has been encroached. Corrupt Civic bodies are responsible for it.

There is poor management of the **urban water drainage system**. CAG pulled up Bengaluru municipality for this poor management.

Urban local bodies complain about lack of resources and low municipal tax rates. But truth is that civic bodies are guilty of **impropriety** in the use of resources. The CAG also found that the Bengaluru municipality did not maintain proper records of the stormwater management funds allotted to it under the JNNURM. It also noted the lack of coordination between the municipality and the [Bangalore](#) Development Authority on drainage-related matters.

18. [What India could do to make progress against climate change](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“What India could do to make progress against climate change”** published in **the Mint** on **8th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environmental pollution and degradation

Relevance– About steps India should take to fight climate change

News- The article provides suggestions related to India strategy to resolve the challenges related to climate change.

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Climate change is a **global problem** that needs **global response**. The 27th climate summit in Egypt and G20 summit in Indonesia are happening when developed countries are facing challenges like the Ukraine crisis, sharp increase in gas prices in Europe and geopolitical tension between US and China.

How India could tackle the challenges related to climate change?

Two things are important- (1) Indian position on negotiation about climate strategy. (2) India's position on international financing for developing countries to manage climate change.

India current strategy of managing climate change: Major targets of our strategy announced at CoP-26 at Glasgow includes-

(1) Net zero emission by 2070 (2) Reducing emission intensity of GDP by 45% by 2045 (3) Renewable energy share of 50% in total electricity generation.

The target of 450GW renewable energy by 2030 is a **supply side element**. It needs to be supplemented by **demand side measures** like 1) reducing fossil fuels in transport through electric vehicles and electrification of railways; 2) promote green hydrogen technologies for heavy industries; 3) increase efficiency of buildings and public transport.

Suggestions related to India strategy for managing climate change:

It needs interventions in many areas and coordination across different levels of government and private sector.

A good strategy is a **10 year program** that is not part of nationally determined contributions to UNFCCC but serves as domestic targets which are the following:

(1) We need to define targets for peak coal use for power generation around 2030 by considering the commissioning of coal power plants currently built and possible phasing down of inefficient one.

(2) A date for peak economy wide emissions needs to be fixed.

(3) Poor financial health of discoms needs to be resolved. We should try to get financing from multilateral investment banks for this purpose.

(4) To increase the share of renewable energy in total power generation requires innovation in electricity regulation and grid management practices.

(5) Minimum energy efficiency targets for household appliances need to be reviewed and set periodically.

(6) Railway's entire traction network needs to be electrified by converting diesel locomotives to electric.

(7) Growth of **green hydrogen** needs to be supported by setting targets for major industries that can shift to it.

(8) State government needs to be encouraged to prepare climate action plans for cities and rural areas.

(9) Separate targets for increasing the share of electric vehicles; expanding EV charging networks and phasing out of internal combustion engines need to be fixed.

(10) There is a need to introduce **carbon tax** and the Energy conservation bill should have provisions for it.

(11) There is a need for more investment in afforestation.

Financing the transition to carbon neutral economy:

It is a major unresolved problem. UNFCCC provides that developing countries will get finance from developed ones.

Paris agreement promised assistance of 100 billion dollar per year by 2020 but it has yet to be realized. Glasgow pact recognized the failure and promised earliest delivery and continuation till 2025.

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Estimates suggest that investment needs of developing countries excluding China comes close to 4% of GDP or almost \$1 trillion per year by 2025.

Developing countries need to accept that a large portion of this amount has to be mobilized domestically. It has to be a combination of public and private flow.

G 7 countries have given no indication of their willingness to provide funding. The upcoming G20 summit will provide some clarity.

19. [Profitability of apple farming: The crisis of apple farmers](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The crisis of apple farmers**” published in **The Hindu** on **12th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country.

Relevance: About the non-profitability of apple farming.

News: Apple growers in Himachal Pradesh are protesting due to the non-profitability of apple farming.

What are the reasons behind the non-profitability of apple farming?

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Himachal Pradesh provided a lot of support to apple production. Such as setting up nurseries and giving plants to farmers on a large scale, offering a transport subsidy on cartons, providing heavy concession on tools, etc. Land reforms restricted the transfer of land to non-agriculturist of Himachal Pradesh.

But in the 1990s, with rising fragmentation of land, low productivity and withdrawal of state support, apple agriculture became unsustainable.

This resulted in **a)** Increasing cost of apple production, **b)** Input cost of fertilizers, insecticides, and fungicides have risen by 300% in the last decade, **c)** Increase in the cost of apple cartons and trays and packaging. For example, increase in the Goods and Services Tax on cartons from 12% to 18%.

All this made farmers sell their produce to big buyers instead of selling it in the open market. The big growers have also started to shift from the conventional varieties to more genetically modified varieties called the spur, most of which are imported from European nations.

Read more: [Artificial Intelligence powered solutions can enable farmers to do more with less and improve farm productivity](#)

How does apple procurement by large players make apple farming non-profitable?

In the open market, the price of apple is decided on the basis of an apple carton. Large players do not buy apples in cartons; they procure them in plastic trays and decide the rate on the basis of a kilogramme.

Unlike in the open market, where apples of all varieties/grades are procured, the large players only procure apples of high quality. Such apples don't constitute even 20%-30% of the total production in a harvest. Further, large players also bring in a substantial fall in procurement prices across the market.

Note: *Jammu and Kashmir ensure legally guaranteed procurement at a Minimum Support Price. But in States such as Himachal Pradesh, the MSP is absent for apple farmers.*

Read more: [Pineapple Agroforestry Systems can Address Twin Challenges of Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss](#)

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What should be done to ensure the profitability of apple farming?

Formation of an independent body: A statutory body must be formed. Such a body should **a)** Have representatives of apple growers, market players, commission agents and the government, **b)** Conduct research in the apple economy, **c)** duly support and trusted by the farmers.

20. [Lending Transparency](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Lending Transparency**” published in The **Business Standard** on **12th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy

News- The article explains the concerns related to loan apps and issues related to recent RBI exercise of vetting loan apps.

The Finance Ministry has asked the RBI to check digital loan apps and compile a “whitelist”. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) has been asked to coordinate with the RBI and service providers such as Google Play and Apple App Store to ensure that only loan apps on the RBI whitelist are available for download.

What are the concerns related to loan apps?

These applications provide loans to vulnerable, tech-illiterate people, and low-income groups at **exorbitant interest rates with hidden processing fees and charges**.

Lenders also use **predatory loan recovery practices** involving blackmailing and criminal intimidation.

There is also the possibility of **money laundering** and tax evasions.

There are also concerns related to **indebtedness of households**. The RBI data shows the financial indebtedness of households was 40% of GDP in May 2021.

What can be done by the RBI?

It can create a checklist of information pertaining to interest rates, fees and other charges, all of which should be clearly published by any loan app.

It could set ceilings on interest rates and impose penalties for violations.

For data protection, the RBI could check the apps that collect more data than strictly necessary to generate credit scores and process loans, and that all such data are collected with permissions, and not shared with other entities. It could publish such data-collection standards in the interests of public safety.

It should work with the Income Tax Department and other departments to detect the cases of money-laundering.

However, the RBI must ensure that it does not exclude legitimate players by setting complicated, opaque standards for whitelisting. It must also ensure that its process of approval or rejection is prompt and offer reasons to the applicant in cases of refusal.

What can be done by other organs of government?

To prevent use of strong arm tactics to extract money from borrowers, executive and the judiciary need to ensure that citizens are not harassed, while accelerating processes of loan recovery.

MEITY could coordinate with Apple and Google to ensure non-compliant apps are kept off these stores.

To prevent “side-load” apps that can be installed by sending a link bypassing Apple and Google app stores, we should educate potential borrowers to avoid these practices.

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21. Making In India. But How?

Source– The post is based on the article “**Making In India. But How?**” published in **The Times of India** on **12th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy

Relevance– About our Production Linked Incentive Scheme.

News- The article explains the Production Linked Incentive Scheme and its future scope.

Production Linked Incentive scheme (PLI), intended to create a sustainable manufacturing base in India.

What is the need for the PLI scheme?

It starts from the premise that India manufactures too little because it suffers from a competitive disadvantage of around 8. 5-11% on account of factors such as lack of adequate infrastructure, high cost of finance; inadequate availability of quality power; neglect of R&D; and the inadequate skills of Indian workers.

Since addressing these weaknesses will take time, the government wants a faster alternative.

GoI through PLIs offer manufacturers a government payment of some percentage, provided they meet incremental investment and sales targets.

Who pays?

The Indian customer pays a higher price because of tariffs if parts are imported

The Indian taxpayer pays for subsidies, not just to Indian firms that are selected for PLI but also to international manufacturers.

How many jobs are being created?

There is no data available on that. We can have a look at imports and export data in the telecommunication sector.

In the last third of 2019 before PLI was introduced , exports were \$1. 6 billion and imports \$4. 4 billion. In the last third of 2021 after PLI was introduced, exports were \$2. 7 billion and imports \$5.

So exports have gone up substantially, but they were already trending up before PLI.

On the other hand, imports were trending down, and now are trending up, which is consistent with PLI encouraging manufacturers to import parts so long as the final assembly is done in India.

What are the main concerns related to the scheme?

1. The producers can shift their production to countries having better investment climates like Vietnam, when PLI ends and achieve scale economies without incurring disadvantages given the small investment required to meet PLI eligibility. There will be little incentive for them to continuously operate in India.
2. Manufacturers could continue to produce, but will require continued tariff and subsidy protection.
3. If PLI-induced domestic production does not become globally cost-competitive, it will reduce exports in other sectors. For example, high cost domestically produced semiconductor through PLI incentives will reduce the competitiveness of two wheeler exports that rely on chips.

There is a need to enhance human capital investment, a feasible land acquisition process, strengthening infrastructure and a predictable tax regime.

22. [China's property bust holds lessons for India](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “China’s property bust holds lessons for India” published in **The Business Standard** on 13th September 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Industries and industrial policy

News: Decline of China’s property market has become a serious concern for it. It also holds important lessons for India.

One of the reasons for the decline of property market in China is limiting the leverage to it. The step has been taken by Chinese government to protect the financial system.

What are the current situations of the private property markets in China?

The real estate sector has been one of the major growth drivers for the Chinese economy over the last decade. But the property sector has seen the steepest decline in over 30 years.

Sales in China’s property market is stuck at 80 per cent of the pre-pandemic levels and show no signs of picking up.

Covid pandemic and government strict credit measures also declined private property markets. Property sales in China this year are the lowest level since 2015.

The majority of apartments in China are built on a pre-sell model by developers. But this model has failed due to lack of confidence among buyers. Buyers have lost faith in the developers that they will complete projects or deliver apartments.

These financial problems have forced developers to suspend construction activity and stop new projects.

Still, Chinese economy has grown due to exports and infrastructure spending despite the decline in the real estate sector.

However, the present economic situation of China will not help it to achieve the 5.5 per cent target set for 2022.

What will be the consequences of slowing property markets in China?

The commodity prices will be impacted in China if construction continues declining.

There will be the divergence of monetary policy between China and most of the developed world.

For example, now the US and EU are tightening policy and financial conditions to fight inflation while China is cutting rates to increase property markets and stabilize its economy.

The US Treasury bond yields are now higher than Chinese government bonds and this yield gap will only grow in the future which will weaken the Chinese currency.

A weakening Chinese currency will put pressure on other emerging market (EM) currencies and no country would like to lose competitiveness to China.

What is the current real estate market situation in India and what lesson India can learn from China?

It suggests how much the real estate sector can be a stimulating factor for the economy and how much it can slow down the economy if it is not working well.

For example, after IL&FS crisis Real estate sector in the India was deprived of funding increasing defaulting builders and real estate NPAs.

However, the real estate in India is booming now due to various reforms brought by the government.

Therefore, India should also focus on the real estate sectors with proper reforms and credit access in the future.

23. [Battling Global Crises Locally](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Battling Global Crises Locally**” published in **The Times of India** on **13th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environmental Pollution and Degradation. GS2- Development and management of health

News– The article explains the difficulty in collective response at international level, as seen in the case of Covid and climate change. Thus, national level policy responses are required to compensate for it.

What are the challenges associated with collective response at international level and how can it be resolved?

Benefits of global public goods like climate change are enjoyed by other countries also due to its spillover effects in terms of reduced global warming.

But the burden falls exclusively on countries reducing emission levels, they are not even incentivized to reduce emissions. Thus, countries pass on this responsibility to each other.

The only way to solve the problem is through international cooperation. **UNFCCC** is an example of joint understanding at international level. The result has been significant yet insufficient progress toward reducing the danger of global warming.

What are the current challenges faced by the existing global framework to fight climate change collectively?

According to its latest **IPCC assessment**, beyond 2020, the world can add only another 500 billion metric tons of carbon to the existing stock. It will cap the increase in temperature at 1.5°C above its pre-industrial level.

But China, US, EU, UK, India, Russia and Japan alone would end up adding 594 billion metric tons of carbon to the atmosphere before bringing their net emission to zero under their nationally determined commitments.

The US and EU-28 account for more than 45% of the existing carbon stock in the atmosphere. They have less than 15% share in the world population and have the highest living standards in the world.

Therefore, the remaining carbon space of 500 billion metric tons can be allocated to poorer nations.

How was the collective global response against Covid pandemic?

Given its global public goods nature, no single country could eradicate the infection fully on its own because there was threat of its reappearance as long as the virus remained active in other countries. Therefore, it was beneficial for countries that discovered vaccines against coronavirus to share it with other countries. Yet, there was limited response to it.

What are the suggestions for countries?

When it comes to global public goods, countries must take supplementary actions at the national level to compensate for suboptimal actions at the international level.

According to a recent book by public servants.

India must expand its production of solar and wind energy. It will not just meet its NDC obligations but also to satisfy the extra demand for Air conditioning that would arise from emission-induced increases in temperatures. States will have to play a critical role in promoting **climate resilient livestock production, climate-smart agriculture and water conservation.**

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Response to pandemic will have to become an integral part of future **disaster risk management strategy** of India. It will have to include developing systems to minimize the spillover effects of epidemics from outside of national borders.

24. [India Industrial Production Index is not beyond repair](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**India Industrial Production Index is not beyond repair**” published in **Live Mint** on **13th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy

News- The article explains the discrepancies in IIP data and suggestions to improve it.

Various analyses have shown that IIP has understated growth in industrial output over the last decade and its unreliability.

Which are the studies conducted on IIP related issues?

Rangarajan Commission in 2001 was the first official panel to flag serious discrepancies in IIP data.

Committee on financial sector assessment by the RBI and Union government in the mid 2000s reiterated the concerns.

National Statistical Commission appointed N.S. sastry for conducting audit of IIP data. It found problems with collection and validation of data.

The Parliamentary standing committee asked for another review in 2012.

The Suamitra Chaudhari panel was set up in 2014.

The National Statistical Commission on real sector statistics in 2018 by Sudipto Mandle raised concerns about IIP reliability and understating growth in industrial output.

A 2020 working panel by some economists raised the issue of bizarre growth in some components of IIP.

What are the issues with the current system?

Post-liberalisation, there is broader erosion in state capacity to track private sector growth.

There is a lack of a comprehensive and dynamic firm level database. The existing

One from the economic census to the MCA-21 are not representative of the entire industrial sector.

There is a lack of effective statistical leadership. The Statistical Ministry is not able to coordinate raw IIP data spread across various Ministries.

Lack of capability with statisticians to validate raw data before accepting it as meaning statistics.

How to make improvements in the IIP index?

Monthly release of index should include number of sampling and no-corresponding units for each item.

GST database can be used. An accurate and dynamic business register is needed.

New databases need to be tested and release in a validated database for public feedback before being plugged into the statistical system.

Statistical governance and disclosure norms need to be improved.

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25. [RBI paper on Climate action has suggestions worthy of adoption.](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**RBI paper on Climate action has suggestions worthy of adoption**” published in The **mint** on **13th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environmental Pollution and Degradation.

Relevance– About global public goods that benefit the whole world population.

News– The article is about the climate risk discussion paper that encourages the financial sector to prioritise green-transition financing and ensure long term system stability by addressing the threats of climate change.

What the consultation paper talk about?

The paper explains **physical climate impact risk** and **transition loss risk** in the financial sector.

It provides broad guidance, good practice for regulated entities in the financial sector about **governance, strategy, processes** and **risk management structure** to address climate risk.

It emphasises on financing opportunities available for climate transition. To have foreign financing in environmentally sustainable business will require incentivisation of green transition from linear economy model to circular economy model.

What are the suggestions put up in the paper?

Extreme weather events and India rank among 10th worst affected countries in climate risk index calls for quick action.

Quantitative and qualitative issues–Both need to be incorporated in **climate risk mitigation strategies**. We need to take a **balanced approach** as regulated entities are saddled with capital commitments, liquidity buffers, cash reserve requirements and CSR requirements.

Qualitative issues-

- Asking for information on climate-impact parameters from corporates during the credit appraisal stage should be mandated.
- strength the **capital buffers** and incentivise the sectors that contribute less towards climate change through **lower risk capital weightage**.
- Due to the absence of data on climate change default probabilities, **stress testing, forecasts or scenario analysis** could be used as short term methodology for loss estimates of lending.

Quantitative issues-

- Sector and region-wise concentration needs progressive rationalisation.
- For reduction in scope 1 emissions i.e., direct emissions by entity and scope 2 emissions i.e., indirect emission like from electricity it buys, investment should be incentivized. It will reduce their carbon footprints by renewable energy and lower carbon footprints across data centres.
- There is a need for an increase in regulated entities financing for newer decarbonisation technology, green hydrogen and renewable energy and reducing the financial entities exposure to polluting industries and promoting lending to cooling technology providers.
- For banks, there is a need to incentivise sustainable financing via risk weight concessions and realignment of PSL guidelines. Climate financing should make up part of 40% PSL targets.
- For regulated entities that meet short of target, there is a need for a mechanism for issuing climate transition certificates on lines of carbon credits.

Ultimately, corporations and regulated entities need to **embed sustainability at the core of their business**.

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26. [Connecting the dots to boost the patent ecosystem](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Connecting the dots to boost the patent ecosystem**” published in **The Hindu** on **14th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – issues relating to intellectual property rights.

Relevance: About India’s patent ecosystem.

News: The recent report of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), ‘Why India Needs to Urgently Invest in its Patent Ecosystem?’, highlights the significance of a robust patent system for a knowledge economy and for the promotion of technological innovations.

What are the key findings of the report on India’s patent ecosystem?

The rising share of residents in the total number of patent applications filed in India has more than doubled during the last decade.

For the first time, the number of patent applications by residents has surpassed that of foreign applications during the last quarter of the financial year 2021-22.

What are the suggestions of the report to improve India’s patent ecosystem?

The report expressed the long pendency of processing patent applications in India as a major concern. So the report suggested **a)** Increasing the efficiency of processing patent applications, **b)** Investigate the patent ecosystem more closely to connect the dots so that appropriate measures are adopted to improve the patent ecosystem.

What are the other concerns in India’s patent ecosystem?

Increasing abandoned applications: The total number of patent applications to the Indian patent office has increased by 48% between 2010-11 and 2020-21. Similarly, the number of abandoned patent applications also increased by almost 350% during this period.

These applications do not meet the requirements under Sections 9(1) and 21(1) of the Patents Act.

The applicants did not refile or submit specifications due to **a)** applicants are not confident, **b)** the long pendency discouraging applicants from following up on their applications.

Incentives to file patents and associated issues: Since the National Intellectual Property Rights Policy 2016, a lot of emphasis has been attached to the filing of patent applications. This resulted in encouraging the filing of patent applications even when the innovator knows that their claims will not pass scrutiny.

India’s poor performance in industry-academia collaboration: India’s score for the industry-academia collaboration indicator has declined over the last few years, from 47.8 in 2015 to 42.7 in 2021. Consequently, India’s ranking in this indicator in the GII declined from 48 to 65 during this period.

Note: India’s improvements in some other indicators have resulted in India’s overall ranking in the GII improving from 81 in 2015 to 46 in 2021.

The draft of the National Auto Policy 2018 points out that collaboration between the industry and academia in India has been limited to niche research areas that have low commercial significance.

What should be done to improve India’s patent ecosystem?

To improve India’s patent ecosystem, India needs to **a)** Eliminate perverse incentives in the system that promote patent filing, **b)** Fasten the entire patent filing system, **c)** Promote the quality of patent applications and **d)** Increase the collaboration between academia and industry.

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27. [About the draft Indian Ports Bill of 2022: An improved Bill, but still contentious](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**An improved Bill, but still contentious**” published in **The Hindu** on **14th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Infrastructure – Ports.

Relevance: About the draft Indian Ports Bill of 2022.

News: The draft Indian Ports Bill of 2022 will replace the Indian Ports Act of 1908.

What is the performance of Indian major and non-major ports?

India has 12 major ports and 212 non-major ports. Most of the non-major ports are small fishing harbours and only a few of them cater to international shipping.

Major ports figure in the Union List and come under the jurisdiction of the Central government. Non-major ports are in the Concurrent List and come under the respective State governments.

Data show that non-major ports have fared much better than major ports. Between 1993-94 and 2021-22, the share of the total cargo of non-major ports went up from 8% to 45%, and the CAGR of cargo traffic of non-major ports was 14% compared to the 4.8% of major ports.

Major ports performed various port functions with their own staff and equipment. States developed non-major ports almost entirely on a public-private partnership (PPP) basis. For instance, Gujarat developed India’s first private port, largest captive port, largest commercial multipurpose port, etc.

Maritime State Development Council (MSDC): It serves as an apex advisory body for the coordinated development of major ports and non-major ports. It has met only 18 times in the last 25 years.

What are the issues associated with the draft Indian Ports Bill of 2021?

A few major provisions of the [draft Indian Ports Bill of 2021](#) are, the bill **a)** Give statutory status along with wide-ranging powers and functions to the MSDC, **b)** Make MSDC a permanent body with its own office, staff, accounts and audit, **c)** Empower the MSDC to formulate a national plan, to be notified in the official gazette, for the development of major and non-major ports, **d)** Order an appropriate inquiry if any port contravenes the national plan, and **e)** Empowered the Centre to make a port non-operational if it was not in consonance with the national plan.

The maritime States oppose the 2021 bill as they thought **1)** A statutory-cum-permanent MSDC will curtail their powers to develop and manage non-major ports, **2)** The bill reflects Socialist-era issues of Central planning and Inspector Raj.

What are the changes in the draft Indian Ports Bill of 2022?

The Bill dropped or toned down many of the 2021 bill provisions. However, the Bill **a)** Retained the MSDC as a statutory-cum-permanent body, **b)** Authorise the Central government to entrust any administrative and financial functions to the MSDC.

What are the challenges with the draft Indian Ports Bill of 2022?

Does not resolve the main issue of disagreement between the Centre and the maritime States: A statutory-cum-permanent MSDC will make the better performing non-major port struggle with the issues of major ports. It will choke future development of non-major ports and stifle novel initiatives by the maritime States.

Ensure that the composition of the MSDC is in favour of the Centre: The Bill makes five Secretaries and one Joint Secretary to the Government of India, besides the administrators of the coastal UTs, as members. Further, the vote of an officer is also counted the same as the vote of a Minister.

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What should be done to make the draft Indian Ports Bill of 2022 holistic?

1) Like the Goods and Services Tax Council, the MSDC should consist only of the concerned Ministers of the Union and maritime States/UTs; officers should only be special invitees.

2) Ports in Germany, the US and China are managed at the municipal and regional levels. A 2011 World Bank Report, 'Regulation of the Indian Port Sector', observed that non-major ports are perceived as "more business-oriented, customer friendly, cheaper and in general more efficient."

So the Centre should understand that the ports are best managed by local and regional governments.

3) The draft Bill relating to the MSDC must be scrapped and the MSDC should remain an apex advisory body.

Overall the centre should work towards greater decentralisation, deregulation, corporatisation and private sector participation.

28. [An opportunity for India Inc](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Connecting the dots to boost the patent ecosystem**" published in **The Hindu** on **14th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Relevance: About Indian business activities.

News: At present, businessmen are seen not as wealth creators but as nation builders. Corporate India receives trust, goodwill and confidence from the nation, and it must provide returns to the nation in equal measure.

What is the present state of Indian business activities?

Challenges with corporate: Corporate India focuses on brand power, digital technology, talent pools, scales of operations, and global connectivity. So, Corporate India's response to the country's job crisis has been more symbolic than substantial.

Challenges with the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs): **a)** Much of India's blue-collar employment is generated in SMEs and in its sprawling gig economy. The jobs thus created are sub-optimal with low wages and unstable working conditions, **b)** Some 45% of India's manufacturing takes place in garments units, hazardous chemical factories and in unsafe engineering workshops.

What should be done to improve Indian business activities?

1) Learn from Taiwan: Technology and innovation in Taiwan has transformed its low-level economy into a part of a global value chain. Taiwanese SMEs which manufactured cotton shirts, plastic flowers and wooden toys are now producing memory chips and laptops and assembling smartphones.

The Government's ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) and collaboration from other corporate can also transform Indian SMEs.

2) India's SME sector needs to modernise itself with the help of digital technology, professional management and better scale of operations.

3) India's corporate sector can extend a helping hand across the aisle to help the SMEs achieve a transformation. This helping hand should be market-driven and backed by a strong value proposition.

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4) Indian food is popular worldwide. However, India has not been able to create a McDonald's or KFC to bring Indian food to the world stage as a global business in scale and sophistication. So, the corporates has to utilise this space.

5) Across the world, the informal sector is steadily evolving into the formal sector in partnership with the organised industry which is creating innovative business models. For instance, Uber, Ola, etc. This model could now be replicated in other situations. This can create a win-win situation for both corporates and informal sector.

Mahatma Gandhi's insight that "what we need is not mass production, but production by the masses" must be an enlightened vision of Indian business.

29. [Don't curb rice exports in anxiety over evidence](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Don't curb rice exports in anxiety over evidence**" published in **The Live Mint** on **14th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country

News: Recently the Centre has imposed a 20% export duty on some varieties of rice and a complete ban on broken-rice shipments.

This has delivered an instant shock to traders and exporters.

India's reputation as a reliable trade partner was already hurt by the Centre's decision in May to stop wheat exports. The ban came after it declared to "feed the world" in response to the global food shortages caused by the Ukraine war.

The latest decision to ban rice exports is a bigger concern to India's reputation worldwide.

What are the issues associated with the ban on exports of rice?

Exporters

The ban and high import duty has affected the exporters.

The price of the rice has gone up and the buyers are not ready to buy at that price. Therefore, around 1 million tons of outbound rice is estimated to be stuck.

Farmers

The ban on export can also affect farmer's income as the rice ban will increase stocks and the new harvested crops will not be bought from farmers.

Food security

India is the world's top exporter of rice. It has shipped 21.2 million tons of rice in 2021-22.

The export ban will lead to food security concerns all over the world.

However, it is necessary for India to ensure that its citizens get enough food and domestic priority should be given more importance.

With the help of different scheme like NFSA, 2013 India has ensured that there is enough food to meet the nation demands at the time of high food inflation.

Why India should not put ban on export of rice?

The ban has been put due to the fear for food shortages in India.

There has been a deficient rain in some paddy growing states this year causing low output. Still, there are other states where paddy has grown in abundance.

Central buffer stocks are down from 31.7 million tonnes at the start of July to 24.5 million tonnes in September. However, it is still almost twice the country's required minimum level.

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Therefore, it seems that there will be price stability and enough grain supplies for the nation.

What are other concerns for India and what can be future course of action?

India has also put a ban on the exports of steel.

These measures from the government raise overall cost of doing business and goes against the perception of an open economy.

Therefore, the government should stay away from these decisions and it is best to rely on RBI for controlling the inflation.

30. Moonlighting & market: Should employees have side gigs? Bosses & HR gurus are divided. But answer is in supply & demand

Source– The post is based on the article “**Moonlighting & market: Should employees have side gigs? Bosses & HR gurus are divided. But answer is in supply & demand**” published in **The Times of India** on **14th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy (Employment)

Relevance– About Moonlighting

News- The article explains the concept of moonlighting and concerns of employers about this new concept.

Moonlighting has expanded exponentially during pandemic. It is prevalent in sectors where demand outstrips supply, like IT sector.

A PwC survey found that 54% of respondents strongly or moderately agreed that India faces a shortage of their skill sets.

What are some facts about moonlighting?

It is related to employees doing jobs on the side of their contracted full-time work.

It expanded exponentially during the pandemic period.

It is resisted by major employers who want to restore their white-collar works to the definition of pre-pandemic level.

What are employers' viewpoints about moonlighting?

(a) Some employers are worrying about productivity. They are concerned about IP (Intellectual Property) leaks and conflicts of interest. For example, Infosys has called it “two-timing” and the Wipro chairman called it “cheating, plain and simple”.

(b) Others are open to the idea of companies working productively with employees without having exclusive ‘ownership’ of them. For example, Swiggy and Cred have greenlighted moonlighting.

According to them, moonlighting can help one do one’s day job better.

An American study published in the Academy of Management Journal last year found that it made employees feel empowered. It resulted in uplifting their mood and increasing performance.

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31. [The governance model to take on climate change](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The governance model to take on climate change**” published in **Live mint** on **14th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Climate change. GS2- Important aspects of governance.

Relevance– About governance model

News- The article looks into the collaborative governance model needed to manage the ongoing transition in the world economy.

Why is there scepticism about the government’s ability to lead the transition?

Polarisation and **authoritarian populism** have undermined the capacity of societies to mount collective action at local and international levels.

Government has neither sufficient information nor the capabilities necessary to achieve positive structural change in the economy. If given too much power, they will direct resources toward the wrong places. They will promote special interests.

What are the policy challenges on climate?

Governance is difficult here. The regulations must not only be effective at the national level, they also must be negotiated globally among states with different interests and circumstances.

Why is the Montreal protocol successful in comparison with UNFCCC?

Both have similar challenges because both involve significant scientific and technological uncertainty. There are also major differences among the positions of advanced and developing economies. This is the reason why UNFCCC took Montreal protocol as its model.

Case of Montreal protocol– Montreal Protocol created sectoral committees in which ODS emitting firms joined national regulators and scientists in seeking technological alternatives.

These groups multiplied as knowledge was accumulated, capabilities were acquired and trust was built among parties.

This approach worked because the problem solving was devolved to local actors called firms with the requisite technological know-how.

Case of UNFCCC– Under the climate regime, firms have been kept at arm’s length from regulators. This has created conflicts of interest and hampered innovation.

What are other successful examples?

There are examples like the US Advanced Research Projects Agency–Energy (ARPA-E) Ireland’s agricultural-pollution regime.

In each case, ground level experimentation is coupled with higher level goal setting.

At the local level, the most successful initiatives took the form of private-public collaborations. They bring together training programs, businesses, non-profit groups and public officials.

What should be the proper strategy?

We should start out with **ambitious, somewhat ill-defined goals**. Program leaders must acknowledge deep uncertainty and hence the likelihood of mistakes.

We must use a **carrot and stick approach**. There must be incentives for the parties with the most detailed and accurate information. There must also be a threat of regulation.

There is a **need for frequent reassessments and revisions, setting milestones and monitoring progress**. When solutions do emerge, they can be generalized in the form of standards or regulations.

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This kind of policy making differs from current approaches. **The 'state versus market' dichotomy is simply irrelevant.** States and markets are complementary. The standard top-down, principal-agent model of regulation is not useful.

32. Labouring under an illusion

Source- The post is based on the article **"Labouring under an illusion"** published in **The Indian Express** on **15th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Employment

News- The article explains the complex labour laws in our country and reforms needed in the system.

Employment elasticity of growth has declined. It is half of what it used to be two decades ago.

What are the reasons behind low employment elasticity?

Labour laws are very rigid. There are about 50-55 Union laws. Their definition differs, which increases the scope of litigation and complicates case law.

There is a lack of harmonisation in these laws as they were enacted at different times.

Sections of the Industrial Disputes Act related to lay-offs and closures are offending.

It increases the non-wage transactions cost of hiring labour.

Complex labour law affects the working of an enterprise in all three stages of life cycle- entry, functioning and exit.

Which states have introduced flexible labour laws?

Economic survey classifies states into those having flexible labour laws and those without them. Almost half of the states have introduced flexible labour laws.

What is the meaning of flexibility?

It does not always mean statutory changes. It can be done by flexible orders and regulations.

Why is it difficult to assess the impacts of flexibility?

First, there is not a long enough time-series.

Second is the lack of data sources. The only data source is the Annual Survey of Industries.

Third, Services are covered by state level Shops and Establishment Act.

Fourth, Covid has disrupted the labour market.

Fifth, technology has turned the manufacturing sector into capital-intensive and there is an increasing trend of contract labour.

Sixth, labour intensity is a function of labour prices and capital. It is influenced by subsidies and tax exemptions.

What steps have been taken by the Union government and state governments?

On the recommendations of the Second National Labour Commission (2002), and several other reports, the Union government unified 29 statutes and passed (2019, 2020) four Codes on wages, safety (and health), industrial relations and social security. These are statutory changes, to be followed by new rules under the new Codes.

Except for two or three large states, most states have announced these rules

What needs to be done?

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Labour market rigidities and complex procedures also exist in state-level Shops Establishments Acts. These need to be made flexible in the spirit of Model Shops and the Establishment Act.

33. [Is The Long Wait For Private Investment Over?](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Is the Long Wait For Private Investment Over?**” published in **Times of India** on **15th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy.

Relevance– About investment

News- The article explains the current scenario of investment in India.

There are favourable macroeconomic indicators that can lead to higher investment in the fiscal year 2023.

What are the macroeconomic indicators which are not favourable?

Gross Fixed Capital Formation that is private investment, was at its peak at 34.3% in 2012-13. It has been in the range of 30-32% since that time.

Share of the manufacturing sector in GDP remains below the stated government policy of 25%. It was 17.4% in 2020.

Labour force participation rate was below 40% in 2022.

What drives private investment in India?

Government capital expenditure is insignificant to drive private investment.

External causes had a negative impact on the investment cycle in recent years. It explains the need for durable growth and demand outlook to spur private investment.

What are the factors conducive to private investment?

Balance sheets of both corporates and banks have improved. Both **corporate debt to GDP ratio** and **NPAs** have declined.

Central government policy of high capital expenditure can create a strong multiplier effect for the economy.

Corporate profitability is at a high despite higher input cost pressures.

Capacity utilisation is improving. It was at 74.5% in March 2022 and surpassed the pre-pandemic level.

At 15.1% in July 2022, credit growth is highest in nearly 2.5 years.

According to **RBI's Industrial Outlook Survey**, business confidence among corporates has recovered well above pre-pandemic levels.

Atmanirbhar Bharat policy can offset global slowdown.

34. [Synchronize policies to counter weak growth and high inflation](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Synchronize policies to counter weak growth and high inflation**” published in **The Live Mint** on **16th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy – Growth and Development

News: This article discusses the problem associated with the rising inflation and measures that can be taken to tackle this.

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The Indian economy has suffered a huge set-back with the pandemic. However, with the efforts of RBI and government, it is reviving still there are other problems emerging that need attention.

What is the current situation of Indian economy?

The headline inflation rate in India has remained above RBI's upper tolerance limit of 6% since January and now has again exceeded 7%.

The reason behind high headline inflation is high food and energy price inflation across the world. It has brought the challenge of low growth and high inflation, which requires the close fiscal-monetary policy coordination for resolution.

How coordination of fiscal-monetary policy can help?

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently reportedly remarked that RBI cannot contain inflation on its own. Some of the facts make this statement true.

There is a significant supply disruption both at home and abroad due to various factors like Ukraine crisis. RBI's policy instruments are not particularly effective in addressing supply constraints.

Given supply constraints, RBI can impose exceptionally harsh contractionary policies to curtail demand, even for necessities like food. These policies may lower the inflation rate but poor households will be the most affected.

Therefore, it is required that central and state government should intervene in using its fiscal measures to ease the restrictions from the supply side.

What can be the further course of action to tackle the increasing inflation?

First, there should be close coordination between RBI and the government to tackle this issue.

Second, government can intervene by taking different measures like easing domestic infrastructure, imposing temporary restrictions on exports of essential commodities, etc.

Apart from the intervention the central government's fiscal policy should continue to focus on stimulating aggregate demand and reviving growth.

Third, the Tinbergen rule should be followed. This rule says that the monetary and fiscal policy instruments should be separately assigned to address the two different policy goals of reducing inflation and reviving growth.

35. [A shimmer of hope for the golden fibre as demand for shopping bags rises](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**A shimmer of hope for the golden fibre as demand for shopping bags rises**" published in **The Business Standard** on **16th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues

Relevance: issues with the jute industry and measures to improve them

News: The government has recently banned single use plastic bags and this has led to an increase in the demand for jute bags. However, the jute industry faces many challenges and has to stay in line with this demand.

Jute is 100 per cent biodegradable and environment-friendly.

What is the current situation of jute industry in India?

Jute mills mainly focus on exporting jute bags due to the high global demand.

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According to data from the Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA), export of jute handbags was about 47 million in 2015-16 and increased to 104 million in 2021-22.

Shopping bags account for about 50 per cent of the export basket for most mills.

However, there are many problems this industry is facing.

What are the problems with the jute industry in India?

Market diversification: The jute industry in India is small and only few mills have taken the advantage to export.

This sector is highly dependent on government orders and small to medium sized mills are producing almost 100 per cent government orders.

The size of the jute industry is about Rs 10,000 crore out of which the government is procuring around Rs 7,500 crore of jute bags. The rest is exported to various firms.

Only few large companies with modernised facilities are generating 30-40 per cent of their revenue from exports.

Financial Issues: The other problem is the financial condition of the jute industry is challenging.

Regulations: The jute sector is a highly regulated sector. The government determines the minimum support price (MSP) of jute crops for each crop year and jute bag prices are fixed on a price formula of the Tariff Commission.

The Jute Packaging Materials Act (JPMA), 1987 has mandated that 100 per cent of food grain and 20 per cent of sugar production is packed in jute bags.

But the margins on government orders are low. It lies between 5 and 7 per cent for jute bags other than shopping bags which has over 10 percent margin.

What are the challenges with the low margin in the jute?

The low margin has various challenges.

For example, the jute production was very low in the year 2021 which led to the minimum carryover for FY 2022. This caused the rise in jute prices upto Rs 7000 – 7200 per quintal.

The government announced maximum procurement price of raw jute in September 2021 which was around Rs 6,800 while the MSP was Rs 4500 per quintal.

In many cases, the government-mandated maximum price of raw jute doesn't work. However, this price cap didn't work and jute mills had to buy raw jute at higher prices. This led to the closure of operations in about 15 jute mills.

What can be further course of action?

First, the jute industry's dependence on the mandatory sector is another challenge. There is a need to develop new markets for jute products in order to make this industry survive. The other probable markets may be soil savers and jute geotextiles. But we need research and development to figure out where jute fiber is required.

Second, there is currently demand for shopping bags only in export markets. However, with the ban on single-use plastic items, it is expected there will be a rise in the demand in the domestic markets as well.

Third, Bring Your Own Bag campaign (BYOB) campaign has been represented before the Ministry of Textiles. This campaign focuses on using reusable bags.

However, in India, campaigns can lift the demand but industries also need to push towards modernization to grab the market and bring back the lost shine in the jute (golden fiber).

36. [Reintroduction of Cheetah](#)

Source– The post is based on the articles “**Why the return of cheetah is a powerful symbol**” published in the **mint** and “**Cheetahs will do well as India has history of their Presence**” in **The Times of India** on **17th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

Relevance– About species reintroduction

News– The article explains the government action plan for African Cheetah reintroduction to Kuno National Park.

Eight African Cheetahs will be reintroduced to Kuno national park.

The last Cheetah was recorded in 1947. After independence, it became extinct.

What is the plan for the Cheetah reintroduction to Kuno?

The cheetahs will be first released in large fenced areas for adapting to the new environment. They will be fitted with satellite collars to track their movements.

After a short stay, they will be released into a large enclosure to make them familiar with the new environment. Here they will remain for around a month before being released into the wild.

Their movements will be monitored by researchers.

What are the issues related to reintroduction?

The animals being brought are southeast African Cheetah. It is a different subspecies from Asiatic Cheetah.

Instead of being allowed to run wild, they will be held up in tightly controlled Kuno national park.

Earlier plans to relocate Asiatic lions from Gujarat to Kuno national park were not successful.

Other cats will have to be removed first. Recently, leopards entered into enclosures meant for Cheetah into Kuno national park.

It will have to survive alongside tigers and leopards. The habitat of cheetahs is totally different from that of tigers and leopards. Cheetahs thrive in grasslands while tigers and leopards survive in dry deciduous forests.

What are the factors favouring its reintroduction?

It can survive in Indian habitats. Kuno is the same place where cheetahs once existed. The area has grasslands and forest habitats appropriate for this species.

African and Indian cheetahs have little genetic difference.

How will reintroduction of the species help?

Bringing back cheetahs will **restore the historic evolutionary balance**. Dryland ecosystems of India will have a chance to return to their natural state as it is the flagship species of grasslands.

It will also uplift the **livelihood of the indigenous forest communities**. It will increase tourism as India is the only country where all the six big cat species are found.

In saving the cheetah, grassland-dependent species like caracal, which are on the brink, will also be saved.

Project Cheetah will boost the ecosystem and biodiversity where it will live.

What needs to be done?

Other cats that are extinct like caracals also need attention.

We need to focus upon other Indian animals like great Indian bustard and vultures.

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Cheetah conservation can be used for consolidation of grassland and shrubland that are languishing.

37. Climate change as business: Crisis, opportunity and everything in between

Source: The post is based on an article “Climate change as business: Crisis, opportunity and everything in between” published in **The Business Standard** on **17th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Climate Change

News: There is a need to take steps towards climate change and adopt net zero emission targets as soon as possible.

This net zero target will not only have a positive impact on the climate but it will also change the economic activities of the nation.

How will the net zero goal change the economy?

It will help in transformational economic change through massive investment.

This change will be seen in almost every major industry and it will also give boost to businesses like solar panels and batteries amongst others.

For example, new hydrogen pipeline grids may supplement existing ones for gas and oil, and charging stations could be found everywhere.

Therefore, net zero target has led to the opportunity for new businesses.

How climate change has led to different business opportunities?

Reliance has asked the Gujarat government for 1,800 sq km of land in Kutch for its green energy project.

Public sector companies like Indian Oil and NTPC, Larsen & Toubro and ReNew Power, among others, are also in the race to catch the new opportunities.

Ola has already taken opportunity in e-scooters.

Investment by big companies now focuses on electric cars and scooters, electric traction for the railways, and scaling up of solar and wind energy farms.

Even though climate change brings new opportunities for businesses but there are many businesses that will suffer.

Businesses like travel and hospitality, office-wear market, cinema halls and commercial real estate are some of the businesses that will suffer because of the change in human activities.

How climate change will impact human activities?

Digitization, virtual communication and data revolution will help in decarbonizing human activities.

This will lead to a change in the traditional methods of communicating or living.

For example, daily travel will be changed with virtual meetings and offline education with online education, etc. These will have impacts on long-term lifestyle changes.

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38. [Ease of moving – Lower logistics costs will boost output](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Ease of moving-Lower logistics costs will boost output**” published in the **Business Standard** on **19th September 2022**.

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

Relevance– About the benefits of National Logistics Policy(NLP).

News: The Prime Minister has recently launched National Logistics Policy(NLP) to help Indian businesses improve efficiency.

What are the previous reforms in the Logistics sector?

a) The Union government created the Logistics Division in the Department of Commerce in 2017 to enable the integrated development of the sector, **b)** A draft logistics policy was published in 2019, but the implementation was delayed, partly because of the pandemic, **c)** The government recently revised the land use policy of the Indian Railways to enable longer-term leasing of surplus railway land at a much lower rate for setting up cargo terminals, among other things, **d)** A number of state governments have formed their logistics policy.

Read more: [How the economy gets a boost from efficient logistics](#)

What are the expected benefits of NLP?

Improve infrastructure: India’s infrastructure deficit is often regarded as one of the biggest constraints in rapid economic growth. The NLP will improve India’s logistical infrastructure.

Address the fragmentation: India’s logistics sector is extremely fragmented, which adds to the cost of doing business. According to one estimate, the sector involves over 20 government agencies and a host of certifications.

Creates employment: An increase in systemic efficiency will boost overall activity and help create employment even in the logistics sector, which supports the livelihood of over 22 million people.

Brings digital service providers together: Along with the NLP, the recently launched Unified Logistics Interface Platform will help bring all digital services in the transport sector to a single portal.

Increase exports: Lower logistics costs will make Indian businesses more competitive and help push up exports, which can become an important driver of growth and employment generation over the medium term. For instance, a 10% reduction in logistics costs is estimated to push up exports by 5-8%.

Further, the logistics policy will build on the PM Gatishakti plan, which is expected to provide multimodal connectivity in various economic zones.

Read more: [How the logistics policy will speed up lumbering freight sector](#)

What should be done to improve the logistics sector?

a) The Union and all state governments work together to address inefficiencies in the logistics sector, **b)** The overall objective of reducing logistics costs by NLP will depend on sustained investment in the infrastructure sector. So the government should frame attractive policies to sustain investment in the sector.

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39. [Funding the future: GoI reverting to earlier funding rule for research bodies is welcome. But India spends too little on science](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Funding the future: GoI reverting to earlier funding rule for research bodies is welcome. But India spends too little on science**” published in **The Times of India** on **19th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education.

Relevance– About the R&D in India.

News: Recently, the government reversed a procedural rule to facilitate the flow of funds to national research institutes.

About the procedural rules for R&D

In March, a new workflow rule **mandated zero-balance accounts for each project** replaced the system where institutes’ central accounts allocated funds. The new system was meant to free researchers from controls of university procedures.

This resulted in **a)** Opening these accounts was time-consuming, **b)** The advantages of a large pool of money coming into a central account were lost. For instance, interest earned from a central corpus helped researchers pay for administrative overheads. So the government reversed the decision.

What is the actual problem with R&D in India?

Despite India’s economic transformation over 30-plus years, India’s R&D spending is too little. As per the Niti Aayog’s latest India Innovation Index report, the per capita gross expenditure on R&D (GERD) is just \$43 (the total spend is 0.7% of GDP) against \$1,800 in the US (total spend 3.4% of GDP) and \$325 (total spend 2.4% of GDP) in China.

Must read: [Research and Development in India: Status, Challenges and Recommendations – Explained, pointwise](#)

What should be done to improve R&D in India?

Ensure the proper functioning of NRF: In the 2020 Union budget, the government promised to set up an apex National Research Foundation with a Rs 50,000 crore outlay and a spending timeline of five years.

The government must clarify how the NRF will work with existing central funding agencies like DST, DBT, CSIR, SERB, ICAR and ICMR.

Read more: [India’s Research and Development \(R&D\) activities has achieved far less than it’s potential](#)

40. [The gender pay gap, hard truths and actions needed](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The gender pay gap, hard truths and actions needed**” published in **The Hindu** on **19th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Relevance: Gender pay gap and issues related to it

News: International Equal Pay Day 2022 falls on the 18th of September. This day makes us think of the gender gap that has arisen between women and men. The commitment towards ‘equal pay for work of equal value’ has not been achieved.

What has led to the increase in the gender pay gap?

Pandemic: The pandemic affected women workers most in terms of job and income losses. Many women have gone back to full-time care of children and the elderly during the pandemic.

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Economic recovery from the pandemic is impossible without improving women's employment rate and reducing the gender pay gap.

Discrimination: Another reason for the increase in the gender pay gap is discrimination based on gender or sex.

Gender-based discriminatory practices include lower wages paid to women for work of equal value, undervaluation of women's work in highly feminised occupations and enterprises, etc.

However, there are many steps taken at the international level to bridge the gender pay gap.

What steps have been taken internationally to address the gender pay gap?

The United Nations have taken efforts at the international level to eliminate all form of gender inequality. The ILO has enshrined 'equal pay for work of equal value' in its Constitution.

The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** provides an international legal framework for realising gender equality.

One of the targets of the **UN Sustainable Development Goal 8** is "achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities and equal pay for work of equal value" by 2030.

Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) was launched in 2017 as a multi-stakeholder initiative led by the ILO, UN Women and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) seeks to achieve equal pay for women and men everywhere.

What is the current situation of women's wages?

Internationally: According to the Global Wage Report 2020-21 of the International Labour Organization, there is massive downward pressure on wages and this has affected women's total wages compared to men.

At the India level: The gender pay gap in India remains high by international standards despite the efforts taken in bringing down the gender pay gap.

The estimates from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2020-21 show an increase in the gap by 7% between 2018-19 and 2020-21 due to the pandemic.

However, labour force survey data of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) indicates that the gender pay gap has declined from 48% in 1993-94 to 28% in 2018-19.

What steps have been taken by India to decrease the gender pay gap?

India has taken required reforms in the **Minimum Wages Act in 1948** and adopted the **Equal Remuneration Act in 1976**. India has also enacted the Code on Wages.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in 2005 has also benefited rural women workers and helped reduce the gender pay gap directly and indirectly. MGNREGA has helped women workers directly by raising their pay levels and indirectly by providing higher earnings to women involved in agricultural occupations.

India amended the **Maternity Benefit Act of 1961** which increased maternity leave with pay protection from 12 weeks to 26 weeks for all women working in firms that employ 10 or more workers.

Skill India Mission has helped women to learn market-relevant skills to bridge the learning-to-livelihood gap and the gender pay gap.

What can be the further course of action to bridge the gender pay gap?

Accelerated and bold action is needed to prevent a widening of the gender pay gap and closing the existing gap. Equal pay for work of equal value is necessary to close the gender pay gap.

Closing the gender pay gap is a key to achieving social justice for working women as well as economic growth for the nation.

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41. Out of tune: An orchestra of multiple instruments is required to deal with the continuing high inflation

Source: The post is based on an article “**Out of tune: An orchestra of multiple instruments is required to deal with the continuing high inflation**” published in **The Indian Express** on **19th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources.

Relevance: Inflation and issues associated with it

News: Covid pandemic and Ukraine war has led to the rise in inflation. The inflation is currently at 7 percent (CPI-based) and 12.4 percent (WPI based). However, inflation in India is better when compared to other countries.

What is the situation of inflation in India compared to other countries across the world?

India has done well when compared to the US and most European countries where inflation is higher ranging from 8 to 12 percent.

The rate of inflation in India is also lower than in Turkey (80%), Pakistan (27%) and Sri Lanka (64%).

What is the current situation of the Indian economy and what can be done?

Inflation

Problems: RBI and MPC have been entrusted to keep inflation within the 4 +/- 2% band but targeting inflation should not be the only objective. Inflation has also impacted the GDP growth of the country.

Solution: Finance Minister has recently said that inflation management requires organization and coordination of many policies. Monetary policy alone cannot tackle inflation.

Therefore, monetary policy along with fiscal, trade and tariff policy, food and agricultural policy, and infrastructure policy should work together to control inflation.

Fiscal deficit

Problem: Fiscal deficit has crossed 10% of GDP (Centre and states combined) for continuously three years. This deficit is causing inflationary pressures along with loose monetary policy.

Solution: A tight fiscal policy is needed.

However, India has effectively managed its inflation despite various problems.

How has India tried to manage its inflation?

India has effectively managed its inflation during the pandemic hit and protected its GDP growth also. This is done by **a)** Not giving an excessive stimulus to boost consumption demand, **b)** Spend more on infrastructure building that had a high multiplier effect on GDP which created demand, **c)** Recent deal with Russia for importing crude oil at discounted prices was part of an inflation management strategy.

What can be the further course of action to control inflation?

India needs better macroeconomic management to put inflation at 4% with GDP growth at 7%.

The measure that can be taken are –

First, there is a need to re-orienting public policy from freebies to investments in rural areas. India needs to focus to create more and higher productive jobs, better rural infrastructure, improving the competitiveness of agriculture, agro-based industry and the MSME sector.

Second, there is a need for higher R&D allocations in agriculture. This will help to develop climate-smart agriculture with an increase in food supplies. Stable and higher farm productivity is required during unexpected climate change to control food inflation.

Third, there is also a need to rationalize the food and fertilizer subsidies that are expected to increase to Rs 5 lakh crore in 2022-23.

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Fourth, food and beverages have a 45.86% weight in the CPI basket in India. The weights of food and beverages in the CPI basket need urgent revision.

42. [Agriculture start-ups: Breaking ground and filling the gaps](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Breaking ground and filling the gaps**” published in **The Business Standard** on **19th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Agriculture

Relevance: Agriculture start-ups

News: This article explains the functioning of farming sector startups in India.

What are the facts related to agri-start-ups in India?

They are new as compared to other sectors but have started to grow.

Services provided by them-

- (1) They are providing consultancy and select services in fields like custom-hiring of agricultural machinery, including drones.
- (2) They are promoting the sale and purchase of farm inputs and products through electronic platforms.
- (3) They are providing advanced technologies to enhance the efficiency and precision of farm operations.
- (4) They are also helping in water-resource management.

The agri-start-up ecosystem in India

The business models of most agri-start-ups are focused mainly on filling the gaps in the existing farming systems and their value chains to ensure optimal returns to farmers.

Many start-ups are working in agriculture’s allied fields such as dairying, poultry and fisheries. Some of them are also collaborating with the government through public-private partnership mode to enhance the effectiveness of agriculture ministry schemes.

Out of the total startups in India, only 5% are in the agriculture sector.

The current value of these agri-start-ups is estimated at Rs 75,000-80,000 crore.

The turning point came during the pandemic. The investment in these startups have surged three times during the pandemic.

What is the financing scenario of these startups?

Earlier the financial institutions were wary of providing financing to these startups because of the risk associated with the agriculture sector. But now they have started to give loans to them. Reserve Bank of India has now allowed commercial banks to treat loans of up to Rs 50 crore to agri-start-ups as priority sector lending.

What steps have been taken by the government?

The Finance Minister announced in her Budget speech this year that the government would set up a fund for agri-tech startups.

It will provide more resources through the NABARD to help agri-start-ups.

The government would encourage the use of Kisan drones for agriculture activities.

What are the challenges faced by these startups?

Their presence is uneven across the states. Agri-startups are generally more successful in states like Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Maharashtra than elsewhere.

What steps should be taken by the government?

Central and state governments need to take steps to facilitate smooth functioning of agri-start-ups to diversify agriculture.

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There is a need to diversify these startups from being largely service providers to producers and marketers of value-added farm products.

43. [Dollar unrelenting rise spells trouble for global economy](#)

Source-The post is based on the article “**Dollar unrelenting rise spells trouble for global economy**” published in **Livemint** on **19th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance: Global Economy

News: The article explains the phenomenon of the recent strengthening of the US dollar against other currencies.

The ICE US Dollar Index, which measures the US dollar against the basket of biggest trading partners, has risen more than 14% in 2022.

Other currencies like Euro, Yen and Pound have fallen to their multi-decade low.

What are the reasons behind the recent surge?

The Federal Reserve’s aggressive interest rate hike is responsible for it. It has encouraged investors to pull money from other markets and invest them in US assets.

Inflation in the US is compelling the Federal Reserve to increase the interest rate.

Dismal economic prospects like the Ukraine war around the world are further making a strong case for the Federal Reserve to continue with this policy.

What are the impacts of this surge?

There is increasing financial pressure on emerging markets. Sri Lanka and Pakistan have sought help from IMF. Serbia is also negotiating with IMF.

Emerging markets are already burdened by debt. It was augmented during the pandemic. According to the reports, They have a debt of \$83 million in US dollars which is due by next year. The dollar surge will make payback expensive for them.

It is making food and fuel imports priced in US dollars expensive for smaller nations.

Not only emerging markets but Europe is also facing challenges. There is a slide of 12% in Euro this year. It is leading to a historical increase in inflation in Europe.

It is leading to decreased investment in commodities like gold and oil

What steps are being taken to stem this rise?

There are calls for coordinated global action. In 1985, a joint effort called the Plaza accord was launched to weaken the US dollar.

The Bank of China is releasing more dollar liquidity into the market to strengthen the Yuan.

44. [There are better ways than cheetahs to revive ecosystems](#)

Source: The post is based on the articles “**The Cheetah moment**” and “**There are better ways than cheetahs to revive ecosystems**” published in **The Indian Express** on **19th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

Relevance: Species reintroduction

News: The article explains the recent government project of Cheetah reintroduction to India. Eight African cheetahs were recently reintroduced to Kuno national park.

What are the challenges associated with cheetah reintroduction?

The carrying capacity of the ecosystem is limited. There have been no proper studies about it. Limited prey base in shrinking habitats creates ecological imbalances.

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The increase in species and their numbers may lead to more human-animal conflicts. Development projects such as highways further fragment the protected areas. It compels animals to venture out.

There is a lack of suitable habitats of sufficient size for them. In the best of habitats like Kenya and Tanzania, cheetahs exist in very low densities of around 1 per 100 sq km. The area of Kuno national park is only 748 sq kms. It can at best accommodate only 10 Cheetahs.

To achieve the objective of establishing the Cheetah's functional role in the ecosystem, the projected number of cheetahs is very small.

It diverts attention and resources from priority conservation initiatives that are part of India's National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031), which does not even mention the introduction of African cheetahs.

This project makes unrealistic claims about its conservation value for grasslands and other open forest ecosystems in India. The 21 cheetahs that are projected after 15 years, that too at one site is insufficient to conserve grassland.

It challenges the rule of law. It is an attempt to stall and further delay the translocation of lions as ordered by the Supreme Court in 2013. NTCA in its review petition before Supreme Court mentioned that the reintroduction of the cheetah is sought to be made in other places.

Confining the animal to one Protected Area increases its vulnerability to epidemics.

45. [Dematerialisation: A digital revolution in Indian finance](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Dematerialisation: A digital revolution in Indian finance**" published in **The Business Standard** on **20th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy –

Relevance: evolution of the securities market in India

News: The number of dematerialized accounts in India recently crossed 100 million. There is a need to look at the evolution of the system.

History of Dematerialization

1993: The foreign institutional investor (FII) started increasing. However, the system of physical shares resulted in the harassment of domestic investors by bad deliveries and fake certificates. Due to these issues the Stock Holding Corporation of India proposed for building a depository by immobilising share certificates.

Later NSE proposed to eliminate the physical share certificates with dematerialisation which was about one-sixth the cost of the physical certificates.

This type of depository was first introduced within NSE and it was named as National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL).

1995: The digital depository required legal reforms which were brought by the Depositories Ordinance in September 1995. The word demat was first introduced in this ordinance.

Later, other reforms were also brought to solve various other issues associated with stocks of the companies, stamp duty, securities, income tax, etc.

What were the transformations brought by the Indian government?

According to the Stamp Act, the revenues from the duty levied on securities are assigned to states.

The stamp duty rates for select instruments are to be decided by the Government of India (GoI) and the balance instruments by states.

Different states have **their own stamp duty legislation** because of the subject mentioned in the Concurrent List.

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This led to differential rate structures on the same instruments across states which required uniformity.

This problem of uniformity of rates was solved in 2019 by amending Ordinance Act of 1995.

How the institutional set-up of securities markets changed in India?

The transformation of the Indian securities markets was led by setting up new institutions.

National Stock Exchange (NSE), National Securities Clearing Corporation (NSCC) and then National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) came up in the securities market of India.

National Securities Depository Limited is an Indian central securities depository, based in Mumbai. It was established in August 1996 as the first electronic securities depository in India with national coverage.

Moreover, the government has expected the problems of monopoly of a single depository (NSDL). Therefore, BSE build a competitor to NSDL which was called the Central Depository Services Ltd (CDSL). Today, CDSL has more accounts than NSDL.

These institutions proved to be beneficial for India in many ways.

What were the benefits of these institutions?

These institutions have helped in cutting operational prices with the increase in output volumes.

NSDL helped in designing of the New Pension System.

A Central Recordkeeping Agency was created that stored facts about each pension system participant for decades and supported frictionless transfers from one pension fund manager to another.

NSDL was also the institutional foundation for building the Tax Information Network for the income tax system.

NSDL and CSDL also have various other benefits also such as it can easily store government bonds and securities for issuers (either private or governments) overseas.

46. [One Nation, One Grid: A problematic power equation](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**One Nation, One Grid: A problematic power equation**” published in **The Business Standard** on **20th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Infrastructure

Relevance: advantages and disadvantages of MBED power mechanism

News: The concept of “One Nation, One Grid, One Frequency, One Price” was announced in October 2021. The policy is based on the market-based economic dispatch, or MBED, mechanism. There are many issues associated with this mechanism.

It is part of the National Electricity Policy of 2021 which proposes to double the penetration of short-term power markets by 2023-24.

The intention of this policy is to reduce the price of power to the consumer but the procedure by which this goal will be achieved appears problematic.

What is the Market-Based Economic Dispatch (MBED) mechanism?

The centralized policy is based on the market-based economic dispatch or MBED mechanism.

Under this mechanism the power ministry is planning to set up a central scheduling and pooling system.

What will be the benefit of MBED mechanism?

First, this system will allocate power at a favorable price by prioritizing the least-cost and most efficient generators and removing more expensive ones.

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Second, this system will reduce consumers' power-purchase cost initially by 5 per cent and will help in the distribution of cheap power across the country.

Third, this system will also replace the existing decentralised and voluntary system which operates through a network of load dispatch centres.

Fourth, it will lead to a "uniform clearing price". Sellers and buyers will be able to bid for the day ahead of the market leading to market clearing price. This in turn will help to generate savings for consumers.

However, there are many problems associated with this centralized MBED mechanism.

What are the problems associated with MBED?

First, generators use their capacity under long-term power-purchase agreements (PPAs) up to 25 years with state distribution companies (discoms) at negotiated prices.

Therefore, it is unclear how MBED will work in these long-term PPAs in its "lowest-cost" pricing.

Second, the inclination of states to offer power to politically sensitive groups below actual cost will impose burden on discoms.

This has already made the financial conditions of discoms bad and their dues on states stand at Rs 1.3 trillion.

As per a recent study by the RBI, a bailout of discoms in 18 large states is likely to impose a burden equivalent to around 2.3 per cent of the GSDP of these states.

Central schemes have been unsuccessful in addressing the problems of discom.

Third, MBED can create constitutional problems.

Power lies in the concurrent list of the Constitution and centralising pricing and supply decisions can take away the autonomy of states.

47. [Reducing air pollution: Stubble burning needs economic solutions](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Reducing air pollution: Stubble burning needs economic solutions**" published in the **Business Standard** on **21st September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3: Environmental pollution and degradation.

Relevance: To understand the issues associated with the stubble burning.

News: As the paddy-harvesting season is near, none of the northern rice-growing states seems to have a workable strategy in place to prevent farmers from burning crop residues. This might aggravate air pollution in the National Capital Region in October-November.

What is stubble burning? and What are the negative impacts of Stubble burning?

Read here: [Stubble Burning Issue](#)

Why do farmers prefer to burn stubble?

Read here: [Why stubble burning is so hard to fix](#)

Wheat straw is commonly used as animal feed and sells at good prices. But rice is unfit to be fed to cattle because of its high content of unpalatable silica. Therefore, it has little market value.

What are the government steps to control stubble burning and its drawback?

The drawback of Microbial stubble decomposer: It was developed by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute. Delhi and Punjab governments offer this to farmers to spray them on fields. It has been rejected by the farmers as an impractical proposition. This is because it takes 20-25 days to decompose the leftover biomass. This is too long for farmers.

The drawback of crop residue management machinery: The machinery involves additional expenses to farmers. So the farmers find it unaffordable without financial assistance.

The drawback of other types of machinery: Happy Seeders and Super Seeders can sow the new crop without removing the paddy remnants from the fields.

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Some bigger machines can harvest paddy, cut the straw into pieces, and spread them on the ground or tie them into bundles in a single operation. But these are costly machines which individual farmers cannot afford.

State governments subsidise the cost of these machines for cooperative societies and custom-hiring service providers. But they do not offer financial aid to farmers to meet the charges for their use.

Note: Haryana is the only state that offers Rs 2,500 per acre for this purpose, but the farmers find the amount too little to cover the costs.

Overall, stubble burning is essentially an economic issue that requires an economic solution.

Read more: [Why Punjab's short-duration paddy varieties have not solved stubble burning](#)

What should be done to prevent stubble burning?

Unless rice straw is converted into an economic good, farmers would have no incentive to spend money on disposing of it in an environmentally safe manner. Some of such solutions are **a)** Making various kinds of paper and hard boards, fuel briquettes for replacing coal in thermal plants, **b)** converting them into biofuel for blending with petrol. Haryana has already set up a 2G ethanol plant in Panipat to produce alcohol from paddy and other agricultural wastes.

All this shows the need to focus on the supply chain for collecting crop residues from fields and making them available to the end-users.

Read more: [Check stubble burning, monitor policy implementation](#)

48. [The lumpy skin disease](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The lumpy skin disease**” published in **The Hindu** on **21st September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3

Relevance: Lumpy Skin Disease and challenges associated with it

News: Lumpy Skin Disease has spread in India and it has severe implications on the economy of India.

The article discusses the challenges associated with Lumpy Skin Disease and measures taken by the government to control it.

What is Lumpy Skin Disease LSD?

Virus: It is caused by lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV) which belongs to the genus capripoxvirus. This virus is a part of the poxviridae family.

Smallpox and monkeypox viruses are also a part of the same family.

The LSDV shares antigenic similarities with the sheep pox virus (SPPV) and the goat pox virus (GTPV) and it is similar in the immune response to those viruses.

Effect of LSD: LSD affects the lymph nodes of the infected animal causing the nodes to enlarge and appear like lumps on the skin. The nodules may turn into ulcers which can develop scabs over the skin.

Incubation period: According to the FAO, the time between infection and symptoms is about 28 days.

More on LSD – <https://blog.forumias.com/lumpy-skin-disease-in-cattle/>

<https://blog.forumias.com/lumpy-skin-disease-epidemic-in-saurashtra-39-animals-dead-govt/>

Is it safe to consume the milk of affected cattle?

LSD is a non-zoonotic disease therefore it is safe to drink milk from the infected cattle.

Moreover, a large portion of milk produced is either pasteurized or boiled, or dried in order to make milk powder.

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This process ensures that the virus is inactivated or destroyed.

How LSD has become a challenge for India?

India is the world's largest milk producer and it also has the largest number of cattle and buffalo worldwide.

The disease has reduced the milk supply which will affect the dairy sector in India.

It will also affect the livelihoods of smaller poultry farmers.

What is the government doing to control the disease?

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has suggested a few measures to control the disease. It includes vaccination of the cattle with more than 80% coverage, controlling the movement of animals, etc.

The government has informed that Goat Pox Vaccine is very effective against LSD. It is being used across affected States to contain the spread.

The affected States have put bans on the movement of cattle. They are also isolating infected cattle and buffaloes, spraying insecticides to kill vectors like mosquitoes, etc.

Some affected States are also setting up dedicated control rooms and helpline numbers to guide farmers whose cattle have been infected.

The government has also come up with vaccine – <https://blog.forumias.com/lumpi-provacind-vaccine-how-icars-new-vaccine-against-lumpy-skin-disease-the-viral-infection-killing-indias-cattle-will-work/>

49. [Harnessing Gati Shakti, National Logistics Policy for closer regional ties](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Harnessing Gati Shakti, National Logistics Policy for closer regional ties**” published in **The Business Standard** on **21st September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Infrastructure

News: The government has announced two major initiatives to develop infrastructure of India. These initiatives can be helpful in regional integration as well.

The two initiatives are – a) Gati Shakti, or the National Infrastructure Master Plan and b) the National Logistics Policy.

These two are interrelated pillars that will help India to become a competitive economy.

What are the features of Gati Shakti?

About Gati Shakti

What are the features of National Logistic Policy (NLP)?

It aims to create a multi-modal connectivity network that enables easy movement of goods, services and people across the country.

The policy provides for a Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP). It is a digital platform that will store information about cargo movements across the country and provide clearances for such movements.

The policy focuses on the target to reduce overall logistics and supply chain costs in India from 12 per cent of GDP to the global average of 8 per cent.

India's rank in Logistic Performance Index (LPI) issued by World Bank is 35. It is low when compared to other countries. It will be achieved through integration of local supply chains with international supply chains.

How Gati Shakti and NLP can help India's neighbours?

The integration of Gati Shakti and NLP will help in regional economic integration.

Components of the Gati Shakti and NLP can be expanded to India's neighbors. It can become a powerful instrument for their economic and social development.

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For example, the objectives of Gati Shakti and NLP can be applied to transport connectivity with the member countries of SAARC.

It will help in improving the regional and digital connectivity among countries for smooth movement of goods and people across borders.

India should seek to become the transit country of choice and the most preferred development partner for all the countries of the Indian subcontinent. It is possible by giving the neighboring countries a “national treatment”, in terms of access to India’s transportation and logistics network.

This can be done by integrating waterways through the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) sub-regional cooperation platform. Further linking the several cross-border rivers can also be done.

Moreover, the development of new ports in the BBIN countries can be done by promoting coastal shipping (Sagarmala) and ocean trade.

NLP includes setting up of modern warehousing and logistics facilities at nodal points across India. Such shared facilities can be extended to the neighboring countries also.

The objectives of NLP and Gati Shakti can also be introduced on the BIMSTEC platform that seeks to integrate South Asia with Southeast Asia.

Other areas that can be extended to neighboring countries are the expansion of rail services, the greater utilization of water transportation, etc.

These areas are important for enhancing energy security and fighting climate change. However, there are other steps that can be taken to give regional dimensions to Gati Shakti and NLP.

What steps can be taken by India to give regional dimensions to Gati Shakti and NLP?

First, India should reshape the architecture of these initiatives to enable their extension to our neighboring countries.

Second, the initial focus may be made on river transportation and coastal shipping among the BBIN and island Neighbours.

Third, India should offer participation to interested neighboring countries in India’s ULIP. It will provide benefits of lower transaction and supply chain costs to those countries.

With little efforts Gati Shakti and NLP have the potential to become the key pillars of our Neighborhood First Policy.

50. Work from home is popular but its productivity isn’t settled yet

Source: The post is based on an article “Work from home is popular but its productivity isn’t settled yet” published in **The Live Mint** on **21st September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3

Relevance: demand for work from home in India and in other countries.

News:

There is a report on Work Form Home published by National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) recently.

The survey was based on teleworking industries (information technology, finance, professions such as law, education, public administration, etc.)

The report has taken the surveys of 27 countries of which India is also the part. The report provides the attitude of the individual towards work from home.

What are the highlights of the report?

Number of working days: According to the survey Indians were working 2.6 days in a week from home compared to 1.5 days of the countries across the world.

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No. of days offered to by the employers: An average of 1.8 days in a week WFH was offered by the employers in India compared to global average of 0.7 days.

No. of days desired by employees: Indians want to WFH on an average of 2.1 days in a week whereas the average of people around the world is 1.7 days in a week.

The gap between employee hopes and employer intentions about WFH was the lowest in India.

Giving income: Indians are ready to give up 6.9% of their income in order to get two or three days of WFH whereas the global average is 5%.

Mostly women were ready to give up their income for WFH because of the responsibilities of the household work that they have to take in most countries.

Travelling time: One of the advantages of WFH is that it saves the travelling time. The average travelling time for the employees across the world is 65 minutes.

Chinese employees spend the highest time in travelling with 96 minutes while Indian employees spend around 65 minutes travelling time.

Productivity: The productivity of the employees went up by 6.7% while working from home at the global level while the productivity in India increased by 9.8%.

51. Trade tactics – on India's Foreign Trade policy

Source: The post is based on an article "Trade tactics" published in **The Hindu** on **22nd September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3

News: The Government will release a new foreign trade policy in the coming week.

The new foreign trade policy could include measures to boost goods and services exports as well as control the rising import bill.

The current trade policy was introduced in 2015 for a five year term. However, the policy was extended for a year due to the pandemic.

What are the problems with new trade policy?

It is not ideal to begin a new trade policy in the middle of financial year.

Moreover, exports have been one of the reasons for better post-COVID recovery and ending an old policy with new one to boost exports is not understood.

How has exports performed recently?

Goods exports have touched a record 422 billion dollar in 2021-22.

The government is expecting better exports revenues this year but it has declined to the single digit in July and August this year.

The reasons for declining export could be a slowdown in the global growth and fear of recession in Europe and the US among the buyers.

Thus, the new policy should be focused on boosting exports and reducing issues associated with it.

What can be further course of action for the new trade policy and for India?

Trade policy: The new policy will have to address some of industry's key concerns such as a buffer against rising interest rates.

The new policy can exclude growth sectors such as pharma, chemicals, and iron and steel from the duty remission scheme due to their better performance.

India: India's recent decision to stay away from the trade agreement of IPEF has shown that there are not many options left for India. India should adopt other ways to negotiate the terms not suitable to it than by moving away from the trade agreements.

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52. [The failure of safety norms](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The failure of safety norms**” published in **The Hindu** on **22th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Disaster and disaster management

Relevance– Fire safety norms

News– The article explains the reason behind the incident of fire at a hotel in Telangana and the steps that need to take place to prevent such accidents.

What were the reasons behind the fire accident?

There was absence of set-back spaces and escape routes.

Fire Fighting equipments were defunct.

Spiral staircase around the elevator shaft.

The basement was utilised illegally for commercial purposes.

Absence of **smoke management and emergency lighting**.

What are the issues with fire safety norms of the state government?

The **Building Registration Scheme** of the state government allowed builders to circumvent the norms.

Applicability of fire safety norms is another issue. Only buildings above a certain height are required to seek safety clearance.

What needs to be done?

Amendment to fire safety norms to include all commercial buildings irrespective of their height within the ambit of fire safety norms.

There should be proper enforcement of fire safety norms.

53. [Moonlighting is neither ethical nor a work trend](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Moonlighting is neither ethical nor a work trend**” published in the **Livemint** on **23rd September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3: Indian economy and employment.

Relevance: About Moonlighting.

News: Wipro has sacked 300 employees it found guilty of working for its competitors. This triggered the ‘moonlighting’ debate.

What is moonlighting?

Read here: [What is moonlighting and if it's legal in India](#)

About the employee contracts in India

Indian economy runs on the trust that contracts will be honoured. An employee and employer are bound by the terms of a mutual contract. Accordingly, a full-time employee doing a side job for a rival is an unacceptable violation of that deal.

How did pandemic aid moonlighting?

Many persons doing ‘dual employment’ is clearly a post-covid phenomenon. This is because **a)**

The workplace is now mobile, atomized, in our laptops and smartphones, **b)** Employers were happy to let their boundaries blur as long as work got done.

What should be done?

IT firms oppose moonlighting as they often work with client data that must be kept secure and employees who moonlight could also create a larger credibility risk for them.

A gig economy need not turn out to be more worker-friendly. Corporate values and mission alignment matter in setting one company apart from another. Further, job securities provide

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superior value addition and better job satisfaction. So the employees should understand moonlighting is neither ethical nor a work trend.

Read more: [Should employees have side gigs? Bosses & HR gurus are divided. But answer is in supply & demand](#)

54. [External risk factors for the Indian economy: Global storm: Overseas risk is main policy challenge](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “Global storm: Overseas risk is main policy challenge” published in **The Times of India** on **24th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Relevance: Indian Economy and its external challenges.

News: In line with major global markets, Indian financial markets were struck recently. Similarly, the rupee-dollar exchange rate has also hit a record low at Rs 80.99.

What are the major external risk factors for the Indian economy?

1) Unclear trajectory of major central banks trying to pull back inflation. Hardening of interest rates will trigger a sharp economic slowdown in major economies, **2)** Most currencies weakened against the dollar and Japan’s central bank made its first foreign exchange market intervention in over two decades, **3)** Inflation is unlikely to quickly go downwards even as demand falls. This is because of ongoing energy supply readjustments that have pushed economic activity and inflation in different directions.

Read more: [Rupee-Rouble trade will be beneficial for Indian Economy](#)

How European countries are facing economic challenges?

Europe: Ever since the Ukraine crisis, European gas and electricity prices have risen 105% and 75%, respectively. Further, Europe’s economic activity is rapidly slowing as the energy shock undermines manufacturing.

UK: The UK’s inflation, at 9.9%, is almost five times its inflation target.

Read more: [Post-pandemic surprises and where the Indian economy truly stands today](#)

What are the economic challenges for India?

Economic policymaking in India will have to factor in an abnormal global scenario. At present, there is no clear signal about the near future behaviour of either revival or price stability of the Indian Economy.

RBI’s monetary policy committee will have an upcoming bi-monthly meeting that has to contend with risks coming largely from overseas.

Read more: [How does the Fed’s taper move impact Indian economy?](#)

55. [Sebi working on new ASBA-like payment system for secondary trades: Buch](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Sebi working on new ASBA-like payment system for secondary trades: Buch” published in **The Indian Express** on **24th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Financial Market in India

News: SEBI is working on a new payment system for the secondary market which could prevent brokers from accessing their client funds.

The new payment system will be on the lines of the Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA) process.

What will be the advantages of the new payment system for secondary market?

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Movement of funds: This system will help in the movement of funds from an investor's bank account only after the confirmation of trade. Therefore, money will never leave the account until the settlement is done.

Settlement mechanism: The new payment system is linked with new T+1 settlement mechanism. This mechanism would lead to efficient use of capital and will also help in further developing India's capital markets.

Standardization: The new payment system will also lead to standardization of process.

What are the challenges with the proposed payment system?

Broking industry: The proposed system could impact the broking industry because many brokers earn a float on the funds parked.

- It could even push up the cost of trading as brokers might look for alternative sources of income.

Brokers not backed by banks: The system will pose complex challenges for brokers who are not backed by banks.

- It will be difficult for standalone brokerages to get access to a client's bank account.

However, it will not be challenging for brokers who are backed by bank as blocking of funds has been happening for more than two decades in the banks.

Operational difficulties: There will be more transparency but it will lead to difficult in operations where there is in one-time payment.

- It will also lead to many occasions of blocking and unblocking money for the multiple trades a customer takes in a day.
- There also issues of failure rates and sometimes more time are required for blocking funds.

Intraday traders: It will become a challenging task for people taking many intraday trades because the new system might require the client to give multiple instructions to bank. However, the use of technology can help to solve this issue.

56. [The seed of idea: How millets can help mitigate climate impacts on food](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The seed of idea: How millets can help mitigate climate impacts on food**” published in **The Times of India** on **24th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Agriculture and climate change

Relevance– Adaptation to climate change

Context– The article explains the need for increasing millet production in context of climate change. It also discusses the methods to improve the yield of millet.

What are the impacts of climate change?

Climate change is impacting agriculture production, **food stability** and **nutritional security**.

Increasing temperature, erratic rainfall and prolonged drought are having severe effects on plant growth. It is causing shorter grain filing periods, reduced yield and biomass of grains.

However, Indian agriculture needs to safeguard the nutritional requirements of over a billion people. Thus, growing millets can be a way forward.

What are the benefits of promoting millets?

Nutritional benefits– They are a rich source of macronutrients and micronutrients like calcium, protein and iron.

They have a **low glycemic index** that prevents type 2 diabetes.

They can help to prevent cardiovascular diseases, lower blood pressure.

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Climate resilient– They have higher photosynthetic efficiency. Their potential yield is unaffected by higher carbon dioxide levels.

Water efficient– They require less water. It is about one-third of rice, wheat and sugarcane.

Cultural significance–Millets have a rich cultural history in India. They have been a traditional source of nutrition for southern and northeastern India. In rainfed farming areas, millet cultivation provides livelihood to 50% of tribal and rural population.

What is the market scenario for millets?

It is overall positive.

MSP for millets has been continuously increasing.

India declared 2018 as the “**National year of millets**”.

2023 was declared as the “**International year of millets**” by the UN.

What is the way forward?

We have to enhance millet cultivation. There is a need to increase crop area under millet cultivation.

We need to research programmes to develop seeds for millets that are high-yielding, stress-resistant, have higher biomass and nutritional value.

These varieties need to be popularised through frontline demonstration and extension activities.

Millets should be included in PDS (Public Distribution System).

There is a need to promote **agribusiness startup incubation centres** and increase popular awareness of benefits of millets among consumers.

We need to have a **national regulatory policy and institutional framework** to bolster the entire value chain for millets.

57. Burning fuel to carry fuel: Govt's ethanol programme to face transport challenges

Source– The post is based on the article “**Burning fuel to carry fuel: Govt's ethanol programme to face transport challenges**” published in **The Indian Express** on **24th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

Relevance– Ethanol blending programme

News– The article explains the need to have a new logistical arrangement for transporting ethanol. It also proposes solutions for transporting it.

India's ethanol production for blending with petrol has soared to an estimated 450 crore litres in the current 2021-22 supply year.

The government has set the target of 20 per cent blending by 2025-26 that is projected at 1,016 crore liters by NITI Aayog. It is creating new logistical challenges.

What are the logistical challenges?

Currently, the entire quantity of ethanol is being transported by road on truck-tankers. Carrying the projected 1,016 crore litres would require about 3.5 lakh tankers.

This will prove very costly. It will also result in greenhouse gas emissions of around 76 million tonnes.

What needs to be done?

The government can consider alternative options for ethanol movement, including through **dedicated pipelines**, rail tank wagons and ferries in coastal areas.

They can also look at the **RORO (roll-on/roll-off) model** of moving ethanol truck-tankers themselves by rail.

In Brazil, the entire movement of oil and ethanol is through pipelines, railway and coastal ships.

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There is no need for dedicated pipelines for ethanol. We can use **multi-product pipelines**. There is a need for precautions because ethanol is a solvent that dissolves the gums formed in gasoline and accumulated in tanks. We need to have filters in fuel hose pipes to resolve this issue.

[58. Weather modifications by China need more discussions on its ethics](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Weather modifications by China need more discussions on its ethics”** published in the **Down to Earth** magazine on **24th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment.GS1- Physical Geography

Relevance– Weather modification by modern technology

News– The article explains the scale of weather modification activities by China. It also discusses the social and ethical consequences of weather modification.

What makes cloud-seeding in China different from others?

Other countries have deployed cloud seeding to deal with water scarcity, ecological crisis and food security.

China’s case is unique in terms of **scale, scope and ambitions**. China does not only use the technology for ecological and environmental concerns. It also uses it for promoting state interest in a broader sense.

China is interested in using weather modification for mega-events. It used this technology during the 2008 Olympic games.

What is our level of knowledge about its harmful consequences?

Cloud-seeding has two dimensions — physical and social science.

A lot of research has been done about the physical dimension, although it is debatable. Scientists have different views.

The social science dimension deserves more attention. For example, excess snow produced from cloud seeding can trigger a human-induced disaster.

We also need more space for discussions on the social consequences and ethical issues.

What is the scale of weather modification in China?

It has been practicing weather modification since 1959.

China has been conducting regular cloud seeding around Shiyangin Hebei Province to supply water to the Greater Beijing Region.

Cloud seeding is regularly done in Shiyang to produce enough water to transfer to Beijing.

Has this created social problems within China?

Weather modification is done for many different purposes. Sometimes it is done for Beijing’s interests and other times to fulfil the expectations of local citizens.

When disasters happen due to weather modification in the former, it raises a few questions. Who can be blamed for it, government or nature.

It needs more research to know about its social consequences.

What is the scope of having an international organisation to control these activities?

Weather modification occurs in the air, where there are no boundaries. This impacts international politics.

We need to discuss if a global law or organisation is needed to solve the problem.

Does weather modification programmes paving the way for solar geoengineering?

Cloud seeding is also part of geoengineering. To deal with climate change, we have two strategies: Mitigation and adaptation. Both cloud seeding and solar reengineering are adaptation strategies.

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Reports suggest that China is doing intensive solar geoengineering research. One strategy is solar radiation management, which reduces the amount of sunlight reaching the Earth, lowering the temperature very quickly.

We need extensive research to study its consequences.

59. [Greying threat: India must have its version of China's fusion of civil and military in naval deployment](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Greying threat: India must have its version of China's fusion of civil and military in naval deployment**” published in **The Times of India** on **26th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.

Relevance: To build India's grey-zone capabilities.

News: Indian Army chief has recently emphasised the need to develop India's grey-zone capabilities.

What are grey-zone capabilities?

The grey zone describes a set of activities that occur between peace and war situations. Generally, grey-zone activities are considered gradualist campaigns by state and non-state actors that combine non-military and quasi-military tools.

These are actions that fall below the threshold of armed conflict which aims to thwart, destabilize, weaken, or attack an adversary. They are often tailored toward the vulnerabilities of the target state. For instance, nefarious economic activities, influence operations, cyberattacks, mercenary operations, assassinations, and disinformation campaigns, etc.

China and grey-zone capabilities

China over the last decade has emerged as a fine practitioner of grey-zone warfare. They have an excellent fusion between their civilian and military naval assets.

For instance, **a)** The so-called Chinese scientific vessel, Yuan Wang 5 was docked at Sri Lanka's Hambantota port. In reality, it was a spy ship capable of tracking intercontinental missiles, **b)** Chinese deploying civilian trawlers and a maritime militia to assert their maritime claims in the South China Sea, **c)** China's so-called Nine Dash Line cartographical innovation that laid claim to almost all of the South China Sea region, **d)** They even encroach upon traditional fishing grounds and exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of neighbouring states. For instance, 220 Chinese fishing vessels had intruded into the Whitsun Reef area, which is part of the Philippines' EEZ.

Read more: [Yuan Wang 5: Why is the visit of a Chinese vessel to Sri Lanka's Hambantota port controversial?](#)

Chinese civilian-military maritime forces mean formidable strategic and tactical worries for India.

What India needs to do to improve its grey-zone capabilities?

India needs to **a)** Seriously upgrade its coastal defence and sharpen its naval fleet, **b)** Along with INS Vikrant, India needs many more high-tech naval vessels and listening posts to counter the China threat.

Read more: [Chinese ship at Hambantota calls for New Delhi to look closely at its maritime strategy](#)

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60. [Open networks are good but only if they are regulated](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Open networks are good but only if they are regulated**” published in **Livemint** on **26th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Relevance: To understand the need for ONDC.

News: The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) is being hailed as India’s next digital leap forward. It is expected to revolutionize e-commerce, much like what the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) did for Indian payments.

What is ONDC?

Must read: [Open Network For Digital Commerce \(ONDC\) – Explained, pointwise](#)

What is the need for ONDC?

During the pandemic, the government found that **a)** A large percentage of the domestic retail trade was found to be digitally excluded, **b)** India has a large supply chain break-down, **c)** Digital commerce in India is dominated by two foreign companies. Further, ongoing investigations against these two companies in the Competition Commission of India stressed the need for a custom-built approach to take on these companies and **d)** To resolve the challenges faced by small traders and shopkeepers due to demonetization, the introduction of GST and digital trade during lockdowns.

Further, the Success of the UPI during the pandemic forced the government to find a similar “public good” for digital commerce.

Read more: [ONDC is the disruption Indian commerce needs](#)

What should be done to make ONDC a neutral platform?

Make the platform-neutral: ONDC should function as a neutral platform, helping neither the buyer nor the seller. ONDC’s task should be generating trust that every player will have to be treated equally.

The government should not allow political agenda to take place within ONDC. For instance, a political party has decided to launch its own e-commerce app (called Bharat e-Market) on ONDC. These things should be avoided.

Proper regulation: In the UPI space, without proper regulation, two largest players in the UPI space—PhonePe and G-Pay—have ended up controlling over 80% of the market. So, the regulation of ONDC cannot be left to the company.

A nominally independent or autonomous body will have to lay down the ground rules, monitor conduct on the platform and weed out any indications of dominance.

Need clarification: The government need to clarify the incentives that exist for private players to shift their network of suppliers and buyers to ONDC.

Read more: [Our open network for digital commerce must win trust](#)

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61. [RBI, inflation targeting, and the limits of monetary policy](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**RBI, inflation targeting, and the limits of monetary policy**” published in **The Indian Express** on **26th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy

Relevance– About inflation

News– The article explains the new statutory framework for inflation targeting. It also explains the reason behind high levels of inflation in recent times and implications of this.

What is the statutory framework for monetary policy?

The Centre, under RBI Act, 1934 has fixed the CPI inflation target at 4% with an upper tolerance limit of 6%.

Read more about [Inflation Targeting](#).

With the enactment of inflation targeting framework, RBI was entrusted with the responsibility of meeting this target (“accountability”). It was given “independence” for the conduct of monetary policy.

Has RBI been able to achieve its target?

Inflation in 2022 has been above 6% every single month from January to August.

During the present government’s first term, inflation was above 6% only for one month after a new inflation targeting framework came into existence.

During the second term, it has exceeded its target in 21 months out of 41 months.

Why RBI needs help of government in controlling inflation?

Food and beverage items have a combined 45.86% weight in the overall CPI (Consumer Price Index).

There has been consistent increase in the general CPI as well as the consumer food price index (CFPI).

During the present government’s first term, average food inflation was low, thus RBI was able to control the inflation. Whereas, during the 2nd term, food inflation has been high, therefore the inflation has been high.

Average weight of food items in CPI is 45% in India. While, it is 10-25% in developed countries.

The food inflation cannot be controlled through **demand side measures** like increase in repo rate. There is need for supply side measures.

Therefore, RBI has to be dependent on the government for **supply side measures**. For example, the government banned wheat exports in May this year. It impacts the independence of RBI in conducting monetary policy.

Inflation control cannot be left to the RBI alone. It needs cooperation between the government and the RBI.

62. [Pitching India as a signature destination](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Pitching India as a signature destination**” published in **The Hindu** on **27th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Industries and industrial policies

Relevance: tourism sector in India and problems associated with it.

News: World Tourism Day is celebrated on 27th September 2022 but tourism sector has been severely impacted by the pandemic in India and around the world.

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However, the government is making efforts to bring the industry back on track.

One of such efforts is the **'The Dharamshala Declaration'** which has been developed with help of various Ministers.

What is Dharamshala Declaration?

The Dharamshala Declaration **aims to recognize India's role in contributing towards global tourism** as well as focusing on recovery of domestic tourism.

The Ministry of Tourism has come up with strategy to encourage more Indians to travel domestically and explore India. It will help to reach the goal of **Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat**.

The Tourism Ministry has also been working with the Ministry of External Affairs **to identify 20 Indian missions abroad**. This will help in bringing higher number of tourists in India.

Moreover, there are goals set for the Indian tourism sector for the coming years that will boost the sector's growth.

What are the goal set for India in tourism sector?

India would be achieving \$150 billion as GDP contribution from tourism and \$30 billion in foreign exchange earnings with 15 million foreign tourist arrivals by 2024.

India is estimated to grow at 7%-9% compounded annual growth rate by 2030.

The Tourism Ministry is committed to work on these goals to ensure the **positioning of India as one of the world's best tourism destinations by 2047**.

What is the current situation of tourism in India and what steps have taken by government?

Tourism has been one of the sectors severely affected by COVID-19.

The Government of India's **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme** was recently enhanced from ₹4.5 lakh crore to ₹5 lakh crore to benefit enterprises in hospitality and related sectors.

Further, the Ministry of Tourism has also prepared a draft **National Tourism Policy 2022**.

What are the provisions of the draft National Tourism Policy 2022?

First, it aims at improving the framework conditions for tourism development in the country.

This will be done by supporting tourism industries, strengthening tourism support functions and developing tourism sub-sectors.

Second, it also promotes sustainable, responsible and inclusive tourism in line with our cultural values.

Third, it aims to give support to digitalization, innovation and technology through the **National Digital Tourism Mission** and skilling through the **Tourism and Hospitality Sector Skill Mission**.

Fourth, the policy also gives a special focus to private sector participation through **public-private-partnerships (PPP)**.

This policy has been first attempt towards tourism and hospitality sectors after 2002.

Moreover, the presidency of G20 will be an advantage for India to bring its tourism Infront of the world.

How can the presidency of G20 will be helpful for tourism sector in India?

India has an opportunity to position itself as a major tourism destination during India's presidency of the G20.

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India will welcome delegates from the 20 countries/European Union and it will be hosting around 200 meetings with foreign delegates.

This will be an opportunity for India to showcase its country's cultural richness to the world.

Moreover, the Ministry of Tourism should also work with other Ministries to bring required transformation in visa, ease of travel, traveler-friendly and improved immigration facilities at airports.

63. [Why PLI Is Worth Doing](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Why PLI Is Worth Doing” published in **The Times of India** on **27th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Industries and industrial policies

Relevance: advantages and problems associated with Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme.

News: Vedanta Foxconn semiconductor factory in Gujarat has received an investment of \$20 billion through the government's flagship Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. This has led to the analysis of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme.

How does PLI affect a specific product category?

PLI on a specific product category is accompanied by higher tariffs on the product.

This increases the import tariffs and usually results in higher price for the Indian consumer and lower prices of domestic products.

For example, iPhone 13 costs Rs 1.29 lakhs in India versus Rs 92,500 in Chicago.

How PLI recognize the problem of manufacturing sectors and what are the steps taken for the improvement?

Problem: Manufacturing as a proportion of GDP has not picked up meaningfully despite reforms in 30 years. PLI reforms recognizes that India's manufacturing productivity is almost 20-30% lower than the rest of Asia. It also recognizes that perfect conditions required for its growth will take time to come up.

Solution: The government will monetize that productivity deficit through PLI.

This will help them to invest in large global-scale capacities. Therefore, PLIs are the industrial variant of Direct Cash Transfer that help to boost the industries.

However, there is a concern for its affordability through budget and post PLI measures.

What are the concerns associated with PLIs?

Affordability: The total combined estimation for the 14 PLI programs is Rs 3.46 lakh crores and it is being argued whether the government will be able to spend this amount.

The amount is expected to be spent over five years and it would be 1.5% of Union Budget expenditure (0.2% of GDP). Therefore, it seems reasonable and can be supported by the government through budget.

Further, the total expenditure is dependent on milestone production achievements of the companies. If the maximum projected milestones are achieved by the companies, they would generate enough additional taxes to pay for the programme by itself.

Post PLI: Investment through PLIs is for a five-year period and this raises concerns for the companies for post five-year plans. It has been said that PLIs would help companies with incentives to build ecosystem and sustain itself without any further requirement of the incentives.

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64. [NASA's risk focus adds up and so does the US Fed's](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Nasa’s risk focus adds up and so does the US Fed’s**” published in **The Live Mint** on **27th September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Science and technology development**

Relevance: **problems associated with space weaponization.**

News: **NASA** is estimated to have invested above \$320 million in Dart (Double Asteroid Redirection Test). It is the US space agency’s project to protect the planet from hitting any asteroid headed for earth.

NASA launched its **Dart (Double Asteroid Redirection Test) spacecraft** in November 2021 with Didymos in its target sights.

Didymos is a large asteroid which is 11 million km away. NASA is planning to hit the asteroid with Dart.

What is the use of Dart project?

America’s Dart project assures everyone on the earth to save the world from any such situation arising out the asteroid hitting the earth.

It would coordinate with other space agencies of the countries to execute the mission in saving the earth.

What are the problems associated with such space missions?

Cost: The cost of the mission is huge when compared to the probability of an asteroid hitting the Earth.

Alteration in data: Further, drones at over 25,000 kmph may alter the orbiter’s speed and make it difficult for NASA to detect and study.

Probability: The probability for an asteroid to hit the earth is very low. Till now, Nasa knows of no asteroid or comet that is on the course to hit the earth.

For example, last year Asteroid Bennu’s was estimated to crash into Earth till 2300 CE. Its probability was 1 in 1,750 and it’s still highly unlikely to happen.

However, Dart can be useful in the bad times when such situation arises.

65. [A push for semiconductor industry](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**A push for semiconductor industry**” published in **The Hindu** on **27th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy

Relevance– semiconductor manufacturing

News– The article explains the size of the semiconductor industry. It also talks about the Indian government scheme to promote semiconductor manufacturing in India and the challenges associated with the scheme.

What about the semiconductor industry?

Semiconductors are the building blocks of almost every modern electronic device from smartphones to connected devices in the Internet of Things.

The chip-making process is complex and highly exact. It has multiple other steps in the supply chain that include-

- Designing software for chips and patenting them through core Intellectual Property rights.

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(b) Making chip-fabrication machines and setting up factories

(c) **ATMP** (assembly, testing, making and packaging).

The chip-making industry is highly-concentrated. It is controlled by the big players like Taiwan, South Korea U.S. According to a New York Times estimate, 90% of 5nm chips are mass-produced in Taiwan.

What are the changes introduced in the scheme?

According to the Electronics and IT Ministry, semiconductor demand in India would increase to \$70-\$80 billion by 2026.

In December 2021, India announced its \$10 billion dollar production linked incentive (PLI) scheme to encourage semiconductor and display manufacturing in the country.

It also announced fiscal support for a design-linked initiative (DLI) scheme for designing software, IP rights etc.

The new changes in the scheme seek to harmonize government incentives for all technology nodes of semiconductors. The modified scheme provides uniform 50% fiscal support for all nodes. Besides, it will provide 50% of capital expenditure for other steps of the process as well (chip design and ATMP).

What are the challenges?

Resources-Chip production is a resource-intensive and expensive process. The outlay of the scheme remains \$10 billion. Just the setting up of one semiconductor factory requires an investment of anywhere between \$3 and \$7 billion. Little would be left to support other elements like packaging and testing facilities, and chip design centers.

Initial funding should focus on areas like design and R&D.

Water-Chip-making requires ultra-pure water. Government needs to provide it to chip making factories. It could create challenges for the government.

66. What is the solution to India's garbage disposal problem?

Source: The post is based on an article "**What is the solution to India's garbage disposal problem?**" published in **The Indian Express** on **28th September 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Environmental Pollution**

Relevance: problems associated with garbage

Context: There is a garbage problem everywhere around the country. Companies make the product but they are unable to take this garbage back to the recycling plants due to the low cost of the packaged material.

What does the data say?

According to a recent annual report of a large consumer goods (FMCG) company, out of every Rs 100 of the company's product that we buy, Rs 5 go up in vehicular smoke and Rs 8 for the package that we hold in our hand.

This packaging is required because the products have a long shelf life, and withstand heat, sunlight and rough handling during freight.

After using the product consumers throw it in the garbage which can be seen littering around the road causing problems like choking gutters.

However, there are different laws present to address the problem.

What steps have been taken by the government to address the issue?

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Government has various laws but they lack implementation.

According to the law, the **Ultimate Manufacturers (UMs)** of plastic are responsible for the collection of the waste and its processing.

They must set up collection networks and work with state pollution control boards and the city and town administrations. It will ensure that the waste reaches recyclers and manufacturers.

However, this system has not worked because of the economy associated with it.

For example, Rs 8 out of 100 was spent on packaging the product, the cost of the packaging materials is barely Rs 1.

Even with the most advanced recycling technology, the value of that piece of garbage in our hand to the ultimate manufacturer is less than 50 paise.

Therefore, it is simply not economical to transfer the waste back to the manufacturer.

This is why the garbage dumps, ragpickers, and the neighborhood kabaddi shops are necessarily the only last mile option of our recycling system.

What can be the course of action?

A suitable amount of money can be implemented as a sustainability tax on the packaging and carriage cost components of a given product. This tax can be easily administered and transferred to the districts and towns.

This would provide the company with a good amount to address its garbage disposal problem.

Therefore, a consumption tax based on sustainability would create the right incentives for a scientific analysis of garbage and the logistics of its disposal.

Further, it will also create a group of professional companies who specialize in this sector and provide their services to hundreds of cities and towns.

[67. Bringing BPCL sale back on the table](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“Bringing BPCL sale back on the table”** published in **The Business Standard** on **28th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Industries and industrial policies

Relevance: problems associated the regulation of petroleum companies

News: Recently the government has put aside the idea to privatize Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL).

The reason behind it is the inability of the bidders to participate due to prevailing conditions in the global energy market.

However, it is not the only reason that prevents the bidders from participating.

What are the concerns with the privatization of BPCL?

The reasons for postponing the sale of the government’s 53 per cent stake in BPCL are not just the market conditions but it is also the policy environment that prevails in the country’s oil sector.

Therefore, even when the markets improve, the chances of a long queue of bidders for BPCL will remain low.

So, there is a need to reform the pricing policies that govern companies refining and marketing petroleum products.

What steps have been taken by the government for the reforms in the petroleum industry and the problems associated with those reforms?

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Many governments in the past have tried to deregulate petroleum product prices but they have failed to do so.

Oil prices are as regulated as any product in the pre-reform days of the 1970s and the 1980s.

Reform: The effort to dismantle the price mechanism for the oil sector was officially started in 2002. The administered price mechanism for the oil sector was officially dismantled.

This provided freedom to the oil companies to sell their products at a price determined by their own calculations on cost and return.

Problems: This led oil companies to declare their prices almost every fortnight but approval from the oil ministry was still required.

Even that little freedom for the oil companies was gone, when international crude oil prices began rising from 2004.

The then government decided to regain full control over prices of petrol and diesel and the oil companies were not allowed to fix the prices till 2009.

Reform: The petrol prices were made free from regulations from 2010. Further, under the Modi government diesel prices were also made free from the govt. regulations.

Problems: The government continued to have an indirect control on retail prices of petroleum products.

The government tried to fix the prices of petrol and diesel and they also raised taxes when international crude oil prices fell.

Therefore, oil refiners and marketing companies never enjoyed the true freedom in pricing their products.

Reform: The government set up the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board in 2006.

It was set up to protect the interests of consumers and entities engaged in activities relating to petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas, and to promote competitive markets.

Problem: But the regulatory board has been insufficient to fulfil its aims.

These all issues have led to the inability of oil companies to develop a transparent system of fixing prices.

How have private companies perform in the petroleum sector?

They entered into the retail markets but later withdrew due to government-controlled pricing. Therefore, the regulatory and policy gaps in the pricing and distribution of petroleum products should be removed.

However, fixing the regulatory and policy gaps in the pricing of petroleum products would be a big challenge.

What can be the course of action?

First, the way out is to grant full freedom to oil marketing companies to fix the retail prices in a competitive environment.

Second, the government could declare a subsidized band of prices for petrol and diesel as it does for cooking gas.

Third, the transaction of the consumer should be linked with Aadhaar based system so that the consumers could claim the difference between the subsidized and market prices.

- This difference could be transferred to their bank accounts.
- This will make the oil companies' costs and returns would become more transparent

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Fourth, it is also important to safeguard the oil marketing companies from political intervention to freeze or bring down retail prices of petrol and diesel.

- This would ensure stability will also encourage the private sector to expand their retail operations in this sector.

68. The future of farmer producer companies could be brightened

Source– The post is based on the article “**The future of farmer producer companies could be brightened**” published in the **mint** on **28th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Agriculture

News– The article explains about **Farmer Producer Companies (FPC)** in India. It analyses the challenges faced by these FPCs and possible solutions to address these issues.

What are the issues faced by the farming sector?

70% of farmers are **small and marginal**. They have disadvantages in terms of scale, potential risk and bargaining power.

The average monthly income is almost 10000 per month at current prices.

Almost half of farmers are facing **debt issues**.

Most farmers are **rain-fed** and exposed to **climate risk**.

What are Farmer Producer Companies?

They were introduced in the 2000s as potential solutions to challenges faced by the farming sector. They operate on the basis of the **welfare model of collectivization**.

They function under the Companies Act, 2013 where shareholding farmers pool their resources for better market linkages.

By 2019, 7374 FPCs have been formed.

A central sector scheme was launched in 2021 to promote 10000 FPCs.

Additional funding is provided through the Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium, NABARD and schemes like the Agriculture Investment Fund.

What are the challenges before FPCs?

First issue is related to raising capital from its members. High income states like Haryana and Punjab have better scope for raising capital. In states with lower per capita income like Odisha, it is difficult to raise capital. 65% of FPCs were operating on meagre share capital before the pandemic.

Second issue is that they cannot absorb public funding equally. There is a role of business development service providers, knowledge partners, and technical institutes to nurture FPCs. Small FPCs find it difficult to engage with these entities.

Smaller FPCs face issues in hiring full staff for operations that impact their branding and customer outreach.

Third issue is related to dominance of male. Women farmers face issues in providing share capital. They are represented by their male proxies.

What are the possible solutions?

Better coordination- There is a need for policy platforms like POSHAN Abhiyan for **inter-agency convergence**.

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Capacity building– The capacity of FPCs for absorbing public funds should be strengthened. Government officials and cluster-level federations set up under the One District One Product scheme can mentor FPOs.

Better incentives- FPCs must enable farmers access to entitlements like PM Fasal Bima Yojana, PM krishi Sinchai Yojana, KCC.

Women participation– They need to be given equal priority in these FPCs.

69. [Symptoms of climate change are real](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Symptoms of climate change are real**” published in the **Business Standard** on **28th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Climate Change.

Relevance: About climate change.

News: The resurgence of the monsoon at a time when it should normally have retreated from the northwest highlighted the impacts of climate change.

The excessive rain also exposed the inherent flaws in the drainage systems and poor town planning in most cities, including Delhi.

What are the clear symptoms of climate change in India?

a) Development of new rain-bearing systems in the oceans, **b)** The frequency of long dry spells and short bouts of intensive rain, along with the schedule of the monsoon’s onset and withdrawal has also undergone a noticeable change, **c)** There is a significant rise in the incidence of heavy downpours and pre-monsoon heat waves in the Himalayan region. This has led to more landslides and a greater melting of snow, and **d)** The overall monsoon rainfall this year, though about 7% above normal, has been quite patchy over time and space. This impedes crop sowing in some areas and adversely affects standing crops in others and **e)** The persistence of La Nina (caused by cooler than normal waters in the tropical Pacific) for an unusually long term of three years.

Must read: [Impact of Climate Change on Monsoon – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the clear symptoms of climate change around the world?

Globally, the impact of climate change is showing up in a higher frequency and more intensity of heat and cold waves, wet and dry periods, and melting of glaciers.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization is of the view that aberrant weather might lead to significant crop losses and exacerbate food security concerns in several countries in Asia, Africa and the Pacific region.

The impact of La-lina for consecutive three years is clearly visible in the dry climate in parts of the US and South America and unprecedented floods in Pakistan.

The potential loss to the global economy on account of weather-related factors is reckoned by some economists at over \$1 trillion by the end of 2023. This shows that global efforts to mitigate global warming are not producing the desired results.

Read more: [Managing Climate Change: A Strategy for India – Explained, pointwise](#)

What needs to be done to mitigate climate change?

a) Adapt to climate changes and enhance preparedness to cope with them, **b)** Concerted efforts to evolve crop varieties and agronomic practices capable of boosting the farm sector’s resilience against weather uncertainties.

Read more: [Climate change as business: Crisis, opportunity and everything in between](#)

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70. [Foreign trade: Going beyond a phrase](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Foreign trade: Going beyond a phrase**” published in the **Business Standard** on **29th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Relevance: About India’s foreign trade policy.

News: Recently, India’s foreign trade policy, 2015 was extended by six months at a time since 2020.

What are the reasons behind extending the foreign trade policy?

Read here: [Foreign Trade Policy extended for six months](#)

What is the need for a new Foreign Trade Policy?

Must read: [The Need for a New Foreign Trade Policy – Explained, pointwise](#)

What is the evolution of trade in India since FTP 2015-2030?

In 2015, the government was doubtful about the benefits of freer trade. So, new agreements were put on hold, older agreements were scrutinised, and bilateral investment treaties were scrapped.

After the Covid-19 pandemic hit India, the prime minister introduced the concept of *aatmanirbharta*, or self-reliance. It is not clear what self-reliance specifically means in the context of foreign trade policy. It is assumed that increasing the capacity and competitiveness of domestic industry.

Meanwhile, the government has also acted on multiple new free trade agreements,. For instance, **a)** Signing a comprehensive partnership with the United Arab Emirates, **b)** A more limited agreement with Australia, and **c)** Moving discussions forward with the United Kingdom and the European Union among others.

Read more: [Policy balance: Higher trade and fiscal deficits can create risks](#)

What clarifications are required in a new foreign trade policy?

The new foreign trade policy should ideally fill **a)** “Self-reliance” is one short phrase and does not constitute a policy statement on its own, **b)** Clarify whether Production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes are a temporary bridging mechanism or an export promotion system or an investment promotion scheme or a geo-strategic play to reduce dependence on China. This can be done by clearly defining aim and purpose of the scheme, **c)** There has to be clear proof of how temporary subsidies lead to a permanent increase in competitiveness.

In the absence of this understanding, the errors of the past will be repeated. These issues need to be clearly examined and understood before releasing a new policy.

71. [Talent, recognition – on awards to scientists](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Talent, recognition**” published in **The Hindu** on **29th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Technology

Relevance– Importance of awards

News– The article explains the rationale behind central government’s proposed move to have a re look at awards, prizes and fellowships. It also explains the issues faced by scientific researchers if it is implemented.

The Union Home Ministry has been given this task to have a re look.

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What is the rationale behind [reducing the number of awards to scientists](#)?

It is in accordance with PM's vision regarding "Transformation of the Awards Ecosystem".

Central government had modified the system of the Padma awards.

It ensures that ordinary people doing selfless work get the opportunity to get awards rather than well-known personalities who are repeatedly given these awards.

The government wants a transparent selection process.

What are the issues with the proposed move?

It is easy to set benchmarks in the field of sports and gallantry awards. But it is not the case with scientific research. It involves subjectivity.

It is possible to train talented youth to be Olympians or international cricketers but impossible to create an Einstein or a Chandrasekhar.

It is not easy to recognise early carrier potential. There is a lot of subjectivity involved. Fewer awards could increase discontent. Many talented youths can miss the opportunity to get awards.

72. [How much should India prop up the rupee?](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "[How much should India prop up the rupee?](#)" published in **The Hindu** on **30th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy – Growth and development

Relevance: concerns associated with declining rupee and widening CAD.

News: The rupee weakened against the dollar recording a low at Rs 81 per dollar in the last week. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been intervening in the forex market to smoothen the decline.

Indian foreign exchange reserves have fallen to about \$545 billion till mid-September 2022 in order to control the volatility.

How much of forex reserves should be used by the RBI to control the rupee volatility?

The use of forex reserves is appropriate at this point. Forex reserves are being spent to curb currency volatility.

It is not easy to fix the rupee at a particular level but it is possible to make it less volatile.

However, there is also a limit to rely on the reserves in order to control the rupee volatility.

How excessive intervention by the RBI can affect and forex reserves and what steps are needed?

Forex reserves can finish if RBI is aggressive in the intervention. Therefore, a holistic approach is needed. Thus, a multi-dimensional policy will be required, which includes easing provisions for remittances, allowing short-term foreign portfolio investments in government securities, etc.

Further a scheme to attract NRI investment can also be considered.

Depreciating the rupee sustainably will help the export sector and will address the challenge of high current account deficit (CAD) to some extent

Interest rate policy can be used to address domestic concerns and to help sustain the impact of the U.S. Federal Reserve's rate hikes.

However, there is a limit to the RBI continuously managing volatility because its priority is price stability through inflation containment and not the exchange rate management.

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What has been the reason for rupee volatility and what measures are required to address it?

The US Federal Reserve's decision to increase rates is making foreign portfolio investors move out of emerging markets.

Geopolitical uncertainties like the war in Ukraine, energy price volatility has also contributed to this situation.

What is the level of forex reserves in India in terms of number of months of import cover and is this measure adequate?

The import cover is one way to measure reserves adequacy but it's a very narrow one. There are other measures such as the Guidotti-Greenspan rule that looks at external debt that is less than one year.

Forex reserves should be sufficient to serve short term debt. From that point of view, we still have adequate reserves.

How can the real effective exchange rate (REER) be helpful for RBI in forex management?

It may not be a good approach and it is better to move with interest rate defense.

Therefore, addressing the macroeconomic fundamentals is necessary as it helped during the taper tantrum in 2013.

High inflation is also increasing the import costs which is widening the CAD.

However, we have already lived with CAD of 4% of GDP and it more important to come up with measures to finance the deficit.

Financing the CAD with capital inflows and preventing hot money outflow with the help of interest rates could be an effective long-term solution.

What are the consequences for the economy if CAD hits 4%?

Even during the tenure of Raghuram Rajan the CAD went up to 4% but as soon as hot money became volatile panic set in.

However, if RBI can operate the interest rate effectively that can check the outflow. But in using this tool RBI has to focus on the real interest rate and economic growth, i.e., R and G, for public debt management.

If the R is going to be greater than G then there is an unsustainable situation.

The only way to address these concerns such as fiscal consolidation, twin deficit crisis, a negative real rate of interest is to raise rates.

What are the concerns associated with the falling rupee?

As per an RBI report, 44% of the outstanding debt has not been protected and is vulnerable to forex volatility.

The rupee hasn't seen the kind of weakness that it saw during the taper tantrum and now it is extremely orderly. The pace of rupee depreciation has not been very severe this time to cause concern. However, uncertainties remain.

Moreover, rupee depreciation and appreciation are market-based and it is based on demand and supply mechanism.

Therefore, RBI needs to intervene only if the rupee is on a sustained free fall.

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73. Rupee trade settlement offers India structural benefits

Source: The post is based on an article “Rupee trade settlement offers India structural benefits” published in **Live Mint** on **30th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3

Relevance: measures taken by the RBI to tackle falling rupee

News: RBI has taken a decision recently to let domestic exim traders facilitate and settle invoicing and payments for international trade in rupees.

This is a welcome step as it will reduce India’s trade deficit and India can more easily raise its proportion of Russian oil purchases at discount prices.

How is this measure helpful?

It is a departure from the long-standing Foreign Exchange Management Act provision mandating final settlement in free foreign exchange.

It would need foreign banks opening Vostro accounts in India with settlements taking place instantly. It would further allow Indian exim dealers to settle rupee-denominated trade invoices using these Vostro accounts.

It also provides the parties with some leeway by allowing advance flow management.

It is done by using excess rupee balances for permissible capital and current account transactions in accordance with mutual agreements.

The provision for opening bank accounts in the case of Russia is limited to Russian banks that are not on the US-Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctions list.

Therefore, this step has come as the rupee falls to historic lows versus the dollar.

Why are the consequences of falling rupee?

Imports: The sharp rise in global commodities, particularly oil imports have caused India’s trade and current account deficits (CAD) to worrying levels.

The current account deficit is expected to touch 3% of GDP in 2022-23 despite a record increase in exports.

Inflation: A weakening rupee worsens the threat of imported inflation in India, since India is dependent on imports for about four-fifths of its annual motor-fuel demand.

Therefore, this policy would lower demand for foreign exchange for the settlement of current account-related trade flows.

Further this step taken by the RBI also has economic and geopolitical implications.

How this measure has economic and geopolitical implications?

First, it has liberalized capital account convertibility to decrease pressure on India’s dollar reserves. Capital account flexibility diminishes the function in trade of currency reserves.

Second, the move could assist Indian exporters in collecting advance payments in Indian rupees from overseas clients.

Third, even if a Vostro account is not pre-funded, foreign importers will have to buy rupees. The rupee payment method can be used to set off export and import transactions.

Fourth, the move could have a favourable long-term influence on regional nations wanting to trade with India.

Moreover, the measure will also affect international politics.

How will this measure affect international politics?

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First, it signals the beginning of more concerted attempts to settle payments in non-dollar currencies among BRICS nation and with other South Asian countries.

Second, it would support the Indian rupee's position on the internationally with China and Russia looking for alternative payment systems.

Moreover, the US dollar holds importance around the globe including in India.

How does US dollar hold importance around the globe and in India?

Internationally: The US dollar is defined as Dominant Currency Paradigm' (DCP) which means the US dollar holds importance as the source, destination and vehicle currency.

The DCP has affected national exchange-rate policies by emphasizing the stability of the US retail price index and input costs.

According to estimates, the dollar's proportion of global invoices is currently 4.7 times more than its share of global imports.

India: 60% of all export-import payments in India are made in US dollars (and 86% in the case of imports).

The settlement at the sovereign level is carried out in dollars even if an Indian exporter is paid in rupees.

Moreover, the rupee's current depreciation can be given to dollar strength globally.

74. [Chief of Defence Staff](#)

Source– The post is based on the articles “**Evolving Chair**” published in **The Hindu** and the “**The Chief task**” published in **The Indian Express** on **30th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security challenges

Relevance– Reformation of armed forces

News– The article explains the new vision of the Indian government for transformation of armed focus and bringing synergy. It also explains the challenges before the institution of Chief of Defence Staff.

What is the status of armed forces in a democracy?

They are constitutionally empowered instruments of the state under the umbrella of **civilian supremacy**.

They operate with a **great deal of autonomy** and are largely trusted by the politicians to offer sound policy advice.

Indian armed forces have followed this model. In the case of India, bureaucracy has acted as a **policy interface** between executive and armed forces.

What is the proposed vision for transformation of armed forces and CDS role in this transformation?

One of the main components of this new vision is reorganisation of the armed forces into **integrated theatre commands**.

It focuses on bringing **synergy** between all wings of armed forces.

CDS mandate is to ensure “**jointness**” of the three services in operations, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance.

CDS is also the **Principal Military Adviser** to the Defence Minister and Permanent Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee.

What are challenges before the institution of Chief of Defence Staff?

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To build a bridge between a government that wants quicker changes and an organisation that is resistant to change.

Build **operational capability** at a pace that will ensure that the military power asymmetry with China remains manageable.

Address the challenges related to **integrated military planning and training**. India specific requirements have to be addressed for fresh structures that focus on jointness.

To properly articulate **policies, doctrines and strategy**. A **National Security Strategy** needs to be devised. It will act as a guiding framework for policies and doctrines.

Balancing the need to retain the operational capability and the government's push towards self-reliance in defence manufacturing. The current **silos** of innovators and designers, manufacturers and armed forces needs to be broken down. We have to ensure lateral entry into innovation and manufacturing spaces to develop intellectual capital.

Shedding **colonial legacies** and traditions that are irrelevant. The focus should be upon fostering a sense of pride in India's martial traditions that go back to epics such as the Mahabharata and to Cholas and Marathas.

To bring in **fiscal prudence** and optimisation in utilisation of the defence budget especially given the tough economic outlook

More clarity is needed regarding the functions of the CDS, particularly their relationship with the Service Chiefs in terms of operational roles and administrative duties.

75. [Convergent growth](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Convergent growth**” published in the **Business Standard** on **30th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy

Relevance– Challenges to growth of Indian economy

News– The article explains the historical reason for disparity in growth and development performance between Indian states. It also tells about the steps needed to be taken to remove this disparity.

The prime minister's August 15 speech spoke of a united and integrated India as one of the five focuses for policy in the years ahead to the centenary of independence.

What are some facts related to disparity in growth and development performance of states?

Low growth states are in northern, eastern and central parts of the country.

High growth states are in the south, west and south-west parts of the country.

There is a widening gap between low growth and high growth states of the country

The ratio of per capita state product increased from 1.6 in 1990-91 to 2.6 in 2019-20.

What are the historical reasons for this disparity?

Colonial period- Madras and Bombay presidencies saw higher growth. It was shaped by domestic entrepreneurship driven by nationalist considerations.

Large princely states also experienced higher growth. There was significant government support for industry, education.

The low growth areas coincides with the old Bengal presidency. Although in some parts, there was significant development in industry and agriculture. But it was dominated by British companies.

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After independence– There was substantial public investment in manufacturing and mining directed mainly at the eastern and central regions. But this heavy investment could not generate opportunities for private enterprises. In west Bengal. Growth was further impacted by extreme leftism.

States in the south and west were benefited by private investment in chemical, engineering and consumer industries. There was also public investment in the petroleum and chemical sectors.

After liberalisation– There has been a substantial shift from public to private investment. There has been rapid growth of export-oriented hightech services like the IT sector.

Higher growth states are the main beneficiary due to their strong private sector, coastal location and global interactions.

What is the way forward?

The focus of convergent-growth policies must therefore be on the five northern and central states- Rajasthan, UP, Bihar, MP and Jharkhand. There is a need to focus upon West Bengal which has the presence of most growth factors.

There is a need to properly utilise the **demographic dividend** of these five northern and central states. These states will account for 91.6 per cent of the national increase in the working-age population between 2030 and 2050.

The northern states cannot be integrated easily with the global economy. There is a need to connect them with the higher-growth states through encouraging a **national value chain** in manufacturing.

Making the northern states part of a national **manufacturing value chain** will require serious investment in logistics and infrastructure for manufacturing, skill development, and organised support for local MSMEs. It can not be done without central government support.

76. [The right corporate culture would end moonlighting](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The right corporate culture would end moonlighting**” published in the **Livemint** on **30th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3: Indian economy and employment.

Relevance: About Moonlighting.

News: Wipro has sacked 300 employees it found guilty of working for its competitors. This triggered the ‘moonlighting’ debate.

What is moonlighting?

Read here: [What is moonlighting and if it's legal in India](#)

Why moonlighting is not acceptable?

Not for all: When it comes to professionals who have access to sensitive data such as customer information and trade secrets of their employers or are in possession of the company’s intellectual property, moonlighting poses a direct risk to the organization. So, in sectors such as fintech and banking, moonlighting shouldn’t be acceptable due to the sheer magnitude of risk it poses.

The employee-Employer agreement: Under it, the employee has explicitly agreed to a non-compete and single employment clause while joining a company. So, moonlighting raises questions about a person’s integrity and violates the implicit bond of trust shared between an employee and the employer. Further, it might even cause legal ramifications.

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Where moonlighting is acceptable?

In countries like the US, moonlighting is close to the norm. Many people work multiple gigs to make ends meet.

An employee and a freelancer are not the same. So, it is acceptable for the segment of professionals who prefer to work on short-term projects while being connected to multiple organizations. Consultants, gig workers, freelancers, etc, have limited exposure to an organization's trade secrets.

Combined with a non-disclosure agreement for them, there is a fair amount of confidentiality and protection built in.

Read more: [Should employees have side gigs? Bosses & HR gurus are divided. But answer is in supply & demand](#)

What are the conditions that lead to moonlighting?

Employees actually accept two different professional responsibilities due to reasons such as **a)** First organization's pay and benefits are lacking, **b)** Lack of opportunities to grow and learn within the organization, **c)** Lack of job satisfaction, and **d)** Organization lag on employee engagement, **e)** An employee may need an additional source of income due to an emergency, **f)** Employee may desire a move into a more challenging role or want to learn something new.

What are the concerns associated with moonlighting and work culture?

There has been a consistent and strong focus on the work culture and work-life balance since the pandemic. If employees are seeking additional work while organizations facilitate initiatives to promote a better work-life balance, there must be a crack in the foundation of work culture.

Read more: [Moonlighting is neither ethical nor a work trend](#)

What should be done?

Improve the organization's culture: **a)** Every manager and every leader must be equipped to understand the struggles of their teammates, **b)** Sustain the focus on the well-being of employees, **c)** Provide employees financial options to take care of themselves and their families during medical crises, **d)** Offering work flexibility to those who are also primary caregivers to children or the elderly, and **e)** Establishing a support system of mental health professionals along with empathetic managers.

The right culture is the only solution to this perennial problem of moonlighting. Further, a good work culture will also create a mutual sense of belonging, loyalty and trust.

77. [A costly decision – Extension of PMGKAY should have been avoided](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**A costly decision – Extension of PMGKAY should have been avoided**” published in the **Business Standard** on **30th September 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3: Indian economy.

Relevance: About extending PMGKAY.

News: Recently, the government has extended the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY-Phase VII) for a further period of 3 months i.e. October to December 2022.

What is Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)?

Read here: [Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package\(PMGKP\)](#)

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What are the concerns associated with extending PMGKAY?

Not an emergency situation: The scheme has been extended due to successive waves of the pandemic, which affected economic activity. But now the economy has now opened up completely.

Against finance ministry advice: Against the advice of finance ministry officials, the government extended the scheme due to political considerations.

Additional expenditure: In terms of fiscal impact, the extension will lead to an additional expenditure of Rs 44,762 crore. This is expected to take the food subsidy bill to about Rs 3.38 trillion, as against the Budget estimate of Rs 2.07 trillion.

Difficult to withdraw: The extension of the scheme gives an impression that it would continue even in normal times and was not necessarily an emergency intervention.

Impact money market: Because of measures taken by the Reserve Bank of India to contain inflation, the liquidity conditions have changed significantly. Higher government borrowing at this stage can push up the cost of money.

What should be done instead of extending PMGKAY?

Higher revenues at this stage should have been used to either push up capital expenditure, which would have boosted growth or reduced the fiscal deficit.

A swift fiscal consolidation in the case of better revenue realisation is needed in the medium term.

The global economic outlook has worsened significantly and will affect growth in the Indian economy as well. So India should use every opportunity to move forward in fiscal consolidation. This would help create some policy space to deal with another potential adverse shock.

78. [Saving the world – DART can reduce risks from meteors](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Saving the world – DART can reduce risks from meteors**” published in the **Business Standard** on 30th September 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3: Awareness in the fields of Space.

Relevance: About DART Mission.

News: NASA’s DART (Double Asteroid Redirection Test) spacecraft has collided with the asteroid Dimorphous.

What is the DART Mission?

Read here: [Explained: How NASA’s DART mission will hit and deflect an asteroid](#)

What are asteroids and their potential impact on Earth?

Read here: [Explained | The NASA spacecraft-asteroid collision](#)

A large meteorite burning up in the lower atmosphere could damage the ozone layer, or release enough energy to cause damage similar to a nuclear explosion.

What are the previous instances of asteroid strikes on Earth?

On average about 17 meteorites of substantial size hit the Earth every day (smaller ones burn up due to friction in the atmosphere).

Approximately 66 million years ago, a very large meteorite crashed into the Yucatan region of Mexico and caused the extinction of a large number of animal and plant species. It caused tsunamis and led to a nuclear winter that lasted a long time. It is estimated that the object was around 10 km in diameter and it caused a crater that’s 180 km wide and 2 km deep.

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In 1908, when a large meteorite smashed into an uninhabited part of Siberia with a force equivalent to a large nuclear bomb.

What are the advantages of the DART Mission?

a) Directly addresses a long-standing nightmare of mass extinction, **b)** It tests proof of concept for a planetary defence system, which could prevent a large asteroid from smashing into the Earth, or making a close fly-by with disastrous consequences, **c)** Since DART appears to have worked, scientists can now conceive a similar mission possibly involving a large nuclear warhead if there's a future emergency.

What are the challenges with missions like DART?

-DART was planned for several years, and the vehicle was launched in November 2021 in order to intersect Dimorphos ten months later.

- Given mankind's propensity for weaponising everything, such missions could also be used for military purposes.

What is ahead after the DART Mission?

The **Observational capabilities** will need to be good enough to observe the potential impact with enough time if there is indeed a hazardous object heading on a collision course.

79. [Swachh Bharat 2.0: Moving forward together](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Swachh Bharat 2.0: Moving forward together**" published in **The Indian Express** on **1st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3

Relevance: measures taken to improve sanitation

News: The article highlights the importance of private sector in resolving the issue of Sanitation.

The concept of sanitation in India has been around since the Indus Valley civilization.

Sanitation coverage in India was as low as 39 per cent till 2014. Around 55 crore people in rural areas were without a toilet facility before 2014.

This severely affected the health and dignity of our people, especially women and children.

What are the impacts of poor sanitation?

Health: Poor sanitation has a great impact on health. For example, contaminated drinking water and food become a major cause of diarrhea and other diseases. It further leads to stunting in our children.

Environment: Poor hygiene and waste management practices also impact the environment. The untreated sewage flows directly into water bodies and affects marine ecosystems, contaminates soil and air.

Economy: A study by the World Bank states that the absence of toilets and conventional sanitation costs India 6.4 per cent of its GDP in 2006. The economic impact of poor sanitation for India is at least \$38.5 billion every year under health, education, access time and tourism.

Therefore, the goals of Swachh Bharat Mission have been effective in improving sanitation in India.

How has Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) helped in improving sanitation in India?

More than 10 crore toilets were constructed from 2014 to 2020 and the country declared itself ODF on October 2, 2019. This achievement was the result of SBM, that was launched in 2014.

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One of its goals was to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to make the country Open Defecation Free (ODF).

This was done by **offering financial incentives for building household toilets** as well as community toilets for slums and migrant populations.

The government also ran several programmes with **the participation of the private sector** and NGOs to educate the population on the benefits of ODF.

The **second phase of the project was started in 2020** and is expected to run till 2025.

It has set even more ambitious targets such as a) sustaining the achievements of phase 1 and b) ensuring the treatment of both liquid and solid waste.

The targets will be achieved through the **help of technology and private sector engagement**.

What is Lighthouse Initiative (LHI)?

It has been started by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation as part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

It will be implemented through PPP across villages in 75 gram-panchayats in 15 states in Phase 1. It is based on the principle of inclusive sanitation.

It aims to build solid and liquid waste management structures.

This will be done by employing a participatory and consultative approach through mobilisation of the village communities, corporates, district and block administration and gram panchayat officers.

What is India Sanitation Coalition (ISC)?

It is a multi-stakeholder platform that creates meaningful collaborations. These stakeholders include the private sector, government, financial institutions, civil society groups, media, donors, etc.

ISC is recognised as the official meeting point between the government and the private sector for engagement in building sustainable solid and liquid waste management infrastructure.

Corporates such as ITC, Jindal Steel and Power, JSW, Nayara, etc. have come forward for collaboration.

This has also led the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation to recognise the benefits of working with the private sector.

Therefore, the Department has sought the construction of soak pits, waste stabilisation ponds, drainage channels, etc. in collaboration with private sector.

The fund has been provided by the Department and it will be further supplement by private sector through CSR funding.

What are other means to create hygienic surroundings in collaboration with villagers?

Managing plastic waste as well as wastewater at a village level by providing solutions to households to convert waste to earn a remunerative return.

It will create hygienic surroundings for the communities and make households economically self-sufficient.

Moreover, recovery of grey water can help to tackle scarce water resources, encouraging reuse and conserving water bodies.

Further, collaboration of corporates with the village communities will help to convert their waste to wealth by utilising simple and cost-effective technologies.

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80. [5G services to be rolled out today; how will your experience change?](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**5G services to be rolled out today; how will your experience change?**” published in **The Indian Express** on **1st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3

Relevance: benefits of 5G

News: The Prime Minister of India will launch 5G on 1st October and the sixth edition of India Mobile Congress in New Delhi.

What will be the benefits of 5G?

Socio-economic: The Ministry of Communications said that 5G can bring new economic opportunities and societal benefits and bring transformation for Indian society.

Consumers: 5G could have benefits of the superior Internet speed and low latency over 4G for consumers. 5G could touch 10 Gbps compared to the 100 Mbps peak of 4G. Latency under 4G is between 10-100 ms (millisecond) whereas on 5G it is expected to be under 1 ms.

Latency is the time it takes for a device to send packets of data and get a response. Shorter the latency, quicker the response.

Which technology is being used by the operators to launch 5G?

5G networks are deployed mainly in two modes: standalone and non-standalone. Both architectures have their advantages and disadvantages.

The biggest difference between the two architectures is the **compatibility** with existing device ecosystems.

Most smartphones today have the capability to connect to non-standalone 5G networks which are 5G airwaves transmitted through 4G networks.

Standalone mode: Reliance Jio has chosen the standalone mode. In this mode 5G network operates with dedicated equipment and runs parallel to the existing 4G network.

Whereas, in the non-standalone mode, the 5G network is supported by the 4G core infrastructure.

Non-standalone mode: Bharti Airtel has opted for non-standalone mode. The non-standalone networks are built on existing infrastructure.

Therefore, the initial cost and the time taken to roll out services through this mode is less than standalone networks.

81. [India-US ties: Depth & nuance](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**India-US ties: Depth & nuance**” published in the **The Indian Express** on **1st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- International Relations

Relevance- India and US relationship

News- The article explains the relationship between India and the USA.

How India-US relations have evolved historically?

Following the nuclear tests of May 1998, western world was angry with India. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee wrote to President Bill Clinton. He told the nuclear weapon threat from China compelled India to have its nuclear bomb.

Talks between then External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott led to President Clinton’s historic visit of March 2000.

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The **Indo-US nuclear deal** during the George W Bush years further improved the strategic relationship.

Obama became the only President to make two visits to India. He hosted both Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi in the White House.

During the Trump presidency, there was continuous improvement in relations. **Quad framework** was revived. Defence partnership became strong. There was signing of the foundational agreements like **LEMOA, COMCASA**.

The momentum of the relationship has continued under President Joe Biden especially on **Indo-pacific strategy**.

What are the current states of relationship?

Experts say that India's relationship with the US has been the most comprehensive association since independence. India and US are seen as **"natural allies"** by leaders from India.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been a test case for the relationship. India did not criticize Russia. It has annoyed the west.

The US decision to provide F-16 to Pakistan has created friction between two sides.

Some analysts in New Delhi view the renewal of the US-Pakistan military engagement as a message to New Delhi for its strategy of **"issue-based alignment"**.

There is absence of a full-time ambassador 20 months after the Biden Administration took charge.

Both see rising China as a common threat. USA was late in recognising the threat. Although the containment started with Obama pivot to Asia strategy, the Trump administration clearly spelled out China as a strategic rival.

US exit from Afghanistan has increased China leverage in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In this context, India has sought an exemption on S-400 from US sanctions.

The closeness between China and Russia is increasing. There is a need for improving the relationship by accommodating each other.

82. [Let The Land Heal](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **"Let the Land Heal"** published in **The Indian Express** on **1st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Agriculture and Environment

Relevance– Unsustainable agriculture practices

News– The article explains the issues related to excessive use of pesticides. It also suggests measures to reduce their use.

What is the issue?

There is indiscriminate use of pesticides by farmers.

Lack of quality farm advisory services is responsible for it.

Pest are developing resistance to existing pesticides.

It is impacting the human body and biodiversity.

What is the way forward?

Alternate business model– The business model of the farm chemical input industry must transform to become a service industry.

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In India, shopkeepers only sell farm chemical inputs. Individual farmers cannot afford good quality precision spraying equipment. It leads to wastage.

To reduce the wastages, input sale of the sellers could be in the form of services like spray on farms.

Transparent data collection– Shopkeepers should report each sale of farm chemicals to the government in real time.

There is a need for a mandatory QR code on each farm chemical package. These measures will allow for better-targeted farm advisory and grievance redressal.

Independent regulator– Same officials and departments who advocate pesticide use also regulate the trade. The regulation of farm chemicals needs to be transferred to the health ministry.

83. [‘Lichens are a pioneer species which enable all life — conserving them is vital’](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “‘**Lichens are a pioneer species which enable all life — conserving them is vital**’” published in **The Times of India** on **1st October 2022**.

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

Relevance: About Lichens.

News: At present most conservation work is focused on charismatic species, like tigers and elephants. But Plants and lower plants, like lichen, ferns and mosses, were neglected.

What are Lichens?

Lichens are a complex life form that is a symbiotic partnership of two separate organisms, a fungus and an alga. The outer skin and internal structure of a lichen is made of strands of fungal hyphae. Interspersed among the strands inside the lichen are individual cells of algae.

Lichens do not have roots or structures like other plants, they depend on the atmosphere for air and water. So, the quality of ambience reflects in the diversity of lichens.

There are three broad categories of lichen. **1) Foliose** – These are flat and leaf-like lichens, **2) Crustose** – These are formed as a layer, **3) Fruticose** – These lichens resemble minishrubs.

Spread: Between six to eight percent of Earth’s surface is covered by lichen, with over 15,000 known species.

Why Lichen is a pioneer species?

Lichen is a ‘**pioneer species**’ because **a)** They are among the most ancient organisms on Earth. For instance, they are found in the Jurassic era, **b)** They are the first to appear on barren rocks, in deserts and icy terrain and after disturbances like landslides, **c)** They play a foundational role in enabling all life. For example, they aid in weathering rocks, creating soil – the basis of all life, **d)** In deserts, lichen form a crust over the surface, retaining moisture — only in such spots do desert trees grow, **e)** These are also bioindicators of pollution. As they depend on the atmosphere for air and water.

Read more: [Fungi form a kingdom of life — they show us how we all need others to live](#)

What are the other benefits of Lichens?

Animals and birds depend on Lichens: Some Lichens are consumed by musk deer in winter, when little else grows (this is similar to the Arctic reindeer which eat moss, after whom ‘reindeer moss’ is named), while others are used by birds and woolly flying squirrels to pad their nests.

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Formed via a symbiotic relationship between fungus and algae, they resemble a micro-ecosystem and with lower plants like mosses. They attract insects, birds, snails, frogs and little animals needing food, habitat and shelter.

Spices and perfumes: Parmotrema tinctorum and Ramalina sinensis respectively are used as spices and in perfumes, particularly utilised in the famous perfumeries of Kannauj.

Medicinal value: Some lichens are used in medicines for asthma and fractures. Some lichens have biochemicals which can treat cancers.

Source of income: Villages usually collect lichen and sell it to traders for its many uses.

Read more: [Arctic amplification: What is causing Arctic warming?](#)

What are the threats faced by Lichens at present?

a) Lichen found in alpine regions could be affected by **growing climate change**, **b) Species migration** is at work now, with global warming forcing animals and treelines to move to higher, cooler altitudes — lichen at 4,000 metres and in Arctic regions could be affected, **c) Deforestation:** If host trees are destroyed, so are the lichen on them, **d) Pollution in urban areas:** Traffic in urban areas produces nitrogen which damages the algae that make food for lichen.

What are the conservation efforts for Lichens?

In 2018, Uttarakhand decided to develop a park devoted entirely to lichens. Munsiyari in Kumaon was chosen as they have more than 130 lichen species.

Read more: [India's first cryptogamic garden opens in Dehradun](#)

What should be done to protect lichens?

Policymakers must have in-depth ecological knowledge while framing policies, for instance, they should **1) Understand** the link between species, **2) Access** scientific research on the impacts of losing biodiversity, **3) Learn** about habitats which shouldn't be disturbed, etc.