



9 PM

Compilation

31st October to 5th November, 2022

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General Studies Paper – 1

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General Studies - 1

1. [Learn from Morbi: Fix local govt](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Learn from Morbi: Fix local govt**” published in **The Times of India** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1- Urbanisation. GS2- Local bodies

Relevance– Urban governance

News- The article explains the issues related to urban civic bodies in asset creation and maintenance.

The broader goal of investigation of the Morbi incident should be to identify the issues faced by urban civic bodies.

What is the importance of asset creation in urban areas?

This enable a city to provide an economy of scale. Assets determine the economic potential and environmental sustainability of a city.

PM has himself observed that vision of India@2047 as developed nation will be shaped by cities.

What are the issues related with urban asset creation and maintenance?

Fiscal health– Large parts of municipal budgets are spent on previous year dues. It leads to cost overrun.

Procurement process and enforcement– The procurement process is weak.

There is a lack of transparency and people-centricity despite several supportive mechanisms like RTI.

There is a wide nexus between contractors and vested interests in the political economy.

Capacity of civic bodies– These bodies suffer from overlapping responsibility and multiplicity of agencies.

There is an acute shortage of staff. One CEO or engineer handles two or more civic bodies.

Training and feedback are either absent or irregular.

What is the way forward?

Improving fiscal health– State needs to initiate civic body reform regarding its own source funds. Property tax toolkit gives step-by-step directions for this.

Accounting exercise with ratio analysis, realistic budgeting with participatory resources and timely auditing is needed.

Following due process– Asset creation and maintenance should follow the rules, byelaws and regulation. It includes safety, environmental and energy audits as per building code, Model Municipal Law, 2003 and UDFPI guidelines, 1996.

Capacity building– There is a need to focus upon competency-based modules rather than routine conventional training. Exposure visit and roundtable seminars for all municipal functionaries including elected leaders is needed.

2. [About rising global population: How we can achieve growth with balance](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**How we can achieve growth with balance**” published in **The Indian Express** on **5th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1- Population and associated issues.

Relevance: Rising global population and concerns associated with it.

News: World’s population is increasing rapidly. It is expected that India might be the world’s most populous country by 2050 with its population crossing 1.65 billion and replacing China from the top spot.

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What are the different views on the rising global population?

Positive aspect: Some argue that population growth will bring new ideas that will increase food production while others argue that population growth leads to the creation of more value than consumed by an individual.

Negative aspect: Others argue that more people means more exploitation of resources and more carbon emissions which may ultimately harm nature.

What are the projections for global population growth?

China along with developed Western countries took measures to control their population in the last century. As a result, they witnessed low birth rates leading to a slowing down of population growth in this century.

However, countries like the **Middle East** and **Africa** continue to register higher population growth rates. There is a projection that 40 per cent of the world population will reside in Africa by 2100.

Moreover, Muslim countries' population growth rates have **increased to 1.5%** compared to the rest at 0.7%. This population growth will also be witnessed in India which has raised alarms among the policymakers including in India.

What are the concerns for India?

Due to the rise in Muslim population, it is expected that India will have the **largest Muslim population** in the world by 2050 and this growth might endanger the unity of the nation.

One of the consequences of the rising population is that it leads to a division of the country.

South Sudan and Kosovo are examples of it.

However, globally there has been a decline in the population growth rates including **low fertility rates** among Muslims. This has been highlighted by **National Family Health Survey**.

What can be the course of action to control the rising global population?

The population will continue to grow with time so balanced growth is needed with better living standards for future generations. Thus, the world need to ensure sustainable growth.

The statement of **Gandhiji** "nature can offer a free lunch, if only we control our appetite" is relevant in this context.

General Studies Paper – 2

General Studies - 2

1. [A check over of the U.S.'s much anticipated NSS](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**A check over of the U.S.'s much anticipated NSS**” published in **The Hindu** on **31st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International relations

Relevance: National Security Strategy of the USS and its relevance for India

News: The United States has launched its **National Security Strategy (NSS)**. It is a comprehensive document that provide the estimates of investment in the defense of the country and in achieving the nation's security goals.

What are the goals of NSS?

The NSS of the Biden administration focuses on multiple goals to be achieved in the current decade (2021-30).

It seeks to **1) Sustain U.S. leadership, 2) Improve the U.S. economy, 3) Building partnerships and alliances, 4) Counter China as its strategic competitor and Russia as a disruptor, and 5) Boost U.S. competitiveness and defend democracy.**

It also focuses on the issues of climate change, food insecurity, pandemics, terrorism, energy shortages and inflation along with food security and inflation.

It serves three purposes – **a) fulfils the aims and vision of the National Security Strategic Guidance, b) provides clarity and direction to various policies, c) fulfils the political expectation in the US.**

An important part of the NSS is to inform the U.S. Department of Defense's strategy, especially in the two areas – **nuclear posture and missile defense.**

What are the agendas put under NSS?

It lays down three main agendas of the U.S. strategy of moving forward: **a) invest; b) build and c) modernize.**

Invest: It seeks to **invest in the tools of American power** and increase its influence by strengthening the economy, improving critical infrastructure and investing in technologies such as microchips and semiconductors.

Build: It seeks to build the strongest possible **coalition of nations.**

Modernize: it aims at modernizing that would fulfil the US' **internal and external security demands.**

These three agendas will help US to compete with China as NSS names China as the **only competitor** that could shape the international order in a fundamental way.

How does NSS provide strategy to compete with China and fill the gap of Russia?

The NSS provides a long-term and immediate plan to counter China. It seeks to build a **joint-strategy** to compete China while putting **limitation** on Russia.

It considers China's increasing dominance in the **Indo-Pacific region** in areas of economy, technology, development, security, etc, a threat.

Further, it also focuses on **building alliances and global partnership** to oppose change in the status quo of Taiwan by China.

It identifies Russia's downgraded economy, military, and its degraded global influence. To fill the gap of Russia, the NSS acknowledges **India and Japan.**

This acknowledgement may be a hint for the inclusion of India in G7. However, one has to be aware that any such inclusion will serve the interest of the US only rather than its Indo-Pacific partners.

How NSS recognizes India as the strategic partner of the US?

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NSS identifies India as a both **bilateral and multilateral partner in the Indo-Pacific** and highlight the importance of India as the largest democracy and a major defence partner. It provides India with the opportunity of **partnership with the US in the defence sector**. It has also recognized India as an important partner in the Indo-Pacific through regional partnerships such as the **Quad** (India, Australia, Japan the U.S.) and the **I2U2** (India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the U.S).

2. [The extra-constitutional delusions of Raj Bhavan](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“The extra-constitutional delusions of Raj Bhavan”** published in **The Hindu** on **31st October 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Governance**

News: The Kerala Governor issued the statement that individual Ministers who lower the dignity of the office of the Governor can face withdrawal of the pleasure by the Governor. The statement has stirred the controversy.

What are the different views regarding the pleasure of the Governor?

Governor mainly exercises two powers – a) Statutory Power, b) Constitutional Powers

Statutory Power: The governor has statutory powers as a Chancellor of universities in the State, like determining the loopholes in the appointment process, etc. Vice-Chancellors of universities were expelled in exercise of this power. However, he does not have power to expel Ministers and he is expected to act within the bounds of the Constitution.

Constitutional Powers: Article 163(1) says that the Council of Ministers must aid and advise the Governor. **Article 163(2)** says that the Governor can act in his discretion in certain matters according to the Constitution. These two articles have to be read together.

This means that **Governor is bound by the Cabinet** decision except in certain cases, where he can use his discretion, such as in deciding on sanctions to prosecute a cabinet minister or in his decisions as Administrator of a Union Territory, etc.

Article 164 says that the Ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor. However, this article cannot be separated from Article 163.

Therefore, it means that Governor cannot use its pleasure unless the Cabinet or the Chief Minister advises to use it.

Scholar's view: The jurist **H.M. Seervai** said that if Governors have discretion in all matters under Article 163(1), then it would be unnecessary for another provision that gave discretionary powers to Governor under Article 163(2).

According to scholar **Subhash C. Kashyap**, the pleasure given in the constitution signifies the use of the pleasure only when the Ministry has lost the confidence of the majority.

Supreme Court: Supreme Court in **Shamsher Singh vs State of Punjab (1974)** highlighted the statement of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar regarding Article 164.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said unlike the President of the US, Indian President is bound by the advice of his Ministers. The President cannot act against the advice of the Ministers nor he can take any decision without their advice.

He further said that the President of India cannot dismiss any Minister as long as he enjoys the majority in the Parliament. This same principle applies to Governor as well.

SC also said that the power and functions of the President and the Governor should be disposed by the Ministry answerable to the Legislature. This will secure the democratic nature of the governance.

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Colonial laws: As per the **Government of India Act, 1858**, the post of Governor was under the supervision of the Governor General and **Government of India Act, 1935** made Governors to act on the advice of the provincial Government.

Constituent Assembly: There were debates over the misuse of the power of the Governor. The draft article 126 contained that Governor's Ministers shall be chosen and summoned by (the Governor) and shall hold office during his pleasure. However, this article was later amended and the Cabinet was given the authority to rule.

So, it implies that the Governor is only a titular head of the State and the Governor cannot act against the Cabinet if the Cabinet has majority. Therefore, the current statement of the Kerala Governor stands void.

3. [Why we need a more comprehensive index than the Global Hunger Index](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Why we need a more comprehensive index than the Global Hunger Index**" published in **The Indian Express** on **31st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice –

Relevance: Problems with GHI 2022

News: India has ranked 107 among 121 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI, 2022). This has raised concern over the policy of the government in tackling hunger especially in the children. However, it has raised the lacunae over the methodology of calculating hunger by GHI and problems associated with it.

What are the problems with GHI?

Problems with Indicators

Three of the four indicators used for calculation of the GHI are related to the **health of children** and therefore the index does not represent the **entire population**.

The indicator that estimates the proportion of undernourished population is based on an opinion poll conducted on a very small **sample size of 3,000**.

The other variables that GHI uses are **stunting (low height for age)**, **wasting (low weight for height)** of children and **mortality rate of children** under 5 years.

Therefore, the government has said that the data provided by GHI 2022 mostly reflects the health of the children rather than the health of the entire country.

Further, the problem of stunting and wasting is **multidimensional** and not just because of hunger. Thus, it requires a focus on female education, access to immunization, and better sanitation facilities.

Problems of food shortages

GHI 2022 suggests that India is facing food shortages and many Indians do not have access to food. However, this is not true.

India has been **giving free food (rice/wheat)**, 10/kg per person per month to more than 800 million people since April 2020 in the pandemic. It also exported more than 30 MMT of cereals in 2021.

This distribution and export have helped in tackling starvation not only in India but around the world. India has also been applauded for its effort by multilateral agencies like the UNDP, IMF, World Bank, etc.

Therefore, the government has raised concern that GHI does not include free food under the PMGKY (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana) but instead relies on an opinion survey of 3,000 in a country of 1.4 billion.

On the other hand, the authors GHI say that NSSO's consumption data has not been generated after 2011 which made them rely on the sample size.

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What can be the course of action?

The authors of the GHI index should use the **calorie intake based on FAO's food** balance sheets because there are problems even with the NSSO consumption data.

For example, according to the research at ICRIER, calories consumption for 2019 was estimated at 2,581 calories while the NSSO consumption survey of 2011 is stuck at 2088 calories.

Therefore, more research is needed by the authors to produce GHI which will eventually improve India's ranking.

Further a more comprehensive index like the **Multi-dimensional Poverty (MPI)** index of the UNDP than the GHI is needed to get the status of the entire population.

4. [The case of consent – on women related issues](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“The case of consent”** published in **The Indian Express** on **31th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Mechanism and laws related to vulnerable sections

News- The article explain the issue of women alleging rape when long-term relationships come to an end.

What is the legal position?

Section 375 is related to rape. As per Section 375, a man is said to have committed rape if he has sexual intercourse with a woman **“without her consent”**.

It should be read with **section 90**. Section 90 provides that consent given **under a misconception** is not consent in the eye of the law. Hence, a woman who indulges in sexual intercourse with a man on the promise of marriage argues that her consent was accorded under the “misconception” that the accused was going to marry her.

Supreme Court has ruled that the alleged misconception created to obtain a woman's consent for sex has to be close to the incident and not stretched over years.

What are the issues involved?

The law is being misused against the male sexual partners. It is being used as an instrument of arm-twisting, blackmail, extortion and disproportionate revenge. It causes immense harassment, including imprisonment, the financial burden of seeking bail to men who had no criminal tendencies.

Risk averse tendency of police in sexual offence related cases further exacerbate the problem. It also results in an undue burdening of the criminal justice system.

Relationship dynamics are further undergoing a quantum change. Young men and women increasingly engage in **casual dating** and **short-term sexual intercourse** through social media apps.

A law that seeks to protect unmarried adult women from being deceived into sexual intercourse also appears patently **paternalistic**.

The law is also paradoxical to women's **sexual liberation and empowerment**. This comes with both the freedom and the responsibility to own up to their choices and desires.

What is the way forward?

There is an urgent need to institute a system of detailed **preliminary enquiry** for such complaints before registering an FIR to gauge the veracity of the allegations. This would help protect the genuine victims.

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5. [How today's energy crisis will shape our world's future](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**How today's energy crisis will shape our world's future**” published in the **mint** on **31th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations. GS3- Energy

News- The article explains the current energy crisis and its implications.

What are some facts related to the current energy crisis?

This has been initiated by Russia's invasion of Europe.

According to the IEA, the world is in the midst of the first global energy crisis, a shock of unprecedented breadth and complexity.

It is much broader-based than the crisis in the 1970s. It does not cover just oil, but gas and other fossil fuels.

Between January and July this year, the IMF global price index has risen by 72%. But since then, the gas prices have fallen drastically due to lower demand.

The epicenter of the crisis has been Europe.

What will be the implication of this crisis?

There is a longer term shift. Even if the situation normalizes, Europe's dependence on Russia will not be the same. The rupture between their energy relation will be permanent.

Germany is looking for other alternatives to meet energy needs. Major replacements have been Norway, Netherland.

Ripples of these realignments will be felt by big consumers like India. It will have to make more efforts to secure energy supply.

Russia will have to look for new buyers for its oil as the full European embargo on Russian oil begins in February next year.

Countries will have to prioritize energy security over other goals.

There will be a transition towards clean energy. IEA energy outlook says that coal demand will plateau by next few years and natural gas by next decade.

What is the scenario of India?

India dependence on Russian oil is not a short-term shift. India will likely be a major buyer in years to come. If Russia is able to build a pipeline in Asia infrastructure in Asia, India could be a major importer of Russian gas.

Renewable will continue to grow in importance. IEA Energy Outlook says that coal share in electricity generation will fall by 20% in less than a decade. Share of solar power and wind energy in electricity generation will rise to about 27% from the current 10%. But it will be a major consumer of fossil fuel.

6. [Sequence of implementation, EWS quota outcomes](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Sequence of implementation, EWS quota outcomes**” published in **The Hindu** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Governance**

News: The main aim of the reservation policy in India was to ensure the level playing field for the most marginalized and backward sections of the society.

However, with the time the scope of reservation expanded which led to the debate over the exclusion and inclusion of the beneficiaries of reservation.

How reservation Indian is given?

The reservation in India has two forms: **a)** Vertical Reservation (VR), **b)** Horizontal Reservation (HR).

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Vertical Reservation included reservation to different marginalized social groups such as SC, ST, and OBC. **Horizontal Reservation** is the reservation given to women, people with disability (PWD), domicile, etc. across each vertical category.

Vertical reservation system was social-group based which made individual eligible only for a single reservation category.

What is 103rd Constitution Amendment Act, 2019 and what changes were made in the Act?

It provided **10% quota for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)**. This EWS quota changed the intent of reservation which was usually based on social group identity (caste or tribe).

The amendment explicitly removed individuals who are already eligible for one VR (SC, ST, or OBC) from the scope of EWS reservations. This means that a person belonging to SC category cannot avail the quota under EWS category as that individual already has reservation under SC category.

This exclusion was immediately challenged in court on the grounds that it violated individual **right to equality** (Art. 14-18).

What are the problems with EWS quota?

Contradicts Indra Sawhney case: The Indra Sawhney case (1992) said that open-category positions must be allocated based on merit in the first step, and VR positions should be allocated to eligible individuals in the second step.

This procedure is called “over-and-above” choice rule and this rule distinguishes from the “guaranteed minimum” rule.

The guaranteed minimum rule guarantees a minimum number of positions to members of beneficiary groups, regardless of whether they enter through reserved or open (“merit”) positions.

Proper Sequencing: Multiple VR categories make sequencing important. This means putting a category after other categories and in a right place so that the proper beneficiaries can avail the benefits.

The current income limit for EWS reservation qualifies almost 98% of the population. Therefore, putting EWS before other categories will make it to fill first which will make EWS to be treated as **open positions** and the purpose would not be served.

So, it would be better to put the EWS category at the last after other VR categories. This will ensure that quota under other categories is filled by the respective beneficiaries such as SC, ST or OBC making EWS quota more accessible to forward castes.

What is the way forward?

Putting EWS category at the first or at the last all depends on the objectives that the government is aiming to achieve.

If the objective is to make **EWS equally applicable to the current VR categories**, then **EWS-first** should be adopted and if the objective is **to minimally interfere with the amendment**, then **EWS-last** should be adopted.

Further, **lowering the income limit** is also not a probable solution as poorer individuals from all social groups (including non-SC-ST-OBC) would be eligible and this would further create confusions.

Therefore, court should take proper stand after considering all the aspects and implications of the EWS quota.

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7. [The ambiguity of reservations for the poor: unconstitutional or not?](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The ambiguity of reservations for the poor: unconstitutional or not?**” published in **The Hindu** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

News: The Constitution Bench led by CJI U. U. Lalit has reserved its judgments regarding challenges against reservations based solely on economic criteria introduced by the Constitution (103rd) Amendment Act, 2019.

Which changes were made in the Constitution by 103rd Constitution Amendment Act?

The 103rd Constitution Amendment Act amended Article 15 and Article 16 of the Indian Constitution.

Article 15 now enables state to take special measures in favour of EWS with maximum 10% reservations in admissions to educational institutions whereas **Article 16** now allows 10% reservations for EWS in public employment.

The amendment leaves the definition of ‘**economically weaker sections**’ to be determined by the state on the basis of ‘family income’ and other economic indicators.

It also excluded SC/STs, OBCs and other beneficiary groups under Articles 15(4), 15(5) and 16(4) as beneficiaries of the 10% EWS reservation.

However, there are different arguments regarding the Act.

What are the different arguments regarding the Act?

Arguments against the Act

Contradictory to Indra Sawhney judgement: SC in Indra Sawhney case held the Narasimha Rao government’s executive order of providing for 10% reservations based purely on economic criteria unconstitutional.

The argument made by the SC was that income criteria cannot be sole reason behind the exclusion from government jobs and the Constitution was primarily concerned with addressing social backwardness.

Arguments for the Act

Does not violate basic structure doctrine: Some argue that that the amendment violates basic structure of the Constitutions as reservation is given on the basis of economic criteria. However, Constitution does not explicitly mention that backwardness only means social and educational backwardness.

Further, the state may come up with different measures for EWS category in ensuring reservations in education and public employment which may raise concerns. However, using reservations and special measure for addressing poverty do not violate the **basic structure doctrine**.

Does not contradict reservation under Article 16: **Article 16(4)** allows reservations for backward classes (SC/STs, OBCs) and it is dependent on beneficiary groups not being ‘**adequately represented**’ but this adequate representation has been **omitted** in Article 16(6) for EWS.

This amendment makes easier for the state to provide reservations in public employment for EWS.

However, ‘**representation**’ is not the aim of EWS reservation. Thus, Question of ‘**adequacy**’ is relevant only in the context of representation made by the backward classes under Article 16(4). Moreover, there are other challenges with the Act.

What are the challenges ahead?

Breaching the 50% limit: The amendment may be challenged on the ground that it breaches the 50% limit of the reservation as given in the Indra Sawhney judgment. However, the majority

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of judges held that the 50% ceiling must be the general rule and a higher proportion may be possible in **‘extraordinary situations.’**

The court also said that the constitution focuses not one of ‘proportional representation’ but one of ‘adequate representation’. Therefore, the 50% ceiling limit might not be suitable when the beneficiaries constitute more than that.

Equality: There might also be challenges regarding the idea of equality. The majority judges in Indra Sawhney invoked the idea of balancing the equality of opportunity of backward classes against the right to equality of everyone else. Therefore, the court may also face challenges to solve these critical issues in the future.

Defining EWS: The government might face difficulties in defining the EWS category and setting the required income limits for the category.

8. [The amendments to the IT Rules, 2021](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“The amendments to the IT Rules, 2021”** published in **The Hindu** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Government Policies

Relevance: amendment in the IT Rules, 2021

News: The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) has notified amendments to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules, 2021).

What are the IT Rules, 2021?

IT Rules, 2021 aims at placing obligations on **Social Media Intermediaries (SMIs)** to ensure an open, safe and trusted internet.

What was the need to amend the IT Rules, 2021?

1. a) to ensure that the interests and constitutional rights of netizens are not being breached by big tech platforms, b) to strengthen the grievance redressal framework in the rules, c) to provide edge to early-stage Indian start-ups from these compliances.

These amendments can be broadly classified into two categories – a) placing **additional obligations on the SMIs** to ensure better protection of user interests b) involving the institution of an **appellate mechanism for grievance redressal**.

What are the additional obligations placed on the SMIs?

Increased Compliances: The amendment has extended the obligation of SMIs to ensure that its users are in compliance with the relevant rules of the platform.

Further, SMIs are required to “make reasonable” efforts to prevent prohibited content being hosted on its platform by the users.

However, this has raised concerns amongst the users that the increase in the power of SMIs would allow them to breach the **freedom of speech and expression**.

Protecting Fundamental Rights: The amendment introduces an obligation to “respect all the rights provided to the citizens under the Constitution including in the articles 14, 19 and 21”.

However, frequent changes in the design of the platform arising out of case-to-case based application could result in heavy compliance costs for SMIs.

Prohibited categories: The amendment now obligates SMIs to remove information or a communication link in relation to the six prohibited categories of content when a complaint arises.

They have to remove such information within 72 hours of the complaint being made. This is an important step towards controlling the spread of the content.

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Accessibility: The amendment now obligates SMIs to “take all reasonable measures to ensure accessibility of its services to users along with reasonable expectation of due diligence, privacy and transparency”.

There are concerns that accessibility may require SMIs to provide services of which they are not capable.

However, these obligations are meant to strengthen inclusion in the SMI ecosystem by allowing participation of persons with disabilities and from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Multiple Languages: The amendments also mandate that “rules and regulations, privacy policy and user agreement” of the platform should be made available in all languages listed in the **eighth schedule** of the Constitution.

What are the newly-introduced Grievance Appellate Committees?

The government has instituted Grievance Appellate Committees (GAC).

The committee will be a **three-member council** out of which one member will be a government officer (holding the post ex officio) while the other two members will be independent representatives.

The GAC is required to adopt an online dispute resolution mechanism which will make it more accessible to the users and users can file a complaint against the order of the grievance officer within 30 days.

This has made the in-house grievance redressal more accountable and appellate mechanism more accessible to users.

What are the concerns associated with GAC?

2. a) the amendments have not made clear whether the users have to approach the GAC before approaching the court, b) there are concerns with the appointment made by the central government in the GAC as it can lead to bias content, c) the IT Rules, 2021 do not provide any explicit power to the GAC to enforce its orders d) it could lead to conflicting of the decisions if users approach both court and the GAC.

9. [The integrated circuit wars](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The integrated circuit wars**” published in **Business Standard** on **1st November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the US sanctions on China and the integrated circuit war.

News: Recently, the US President has denied access to China for leading-edge chips that the US doesn’t have the capability to design and manufacture. This created a new phase in the integrated circuit or “silicon chip” war.

About the US Sanctions on China to gain advantage in integrated circuit war

The sanctions not only prohibit the sale of the newest generations of chips to China but also forbid any US firm or those dependent on US technology from selling or licensing software, equipment or technologies that China will need to build its capabilities in chips.

The sanctions restrict US citizens and green card holders from working for or with any Chinese entities in a large number of technology areas.

The sanctions also apply to US allies and their firms, given that they are dependent on US technology in one way or the other.

How the recent US Sanctions will impact China on integrated circuit war?

Impact Chinese purchase: The sanctions will make it difficult for companies like TSMC of Taiwan or Samsung of South Korea from selling the latest generation of chips to China or even

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helping it in this area. This is because China has always been a big customer for TSMC and Samsung.

Impact Chinese ambitions: Recently, the Chinese President devised a plan to leapfrog the US in multiple technologies and take a critical lead over the West. Without access to the latest generation of chips, its ambitions in Artificial Intelligence research as well as 5G and Blockchain will suffer a big setback.

Impact Chinese Origin US citizens: Much of China's current tech capabilities were built by people who went to the US, studied and worked with leading US or Western technology companies before coming back home to build up domestic technology companies. Many of these entrepreneurs are Chinese by birth but have since then acquired US citizenship. The sanctions will force them to choose sides.

Read more: [The fate of chips will decide the fate of nations](#)

What are the reasons behind the sanctions?

TSMC is the acknowledged leader in 3-nm processes, which are used to make the most cutting-edge and powerful chips currently, Samsung and Intel are building their own capacities. All three firms are also now working on 2nm processes.

In contrast, Chinese chip fabrication capabilities are several generations behind. For instance, the Chinese latest breakthrough is only in the 7 nm process and most of the chip fabrication facilities in the country are of a much older generation.

China has been pushing technology research in its universities and technology institutes for some time, but it is still behind the US and European research in many areas.

What India needs to do to improve chip manufacturing in India?

India has lagged far behind in this critical area. The government has taken a number of concrete steps ranging from the production-linked incentive scheme to helping firms set up plants in India to license 28-nm fabrication technologies from abroad.

However, they will not be enough for India's ambitions. So India needs to move up the chip value chain by either buying fully or taking a significant stake in independent chip design and foundry firms around the world that may be available for sale. For that, India needs to encourage active private-sector participation.

Read more: [Semiconductors: Why India should not make chips – Instead, the focus should be on other parts of the global value chain](#)

10. [Independence on a tightrope: India's foreign policy choice](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Independence on a tightrope: India's foreign policy choice**” published in **Business Standard** on **1st November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About India's foreign policy choice during recent times.

News: Recently, the Russian President praised India's independent foreign policy at the Valdai Club conference in Moscow.

About India's foreign policy choice during Russia-Ukraine War

Ever since Russia's “special military operation” in Ukraine, India has been forced to weigh the benefits of its strengthening alliance with the United States against the needs embedded in its ties with Russia that date back to the Soviet era.

This has demanded an intricate balancing act because, **a)** India's defence forces largely rely on Russia for hardware and spares, **b)** India is building closer defence and economic ties with the

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US through the Quad and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) to counter growing Chinese power in the region.

How India's foreign policy choice remained neutral in Russia-Ukraine War?

Criticised Russia but engaged with Russia: India has consistently abstained or voted against anti-Russian resolutions in the United Nations. On the other hand, India criticised Russia for not exploring dialogue in its differences with Ukraine.

These critiques, however, did not prevent Russia from becoming a major supplier of crude oil to India, accounting for almost a fifth of its overall imports. In September, Russia became India's largest supplier because of its willingness to offer competitive rates, forcing traditional West Asian suppliers to cut prices.

Note: Russia is no longer a key source of new defence equipment—Europe, the US and Israel are emerging as key suppliers. Also, India is nowhere near the largest buyer of Russian energy — Europe remains in the top spot.

Similarly, India did not attract sanctions last year despite buying Russia's S-400 air defence missile systems.

Opt out from one of the Key pillars of IPEF: The [Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity \(IPEF\)](#)'s creation of "four pillars" is a result of Indian demand. India has joined three of these "pillars" holding up the IPEF, but chose to stay out of the one concerning "connected economies".

How has India's independent foreign policy choice hampered its recent ties with the US?

India's foreign policy choices have raised concerns in the public discourse that India is reviving historic ties with Russia at the expense of the US. But the US has **a)** Renewed its F16 fighter aircraft deal with Pakistan and **b)** Removed Pakistan from FATF despite Indian complaints.

11. [An ASHA worker writes: At 100, I see an India beyond the rural-urban divide; a healthy India](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**An ASHA worker writes: At 100, I see an India beyond the rural-urban divide; a healthy India**" published in **The Indian Express** on **2nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice

Relevance: concerns with health system in rural India

News: The article discusses the problem faced by health system in rural India and role of ASHA workers.

What are the health problems faced by rural areas in India?

Lack of Information: One of the biggest issues faced in rural health services is lack of information. People in rural areas do not have proper information related to health issues.

For example, people in rural area of Maharashtra opposed ASHA workers during quarantine of Covid positive patients.

Therefore, there is a need for robust **channels of communication** between the government and the rural population to send the information effectively. ASHA workers can play a crucial role in this effort.

Lack of resources: Rural health in India suffer from lack of proper resources and facilities.

For example, hospitals in rural areas are far and understaffed, road connectivity is not good for ambulances to arrive on time, proper testing facilities are also not available.

How ASHA workers play an important role in the health system of rural areas?

They are the lifelines in rural areas. They are first to be called at the time of medical emergency. This has made them to get the title of "**Guardian of the Year**" by Time magazine in 2020.

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However, these accreditations are only short lived and there is a need to fix the issue at a larger scale.

What are the problems faced by ASHA workers and how can it be solved?

First, ASHA workers do not have fixed income. Therefore, they should get a fixed income to give them stability in job.

Second, ASHA workers are recognized as volunteers but their jobs should be formalized which would give them dignity and protection. This will also ensure that they are taken seriously by the state, the gram panchayat, and patients.

12. Tel Aviv model: Israeli politics is unstable. But key policies are stable. A lesson for other democracies

Source: The post is based on an article “Tel Aviv model: Israeli politics is unstable. But key policies are stable. A lesson for other democracies” published in **The Times of India** on **2nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: Israel economy and lessons for India

News: Israel voted for the fifth time in four years and the results could lead to a change in the government. This shows that here has been political instability in Israel. However, this political instability has not affected the growth of the nation.

How has Israel focused on its growth?

Pandemic: Israel rolled out Covid vaccines along with early booster dose to mitigate the effects of pandemic on its economy. Israel was open during the Omicron wave and the it achieved achieve 5. 2% GDP growth that year.

Hi-tech industry: Israel’s hi-tech industry has grown remarkably in the last four years. It saw a 136% increase in 2020 and Israel also raised \$25 billion at the end of 2021 for its hi-tech sector.

Foreign policy: Israel has entered into normalizing its ties with Arab Nations (UAE, Bahrain and Morocco) through Abraham Accord. It has also joined hands with India, UAE and US through I2U2 platform. The platform focusses on boosting infrastructure, food security, access to energy and strengthening economic partnerships in the region.

How other democracies including India can learn from Israel and what can be way forward for India?

The policies of Israel show that irrespective of political turmoil, its economy is intact and even growing. This lesson has to be learnt by democracies like India that political changes should not affect the country’s growth.

Moreover, India should continue strengthening its partnership with Israel particularly to build cooperation with the Israeli tech and agriculture sectors. It should also focus on negotiating a free trade agreement with Israel.

13. At SCO meet, Jaishankar targets BRI

Source: The post is based on an article “At SCO meet, Jaishankar targets BRI” published in **The Hindu** on **2nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: India’s response in SCO meeting

News: A virtual meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was held recently. It was attended by the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

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What were the response of India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar at the SCO meeting?

Connectivity projects should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states and respect international law. He said this in reference to China's **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.

More trade through Iran's Chabahar port and the International North South Transport Corridors (INSTC) to improve bilateral trade with **Central Asian countries**.

India's total trade with SCO Members is only \$141 billion which has potential to increase. He put emphasis over **access to fair markets** for mutual benefits to move forward with increasing the trade.

Amongst the SCO countries India's large amount of trading is done with China which crossed \$100 billion this year.

India is looking for greater cooperation with SCO member states on countering **the food crisis**, particularly with millets. The recent food crisis is caused by the Ukraine war.

There is a need for better connectivity in the SCO region built on the interests of Central Asian states. This will unlock the economic potential of this region.

Other member countries of the SCO criticized economic sanctions imposed on Russia as it affects the global economy.

What is the stand of India on BRI?

BRI is a series of infrastructure projects that pass-through Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia. India has refused to join the BRI.

India on the other hand is looking for the alternative to BRI and an alternative trade route through Pakistan.

For this, India has been developing and promoting the **Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar** and the **link through the INSTC**.

14. [Arif Mohammad Khan is overreaching in his role as governor](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Arif Mohammad Khan is overreaching in his role as governor**” published in **The Indian Express** on **2nd november 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Federalism

Relevance– Position of Governor

News- The article explains the position of Governor in constitutional setup.

Kerala governor seeked the dismissal of state finance minister for expressing his opinion on the security given to a vice chancellor in UP. He equated it with the violation of the Constitution and as threatening cordial relations between states.

What does the constitution say about the powers of governor?

Under **Article 163(1)**, the council of ministers is “to **aid and advise** the governor in the exercise of his functions, except in so far as he is by or under this Constitution required to exercise his functions or any of them at his **discretion**”.

Article 164 provides for appointment of ministers in state. It has to be strictly on the advice of the council of ministers headed by CM. The governor has no independent power to appoint any minister.

The governor is the **titular head** of the government. He is not an active participant in the day-to-day functioning of the government.

What has been the position of the judiciary?

The Supreme Court in **Nabam Rebia case, 2016** held that the exercise of executive power by the governor, is by and large **notional**. The office of the governor has been described as “**titular**”.

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In **NCT Delhi v. Union of India**, SC underlined that our adoption of the **Westminster form of government** means that the real powers vested in the elected government and governor has to be just a **nominal head**. He reigns but does not rule.

In **Shamsher Singh v State of Punjab (1974)**, the apex court had said we are a parliamentary democracy and governors should ideally behave just like the British monarch.

What do the debates of the constituent assembly say about the position of governor?

Hari Vishnu Kamath, a member of the Constituent Assembly, moved an amendment to do away with the discretionary powers Article 163. the reason given was any discretionary powers would undermine the **tenets of a constitutionally elected government**.

Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri feared that such powers may be used to unsettle democratically elected governments.

Ambedkar was of the opinion that **Clause (1) of Article 163** is a very limited clause. It was not a general one that gave the governor power to disregard the advice of his ministers in any matter in which he finds he ought to disregard.

How should the governor use discretionary powers?

Discretions to be exercised with caution and in a reasonable manner. It is not according to will and private affections. Absolute discretion is constitutional blasphemy. It endangers freedom.

The role and duties of the governor are only to the extent where he is advised by the council of ministers so that the fine democratic values are maintained.

The governor may exercise his discretionary powers only in certain exceptional situations such as formation of government when there is no clear majority.

Their duty is to ensure that the popular government elected by the people who are the real sovereign of our country complete their terms in office and in cases.

15. Two-finger test in rape cases: Executive must summon the political will to implement Supreme Court's directive

Source: The post is based on the article **“Two-finger test in rape cases: Executive must summon the political will to implement Supreme Court's directive”** published in the **Indian Express** on **3rd November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the ‘two-finger’ test and its elimination.

News: Recently, the Supreme Court has declared that any person conducting the invasive ‘two-finger’ or ‘three-finger’ vaginal test on rape or sexual assault survivors will be found guilty of misconduct.

What is a two-finger test, and What did the Supreme Court say about the two-finger test?

Read here: [Anyone conducting ‘two-finger’ test on sexual assault survivors will be held guilty of misconduct: Supreme Court](#)

What are the concerns associated with the two-finger test?

Legal scholars believe the two-finger test allows for “medicalisation of consent” where women’s bodies are given precedence over their voices. So, the two-finger test is an invasion of privacy and a violation of a survivor’s dignity. The test also signifies the patriarchal notions about rape. The prevalence of the test also highlight the poor state of forensic medicine infrastructure in India. Further, there is a lack of awareness amongst the medical community about the unscientific nature of the two-finger test.

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What is the present status of the two-finger test?

Based on the recommendations of the **Justice J S Verma Committee Report**, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare issued guidelines for medico-legal care for survivors of sexual violence. These guidelines explicitly prohibited the two-finger test and discussed the need for training medical examiners to respond to the needs of the survivors in a sensitive and non-discriminatory manner.

Lillu @ Rajesh v. State of Haryana (2013) case: In this case, the court prohibited the test. But despite that, the two-finger test still remains a reality.

What is the significance of the recent judgment on the two-finger test?

Address the Lack of political will to enforce the guidelines: The Court commented on the sorry state of affairs and issued directions to the government to enforce the protocol including the emphasis on workshops and the medical school curriculum.

Guidance to medical practitioners: The Court took a step further by holding a person conducting the two-finger test on a rape survivor guilty of misconduct.

What needs to be done to completely rule out the two-finger test?

The government has to undertake a comprehensive pan-India review to assess the nature and extent of the problem and rely on an evidence-based approach to addressing the problems of implementation.

16. [Ugly truth about a vaccine that did not work – on Kaynasur Forest diseases vaccine](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Ugly truth about a vaccine that did not work”** published in the **mint** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Health GS- Science and Technology

News- The article explains the issues related with Kaynasur Forest diseases vaccine

What are the issues with the KFD vaccine?

The KFD vaccine has faced both **regulatory and quality problems** for over two decades. CDSCO has not given permission to the vaccine manufacturer, the Bengaluru based IAHVB since at least 2002.

Vaccine quality has deteriorated measurably over two decades. It is failing the **potency test** repeatedly. Potency is closely linked to **effectiveness**.

NIV did not ask IAHVB to stop manufacturing the vaccine despite failing potency tests continuously.

Studies conducted by the National Institute of Epidemiology have shown that effectiveness of vaccines has dropped dramatically by the mid 2000s.

What is the contribution by NIV in the fight against KFD?

NIV scientists were first to isolate the virus from Kaynasur forest in 1957.

In the 1960s, NIV developed a **formalin-inactivated vaccine**.

It detected the carrier of the virus.

How did the vaccine come into production? In 1989, the Karnataka government set up a manufacturing facility under VDL Shivamogga. NIV transferred its vaccine technology to VDL.

In the 2000s, the Karnataka government decided to move the manufacturing facility to IAHVB despite having inadequate infrastructure.

What is the legal process for vaccine approval?

CDSCO permits a manufacturer to make a vaccine. It approves both manufacturing methods and quality control tests.

If a manufacturer releases a vaccine that fails quality control., then it is illegal.

What are some facts about KFD?

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It is deadly disease. But it severely impacts only 5-10% of affected people.
It mainly affects forest and agriculture workers.
There is no specific treatment for it.

17. There is no debate: There has been a persistent decline in poverty in India

Source: The post is based on the article “**There is no debate: There has been a persistent decline in poverty in India**” published in the **Indian Express** on **4th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: Explaining how poverty fell faster after 2011.

News: The recent release of the NFHS data for 2019-21 allows for a detailed analysis of the progress in the reduction of absolute poverty and related determinants like nutrition. The data reveals that poverty fell faster after 2011.

About India’s poverty estimation through NFHS

Poverty did decline between 2011-12 and 2017-18 or 2019-20. This is because policymakers and academics have given a higher priority to the poverty-reducing properties of inclusive growth rather than growth per se.

The NFHS surveys are part of a multinational attempt to provide estimates of multidimensional poverty. Its computation rests on estimates of poverty according to 10 different indicators. The deprivation index for each indicator is the per cent poor (deprived) according to that indicator. How can one know poverty fell faster after 2011?

Survey	NFHS				CAGR (% change per year)			
	2005-6	2011-12	2015-16	2019-21	2011/05	2015/05	2020/11	2020/15
Year	2005-6	2011-12	2015-16	2019-21	2011/05	2015/05	2020/11	2020/15
Headcount ratio (MPI), %	55.1	41.3	27.7	16.4	-4.8	-6.9	-10.3	-10.5
PC income per mth (Rs)	3990	5823	7232	8628	6.3	5.9	4.4	3.5
PC consumption per mth (Rs)	2221	3273	4165	4998	6.5	6.3	4.7	3.6
MPI DEPRIVATION %								
Nutrition	44.3	38.2	21.1	11.8	-2.5	-7.4	-13.1	-11.6
Child Mortality (CM)	-	4.5	2.2	1.5	-7.2	-7.7	-	-
Years of Schooling	24	17.6	11.6	7.7	-5.2	-7.3	-9.2	-8.2
School Attendance	19.8	19.5	5.5	3.9	-0.3	-12.8	-17.9	-6.9
Cooking Fuel	52.9	51.1	26	13.9	-0.6	-7.1	-14.5	-12.5
Sanitation	50.4	48.2	24.4	11.3	-0.7	-7.3	-16.1	-15.4
Drinking Water	16.4	11.9	5.7	2.7	-5.3	-10.6	-16.5	-14.9
Electricity	29	28.3	8.6	2.1	-0.4	-12.2	-28.9	-28.2
Housing	44.9	39.4	23.5	13.6	-2.2	-6.5	-11.8	-10.9
Assets	37.5	37.5	9.5	5.6	0.0	-13.7	-21.1	-10.6
Ave (above 10 excluding CM)	-	-	-	-	-1.9	-9.4	-16.6	-13.3

Source: OPHI (2022). All Published Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Results 2010-2022. Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, University of Oxford. Notes – 2011/12 data is from NCAER-U of Maryland, IHDS survey

Source: Indian Express

Let’s consider 2005 to 2011 as P-1 and 2011 to 2021 as P-2.

a) Multidimensional poverty declined at a compounded annual average rate of 4.8% per year in P-1 and more than double that pace at 10.3% a year during P-2.

b) Every single household survey or analysis has shown that consumption inequality declined during P-2. This is consistent with the above finding of highly inclusive growth during P-2.

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Note: Except for the 2017-18 dubious NSS survey, India makes public all of its data. In contrast, unit-level poverty data on China is not even made available to the World Bank, a body authorised to publish country-level estimates of poverty.

Read more: [We've made significant progress on poverty reduction](#)

What made the growth so inclusive and ensured poverty fell faster?

A major factor behind the inclusive nature of growth during P-2 is the focus of government policies on each of the individual indicators indicative of a dignified standard of living. Such as, **a)** Slow-moving variables such as housing, access to cooking fuel, sanitation, etc, have witnessed a remarkable increase, **b)** Close to one-third of Indians were deprived of electricity till as recently as 2014. It was only after Saubhagya Yojana India managed to electrify every village, and eventually households, **c)** Jan Dhan Yojana which made financial inclusion a reality in India, especially for women, **d)** Modern cooking fuel is provided through the Ujjwala Yojana, **e)** Jal Jeevan Mission has increased the rural piped water coverage from 17% in 2019 to above 54% at present.

All these have ensured the benefits of growth are equitably distributed across a wider class of citizens.

18. [Poppy love in Afghanistan](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Poppy love in Afghanistan**” published in **The Indian Express** on **4th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: rising poppy cultivation in Afghanistan and threats from it.

News: Afghanistan has witnessed an increase in the poppy cultivation despite of the ban imposed on its cultivation by Taliban.

What are the highlights of the report say?

According to the report published by the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**, land coverage for poppy cultivation increased by 32% in the year 2021 than 2020.

The report highlighted that 6,200 tonnes of poppy was harvested in the year 2021 which can be converted into 350-380 tonnes of export-quality heroin. Thus, 80% of the world opiates come from Afghanistan.

This opium sales have increased the farmer's income from \$425 million in 2021 to \$1.4 billion in 2022.

A report in 2020 said the Taliban's profits from the illegal drug trade, illegal mining, and exports had earned it \$1.6 billion, of which \$416 million was from the drug trade alone.

When did poppy cultivation start in Afghanistan?

Taliban realized the importance of poppy cultivation when they first came in power in 1996. They relied on opium sales for money at the time when they were excluded from the world's trade.

Initially a 10% zakat (tax) on opium were paid to the villages for their welfare but after the Taliban came into power these were directed to the Taliban's treasury.

Taliban also imposed a 10% zakat on the **drug traffickers** and some taxes were also imposed on heroin labs.

These taxes were later increased to 20% which brought \$45 million to \$200 million a year to the Taliban's treasury.

Taliban expanded its narcotics economy by providing official government licenses for opium cultivation, teaching farmers on poppy cultivation and by distributing fertilizers.

However, the opium trade had low priority for the US military present in the Afghanistan. This is evident from exclusion of narcotics trade from the Doha Accords.

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How has opium helped Afghanistan?

Afghanistan's economic situation is not good and they also do not have access to global funds. Therefore, they rely on taxes along with other humanitarian aids.

In this economic scenario poppy cultivation has become an important pillar of Afghanistan's economy.

It has helped in the growth of rural economy, providing employment opportunities in rural areas and people have also become dependent on it to sustain their livelihoods.

The opiate export was valued at 9-14% per cent of the country's GDP.

Moreover, the current ban imposed on the poppy cultivation is not good as this has increased the prices of the opium in the market.

There is fear that high prices may attract people towards poppy cultivation. Therefore, Taliban should remove the ban as it will help them economically and politically.

How has other countries responded towards the drug markets of Afghanistan?

Russia and Central Asian neighboring countries of Afghanistan view this as a threat, i.e. **religious extremism, radicalization, and terrorism**. **India** has also raised its concerns.

The threat of terrorism and drug trafficking from Afghanistan are also discussed as inter-related threats to regional and global security in the **SCO security meeting**.



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19. Higher education needs relief from its resource crunch

Source: The post is based on an article “Higher education needs relief from its resource crunch” published in **Live Mint** on 4th November 2022.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Education

News: Public Universities (State/Central) in India are facing the problem of underinvestment and they even lack funds to fulfil their basic needs.

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has been unable to undertake repairs and maintenance due to the lack of funds. This lack of funds has raised concerns on the funding of UGC.

What is the stand of University Grants Commission (UGC) on current finance problems of public universities?

As per the UGC, the grants given to the Universities have increased from the past years.

For example, the grants given in the year 2020-21 was 4,781 times of 1955-56. UGC funding went up from 0.02% in 1955-56 to 0.05% in 2020-21 as a proportion of GDP at factor cost.

However, these funds are not enough to fulfil the demands of universities as universities/colleges have also increased with the time along with higher enrolment.

Therefore, even though grants seems more but in real terms they have declined.

How has the grants given to universities changed?

Annual grants to higher education institutions rose from ₹10,527.3 crore in 2013-14 to ₹12,716.7 crore in 2020-21 which is a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.4%.

Prominent central universities are at better place compared to others as their CAGR have increased more than other central universities.

For example, JNU’s CAGR is at 5.6% BHU’s 7.2%, JMI’s 7.8%, AU’s 8.7% and AMU’s 10.7%.

Therefore, from the above data it is evident that the grants have increased for almost all universities but the problems face by universities still persists.

Why universities face problems even with the increase in grants?

Universities earlier used to receive grants in **quarterly instalments** but there has been change in the disbursement procedures of grants.

Presently, Universities have to reclaim their grants through a **Public Financial Management System (PFMS)** month by month.

These grants are given to universities only if they meet the specified conditions (on the basis of **conditionality**) and this has also deprived universities to earn the interest income on the saved grants.

Moreover, if grants given particular purpose remain unutilized, it cannot be utilized for another purpose.

For example, grants for salaries can only be used to give salary to the designated faculty and it cannot be used for other expenditures like payments to contractual guest, part-time and visiting faculty, etc.

Further, grants required for expenditures such as repairs, maintenance have to be taken from **non-salary recurring grants**. The grants given under this are usually low than the actual requirements.

Therefore, with the introduction of new procedure for disbursement, universities face problems and their conditions were better during the five-year plans.

How were five-year plans beneficial for universities?

The five-year plans provided universities with **development grant**.

The discontinuation of five-year plans replaced the development grants by Higher Education Funding Agency (**HEFA**) loans for Revitalizing Infrastructure and System in Education (**RISE**).

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During the 11th and 12th five-year plans, central universities received ₹7,829.5 crore and ₹9,346.3 crore but the current HEFA/RISE loans act as a burden for the universities as they have to repay them with the interest.

Moreover, the financial problem makes universities to raise fees which acts as a burden on the students and they are forced to look for loans which mostly ends up with NPAs.

Therefore, there is a need to come up with better funding options for universities as other methods are complex and are more costly to the public exchequer.

20. Remote voting-Shorter term overseas migrants should be able to avail the postal ballot system

Source: The post is based on the article “**Remote voting-Shorter term overseas migrants should be able to avail the postal ballot system**” published in **The Hindu** on **5th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Salient features of the Representation of People Act

Relevance: Voting system.

News: The article explains the issue of allowing **postal ballot facility** to overseas citizens. This is important as India has a large diaspora population of 1.35 crore.

What is the present voting system for overseas citizens?

Currently, ECI allows enrolled overseas citizens to vote in person at the constituency where they are registered as a voter.

What are the issues with the present system?

The necessity to vote in person and the costs associated with overseas citizens have acted as a disincentive for their wanting to exercise their mandate. This was evident in the numbers of such voters in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. It was 25606 against 99,844 registered electors.

What is the stand of ECI?

In 2014, a committee constituted by the ECI to probe methods to enable overseas voters' mandates concluded that **proxy voting** was the most viable. Some political parties objected to the idea.

A Bill was passed in the 16th Lok Sabha to enable proxy voting but it lapsed.

In 2020, the ECI approached the Government to permit NRIs to vote via **postal ballots**, similar to the system already used by service voters.

Why is allowing postal ballots a good move?

Several overseas countries allow this option to their overseas citizens. This is a better method of registering their vote rather than appointing a proxy. Proxy is allowed in case of service personnel who are limited in number. On other hand, NRIs are substantial in numbers.

In the 2014 discussion organised by the ECI, some parties raised a question, how NRIs will get the benefit which is denied to internal migrant workers. But the higher costs of travel back to India, as opposed to travelling within justify this move

21. What international jurisprudence says about the use of nuclear weapons

Source: The post is based on an article “**What international jurisprudence says about the use of nuclear weapons**” published in **The Indian Express** on **5th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: About the use of nuclear weapons.

News: Recently, there has been much talk about the use of nuclear weapons due to the Ukraine conflict which has raised concerns over its use.

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What was the stand of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the use of nuclear weapons?

The **UN for Advisory Opinion** requested the ICJ 30 years ago on the matter whether the use of nuclear weapons can go in hand with the basic principles of humanitarian law.

A majority of 12 out of 15 judges at the ICJ concluded that the use of nuclear weapons can be made only in exceptional cases where the country's survival is at stake.

However, three judges disagreed and they said that the concept of the humanitarian laws of war is deeply rooted in the ancient cultures of different religions.

They cited that the ancient South Asian tradition prohibited the use of "hyper destructive weapons". The judges also quoted the stories of Ramayana and Mahabharat where the use of such destructive weapons was prohibited in any case.

For instance, Rama warned Lakshmana that destructive weapons should not be used in the war because they could lead to the destruction of masses which is forbidden in the ancient laws. Judges further said that this problem is universal and therefore ICJ should reflect the world's principal cultural traditions and include representatives from all over the world.

They also highlighted that international laws should be made in such a way that demotes the use of nuclear weapons but this might not be possible.

What can be the course of action regarding the use of nuclear weapons?

All countries whether nuclear or non-nuclear must adapt to a nuclear-free world. As per **J Robert Oppenheimer** (inventor of the atom bomb), the only defence against a nuclear weapon is peace. This has also been highlighted in the preamble of **UNESCO** that says "Wars begin in the minds of men, and it is in the minds of men (and women) that the defences of peace must be constructed."

General Studies Paper – 3

General Studies - 3

1. [Demand grows, but DNA tests fall under a grey area](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Demand grows, but DNA tests fall under a grey area**” published in **The Hindu** on **31th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Technology

News- The article explains the issues related with DNA tests. It also explains the position of higher courts on DNA tests.

What are the issues involved?

The demand for DNA tests are increasing by around 20% each year.

There is conflict between two issues. On the one hand, it encroaches on the **privacy of individuals** and there is danger of **self-incrimination**. On the other hand, it is needed to unearth the truth, claim of marital infidelity and proving paternity.

The Supreme Court recognized **bodily autonomy and privacy** as part of **the right to life under Article 21**.

Section 112 of the Indian Evidence Act presumes that a child born to a married woman is legitimate. The burden of proof is on the person claiming illegitimacy of the child. The use of DNA tests to deal with claims of infidelity competes with this section.

What have been the views of the cases?

The **Supreme Court** has recently held in a case concerning a woman protecting her identity that compelling an unwilling person to undergo a DNA test would be a violation of his/her personal liberty and right to privacy.

In **Bhabani Prasad Jena, 2010**; Supreme Court held that judges cannot order genetic tests as a “roving enquiry”.

In the **Banarsi Dass case, 2005**, it held that DNA must **balance the interests** of the parties. DNA tests should also not be ordered if there was other material evidence at hand to prove the case.

In its **Ashok Kumar judgment** last year, the court said judges, should examine “**proportionality of the legitimate aims**”, before ordering a genetic test.

High Courts also have taken divergent views. **Kerala High Court** delivered two contrasting verdicts. In a high-profile case last year, it allowed a genetic test to establish that a former Left student leader and her husband were the biological parents of a one-year-old baby. In another case, it dismissed a 77-year-old man’s plea for a DNA test to prove that his wife had been adulterous.

2. [United against terror – on United Nations Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee meeting](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**United against terror**” published in **The Hindu** on **31th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security

News- The article explain the main highlights of recently held **United Nations Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee meeting** in Mumbai.

What are the challenges related to terrorism?

There is lack of **global cooperation** in fight against terrorism. Lack of international cooperation was evident in bringing justice to victims of the 26/11 Mumbai attack.

Pakistan has not prosecuted the preparators of the attack. The USA has refused to extradite David Headley and Tahawwur Rana. China continues to block designating LeT leaders on the UNSC 1267 terror list.

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What was the focus of the summit?

The focus was on online radicalization and terror recruitment, terror financing through cryptocurrency, and virtual assets. The issues like unmanned aerial system use including drones for terror strikes, and transporting drugs and arms were also discussed.

The deliberations led to the “**Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes**”.

3. [Climate responsibility](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**What the new UN climate report reveals**” published in the **Business Standard** on **31st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Climate change

Relevance: About the Climate responsibility at COP 27.

News: Two issues may play an important role in the upcoming COP27 — **a)** Further commitment on global climate responsibility for loss and damage compensation and **b)** Some acceleration of commitments on mitigation actions.

How do the global countries stand on their climate responsibility?

Responsibility

The [Paris agreement](#) mentioned a “common but differentiated responsibility.” The word responsibility meant to **a) Responsibility as liability:** This is for the damage inflicted on others, **b) Responsibility as a duty:** Since climate change affects every country in the world, all have a duty to act.

Concerns associated with fixing responsibility: The Paris Agreement has **a)** Diluted the distinction between developed and developing countries was diluted and, **b)** Created a way for voluntary pledges instead of globally negotiated commitments, **c)** There is no standard set for the substantiality of voluntary pledges.

Loss and damage

This involves the impacts of climate change that are not avoided by mitigation, adaptation, and other measures such as disaster-risk management. It includes, for instance, extreme weather events like hurricanes and floods, the sea-level rise, etc.

Steps taken on loss and damage: This includes **Santiago Network on technical assistance** and an **agreement at COP26 in Glasgow to have a dialogue process** on the issue.

Concerns associated with the loss and damage principle: So far, the cost of financing with unavoidable loss and damage is not yet discussed. According to experts, the financing of loss and damage is even more important than support for mitigation and adaptation.

Must read: [Five years after Paris agreement](#)

Emission-reduction plans

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has estimated the carbon emissions from 2020 to global net zero(2050) should be limited to 500 billion tonnes for a 50:50 chance of staying below a temperature increase of 1.5 degree centigrade. This is done after taking into account the likely emission of greenhouse gases other than carbon dioxide.

Concerns associated with fulfilling Emission-reduction plans: The permissible average per capita per year emission over the 2020–2030 period is 1.8 tonnes of carbon dioxide. But the emissions of the USA will amount to five-seven tonnes, of China four-six tonnes, of the EU and the UK two-three tonnes.

Note: *India’s average per capita per year emissions will be 1.5-2.3 tonnes.*

Overall, the combination of responsibility as liability for loss and damage and responsibility as a duty to leave enough room for others will not be readily accepted by the major emitters.

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Read more: [COP26 a last chance to fulfil Paris agreement goals](#)

What climate responsibilities needs to be finalised on COP-27?

Agreement on loss and damage: Much of the loss and damage will take place in the future as well. So, there should be an agreement to assign financing responsibility for loss and damage with the actual payments provided when the actions to manage loss and damage are undertaken. There should also be a **separation of relief measures** for unpredicted adverse weather events **and steady funding** for measures to cope with threats like sea-level rise.

Emission-reduction plans: The pace of emission reduction depends on the announced targets for 2030, and beyond that, it will depend on the rate at which decarbonisation initiatives like renewable and nuclear energy, electrification of transport or its conversion into green hydrogen, and carbon capture and storage are implemented.

India can assert and ensure that it remains on the UNFCCC agenda and provides a basis for bringing together the vast majority of countries that are mainly victims rather than perpetrators of climate risks.

4. [About India's per capita growth: The First Among Twenty](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"The First Among Twenty"** published in **The Times of India** on **31st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy

Relevance: About India's per capita growth and its forecasts

News: Recently IMF-World Bank meetings have been concluded in Washington. The IMF WEO expects per capita growth in India to be higher than that of China for six years, from 2022 through 2027.

About India's per capita growth against China

Between 1980 and 2019, China's per capita income grew at 7.7% per annum, and India's at 4.1%. Between 1980 and 2014, India's per capita growth exceeded that of China on only two occasions: in 1989, when the excess was 1.1% and in 1990 when the excess was 0.9%.


After 2015, India ended this long "drought" and held excess per capita income growth for three successive years. India is now converging to the per capita income of China. According to the projections, the average per capita growth rate for India and China, 2022-27: India 5.4%, China 4.3%.

Read more: [External risk factors for the Indian economy: Global storm: Overseas risk is main policy challenge](#)

Why India's growth story has surprised many, and How has India performed against G20 economies?

India is a democracy, but China is not. Many experts have hinted that democracy is a constraining factor in carrying out economic reforms that could facilitate growth. But despite being a democracy, India has achieved this development.

G20 COUNTRY PERFORMANCE 2004-27

	CAGR in % per year				
	GDP (PPP)	Per capita GDP (PPP)	CPI	Exchange rate wrt USD	Population
2004-13					
India	7.3	5.9	7.8	2.8	1.4
China	9.6	9.1	3.1	-2.9	0.56
G20: EMs excl. India	6.5	5.6	4.9	-1	0.9
G20 : Advanced Economies	1.6	1	2	-1.8	0.6
All G20	3.9	3.1	3.6	-0.7	0.8
2014-21					
India	3.8	2.7	4.7	2.6	1.05
China	4.6	4.2	1.9	0.4	0.4
G20: EMs excl. India	1.96	0.97	5.9	7.9	1
G20 : Advanced Economies	1.6	1.1	1.5	1.6	0.45
All G20	2.4	1.8	2.9	2.8	0.6
2022-27					
India	6.3	5.4	4.6	2.6	0.9
China	4.25	4.35	2	-1.2	-0.1
G20: EMs excl. India	3.5	3.2	5.2	1.8	0.3
G20 : Advanced Economies	1.6	1.36	3.2	1.38	0.2
All G20	3	2.6	4.3	1.43	0.3

Source: IMF WEO October 2022; Notes: Share in Global PPP is used for weighting regional averages

Source: TOI

For instance, G20 countries provide a useful reference point for a comparative analysis of performance of India. The table provides historical data for five groups of countries: India, China, G20 emerging markets (minus India), G20 advanced economies, and G20 itself.

The IMF WEO data reveals **a)** For the first time ever, EMs and AE exchange rate depreciation has narrowed to near equality for the forecast of period 2022-27, **b)** Across a number of important economic performance criteria the balance has shifted to the EMs, and **c)** Within EMs, the baton of leadership has passed from China to India.

So, overall, India's economy is set to thoroughly outpace its fellow G20 members over the next five years

Read more: [Post-pandemic surprises and where the indian economy truly stands today](#)

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5. [How The Aviation Ecosystem Will Take Flight With C-295s](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**How The Aviation Ecosystem Will Take Flight With C-295s**” published in **The Times of India** on **31st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

Relevance: About the C-295 manufacturing facility and its benefits.

News: Recently, the Prime Minister has laid the foundation stone for the Tata consortium’s C-295 manufacturing facility.

What are the potential applications of C-295 aircraft?

The aircraft is contemporary in design, technology and systems and has widespread usage in 12 countries.

Military applications: It is already certified and operational in numerous roles like Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C), Electronic Intelligence (ELINT), maritime patrol, aerial refuelling, search and rescue (SAR), and even as a water bomber.

It has a load capacity of up to nine tonnes, it can carry up to 71 passengers or 44 paratroopers or 24 stretchers for medical evacuations

Civilian applications: Beyond military potential across the board, the aircraft is certified for civil applications.

The aircraft’s unique capability to connect destinations which are tough to service or reachable only through semi-prepared surfaces and short runways. This can help in both passenger and load-carrying tasks.

Read more: [Need for a New Aircraft Carrier for the Indian Navy – Explained, pointwise](#)

What is the significance of the C-295 manufacturing facility in India?

First of a kind initiative: This is **a)** The first large-scale project given directly to the private sector, **b)** C-295 transport aircraft manufacturing capability is being set up in the country for the first time, thereby bridging a critical gap in indigenous aircraft manufacturing.

Host of benefits to IAF: C-295’s versatility would provide IAF with an immensely powerful tactical transport capability. By the next decade, this fleet would become the backbone of the IAF’s entire tactical transport operations. Apart from the present 40 orders, additional requirements will also emerge from the IAF towards future acquisitions/replacements in this category.

Further, the navy and coast guard have already indicated interest towards their requirements.

Boon for the private and MSME sector: The project will involve the creation of production infrastructure with transfer of technology from Airbus. The resulting manufacturing supply chain will spread from Tata to a host of MSMEs.

As per the data released, about 125 MSMEs across the country will be involved in the supply chain. Overall, the initial order would result in substantial production set-up in the country.

The contract stipulates the setting up of a D-Level servicing facility by 2031, and this maintenance repair and overhaul (MRO) capability will itself be a boon for the private sector with a long-term commitment to efficient and cost-effective maintenance support for IAF.

How India can move ahead with the C-295 manufacturing facility?

1) India should utilise this capability and start targeting MROs of aircraft in friendly countries, **2)** India should try to get export orders from friendly countries, **3)** India should develop indigenous mission computers and own operational software to support indigenous products and R&D and permit rapid modernisation.

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6. [The Supreme Court was right to stay Bombay HC order on G N Saibaba](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The Supreme Court was right to stay Bombay HC order on G N Saibaba**” published in **The Indian Express** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Security

News: The article discusses the misuse of technical irregularity provision of the criminal law in the context of G N Saibaba case.

What are the different terms used in the criminal law?

Acquit: In this, the court decides that a person is **not guilty** of the crime charged against him after a detailed and elaborate trial and hearing of the allegation and evidence presented by both sides.

Convict: in this, the court that a person is **guilty** of committing a crime after the investigation and presentation of charges against the person and after a detailed trial on all facts and evidence collected by both sides

Discharge: It is a result either of a **technical irregularity** in the process or the failure to establish any charge against the person after investigation. This technicality has been used by the accused in the current case.

What are the provisions under UAPA?

The UAPA has a provision that requires the prosecution to obtain permission of the government before filing of the chargesheet in order to proceed.

The permission was granted by the government but the accused raised a technicality issue regarding the same for the first time after conviction.

However, the permission granted in the UAPA is different from the permission provided to public servants in the anti-corruption laws.

Moreover, in both the cases, the law states that a technicality can never override an order of conviction passed after detailed examination of facts and an elaborate trial unless there is a failure of justice.

What were the decision taken by HC and SC?

HC **pardoned** Saibaba and the other accused only technicality of sanction which was not a good step. This situation would have released the terrorists found guilty after an elaborate trial. Therefore, the **Maharashtra Government** approached Supreme Court.

SC after looking at the history of the criminal law decided not provide any relief to the accused on the grounds of technicality. It also **suspended the operation** of the order of the High Court.

According to the SC, there has been no such incident in the history of the criminal law where an order of conviction recorded after a detailed trial has been set aside on the technical grounds of sanction for prosecution in UAPA offences.

How do others view the decision of the SC?

Some sections of the media portrayed the order as if the SC has stayed an acquittal order while other sections talk about personal liberties or human rights mostly to bring pressure on the judiciary.

However, court should not look at those views as justice prevails over the humanity.

Moreover, the charges against Saibaba and the other accused have been factually found by the competent court to in supporting the activities of terrorism of the Naxal.

Therefore, the issue of technicality does not arise after the conviction is done on merits.

What are the impacts of Naxalism?

Naxalism or terrorism has wide range impact including the nation’s integrity and on society.

It is an ideology that that has taken more Indian lives in the past two decades than any other form of terrorism.

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It tries to change the government created by the constitution and establish its own version of a communist state.

Therefore, steps taken by SC were apt and it prevented the bigger mishappening in the future by keeping the Naxals behind the bars.

7. [Morbi tragedy – on issues associated with urban governance](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Don’t just move on**” published in **The Times of India** and **Double engine failure**” in **The Indian Express** on **1st november 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Disaster management. GS1- Urbanisation and their problems

Relevance– Issue with management of disasters in urban areas

News- The article explains the reasons for the Morbi incident. It also explains the negligence on part of the state that caused the incident.

What is negligence on part of the state government?

The negligence by the local administration was responsible for the tragedy. Yet, no FIR has been registered against local administration.

Proceedings against the private contractors who repaired the bridge is not enough.

The Morbi incident is a symptom of the crisis that lies at the heart of **urban governance** in India.

What is the crisis of urban governance in India?

Urban institutions that oversee governance are in poor state.

There is a dispute over the size of the urban population. It influences the flow of resources and political importance given urban areas. The **World Bank agglomeration index** in 2010 estimated that 55% of India’s population lives in areas with “**urban-like features**”. This estimate far exceeds GoI’s estimate for urban population.

The 74th constitutional amendment was enacted three decades ago. But state governments are reluctant to give control over infrastructure to these bodies. It leads to **multiple chains of command, lack of accountability** and corruption.

Municipal revenue is not proportional to the size of urban economies. Municipal revenue remained stuck at 1% of GDP between 2007-08 and 2017-18. Municipal revenues in South Africa and Brazil are around 6% and 7% respectively.

Why is the state government responsible for the incident?

Under the **constitutional framework**, the state government should protect the life of every citizen. It is the duty of the state government to prevent incidents like Morbi. Governance is an important element in the constitutional framework. Without accountability, governance is merely a paper exercise.

Bridges and public ways are **state property**. State must keep them in perfect condition.

There were more people than capacity on the bridge. The administration did not provide enough manpower to prevent the incident.

There is **centralisation of power**. Gujarat is remotely controlled by the central government in Delhi. There is more than one point of supervision and control in the administration. Appointments of civil and police in the state are opaque and have political overtones. State machinery is busy in making arrangements for VVIPs visits.

What is the way forward?

Accountability needs to be fixed for the loss of more than 150 lives.

We need to **take inspiration** from leaders like Lal Bahadur Shastri who resigned because of a train accident.

Compensation and commission of inquiry is not enough. There is a need for good governance on part of the state government.

8. [Building the fast lane to logistics – on Multi Modal Logistics Parks](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Building the fast lane to logistics**” published in the **mint** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Infrastructure

Relevance– Issues related with logistics

News- The article explains the Multi Modal Logistics Park proposed by the central government.

What are challenges related to logistics in India?

The movement of goods is **expensive and inefficient**. Logistics cost around 14% of GDP. It is significantly higher than other countries.

Transporting goods by rail costs 45% less compared to roads. But three-fourth transportation of goods is through roads.

What are some facts related to MMLPs?

These are large land parcels with rail and rail connectivity. It is based on the **hub-and-spoke model**. Goods coming here are seamlessly transferred to trains and other modes of transportation.

Freight from the production zone arrives here. It is shifted to the logistical park nearest its consumption destination.

Mechanised warehousing and **cold chain facilities** are also available here. **Value added services** like custom clearance and last stage processing facilities are also provided.

These parks were first mooted by the railway ministry in 2009. Bharatmala Pariyojana revived the idea.

What process will be followed in building these MMLPs?

35 such parks are planned to be built under **PPP mode**. The first park is coming up in Chennai. National Highway logistics Management, a wholly owned special purpose vehicle of NHAI is the nodal agency for these parks.

MMLPs will be built in the DBFOT mode of PPP. Concessionaires are required to pay a percentage in gross revenue from the third year. National Highway logistical Management company will be mandated to provide infrastructure inside these parks.

Total investment in 35 MMLPs will be 52500 crore. It will be shared equally between government and private sectors. These will be built on 7000 acres of land.

These parks will handle 700 million metric tonnes of cargo at its peak capacity.

What are the benefits associated with MMLPs?

These parks will **reduce the logistics cost** from 14% to 10% of GDP.

It will lead to **improved train services**, use of modern equipment and electronic data exchange. The **movement of inland goods** via containers will be facilitated.

It will **reduce the freight movement** on city roads leading to lower cost and lesser pollution.

It is **in line with the new National Logistical Policy** which aims to create the cheapest mode of transport. Warehousing charges and handling cost will be lower. Economy of scale due to shared infrastructure and competition will reduce the transportation cost.

MMLPs will be built in the **DBFOT mode of PPP**. Concessionaires are required to pay a percentage in gross revenue from the third year. National Highway logistical Management company will be mandated to provide infrastructure inside these parks.

What are challenges to MMLPs?

First is the viability of private players to put their investment in logistical parks.

Another challenge is related to the multiplicity of government agencies involved in setting up MMLPs.

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Soaring food and land prices are other concerns. Availability of affordable land remains a big barrier.

9. [The gun and the pen – On UAPA](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The gun and the pen**” published in **The Hindu** on **1st november 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Role of non-state actors. GS 2- Fundamental rights

News- The article explains the observation by the PM in a conclave of state home ministers.

What are the main points of the PM ‘s speech at the conclave of state home ministers?

He called for elimination of all forms of Naxalism whether they are spreading violence through guns or gaining support and influencing youths through writings.

He emphasised on importance on Unlawful Activities Prevention Act to combat terrorism.

What are the issues raised by the speech?

Incitement to violence by mobilising support for armed insurgency is a grave offence. But if there is no proven connection between intellectual writings and violence, it is not logical to treat armed insurgency at par with intellectual writings in support of any ideology.

UAPA has been frequently and unfairly invoked in cases which have no linkages with terror. Umar Khalid in the Delhi riots case, and Jyoti Jagtap of the Kabir Kala Manch in the Elgar Parishad case are good examples of invoking UAPA and eliminating the need for showing concrete evidence to prove their involvement in incitement to violence.

UAPA is an impediment to **liberty** and subjected to **judicial interpretations**.

It leads to **manipulation of political discourse** in such a way that those who question the actions, methods and processes of the state that cause mass resentment are criminalised. The use of political catchwords like “**urban naxals**” should be seen in that context.

10. [GM Mustard: A win for science and the farmer](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**GM Mustard: A win for science and the farmer**” published in **Indian Express** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country

Relevance: About the benefits of GM food crops.

News: Recently, the government cleared the GM Mustard Hybrid DMH 11 for commercial cultivation.

Must read: [Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee approves commercial cultivation of genetically modified mustard yet again](#)

Why does the adoption of GM food crops are in the broader national interest?

Scientific innovations and their scaling is the best option to reduce over-exploitation of natural resources (soil, water, biodiversity), increase factor productivity, and helps to achieve sustainable development goals, especially ending poverty and hunger.

Wider adaptability: Genetically modified maize, soybean, cotton, tomato and canola are grown worldwide; the area currently under GM crops is about 200 m ha. Besides India, these have been grown for many years in the US, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Australia, Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and China.

Meet the existing deficit in India’s production: India is currently importing around 13 million tonnes at a cost of Rs 1.17 lakh crore to the exchequer. Of this, 2.0-2.5 mt soybean oil and 1.0-1.5 mt canola oil is already GM.

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It is scientifically proven that the consumption of refined oil does not allow any protein to enter the human system. Thus, the consumption of GM oil is completely safe from a health point of view. So permitting GM crops can meet the existing deficit in edible oils (about 55-60 per cent).

Read more: [Govt. allows GM soy meal import to support poultry industry](#)

What are the major benefits of GM Mustard?

Farmers report that the yields of mustard are low and have stagnated for a long time at around 1,260 kg/ha, much lower than the global average of 2,000 kg/ha. Yields of canola in Canada, China and Australia are almost three times higher than in India since they use GM hybrid technology. The government's decision to allow the production of GM Mustard can increase the yield and improve oil production.

Note: Australia has recently released herbicide-tolerant GM Indian mustard, using similar technology of DMH11.

What India needs to do to promote GM food crops?

India needs to **a)** Provide an enabling environment to test the available seed of Hybrid DMH 11 in the current rabi season, **b)** Encourage public-private partnerships to produce quality seeds to cover more area next year, **c)** Scientists at ICAR institutes must be encouraged to develop new GM Mustard hybrids on a mission mode, **d)** Allowing the production of GM Soybean and GM Maize will also be a positive step.

All this will increase both the productivity and profitability of these crops and doubling farmers' income

Read more: [GM crops – on approval to GM Mustard](#)

11. [Safety in public places mustn't be a lost cause](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Safety in public places mustn't be a lost cause**" published in **Live Mint** on **2nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Disaster Management

Relevance: reasons behind disasters in India

News: Over a hundred people lost their lives in the Morbi bridge collapse in Gujarat. This has raised concerns over the failure of governance.

What is the incident?

It is century old bridge that was reopened after seven months of repair without getting a safety clearance. The tourist visited there and they were more than the capacity of the bridge which made the bridge to collapse.

The incident has led the arrest of the people involved in maintaining the bridge and controlling the crowd.

However, such incidents are not new to India. There have been multiple such incidents in the past but the culprits have not been punished.

What are the problems with such disaster in India?

There is serious issue of proper **governance** and **accountability** in India.

The authorities in India take actions after the incident have caused and people responsible for such incidents are not even punished.

For example, the death of businessman Cyrus Mistry raised the issue of rear seat belts but the faulty highway design which was mostly the cause of accident did not led authorities to act against the main culprit.

Therefore, there is little accountability in India for such incidents and people responsible are rarely punished.

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Further, urban governance in India is poorer as it includes corruption and ineffective implementation of the policies. Politicians often join hands with builders to deliver sub-optimal infrastructure.

What can be the course of action?

India requires some efforts to improve its current inability in ensuring proper accountability. Some jurists have called for “**accountability jurisprudence**” so that those responsible (the state, followed by private contractors) are pushed to enforce basic safety norms. There must be a **systemic will** to implement laws and **carelessness** should be removed. Further, there is need to **spread awareness** regarding the responsibility a citizen has because it is not only the state that lacks, sometimes the irresponsible citizens can also endanger the life of others.

12. [Bridging India: Morbi is a reminder how crucial bridges are as joints in India’s vast terrestrial logistics network](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Bridging India: Morbi is a reminder how crucial bridges are as joints in India’s vast terrestrial logistics network**” published in **The Times of India** on **2nd november 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Infrastructure

Relevance– Importance of good infrastructure

News- The article explains the significance of bridges in the case of India.

What is the importance of bridges?

Bridges are the joints that link the road and rail network across challenging terrain. They are an indicator of **society’s capabilities**.

They are **celebrated as engineering marvels**. **Example** is 100-year-old Pamban rail bridge across the sea that links peninsular India to Rameswaram island

India currently moves about 4.6 billion tonnes of freight a year. Around 70% is transported by trucks and 18% by rail. India’s coast-to-landmass ratio is relatively low. The landmass is crisscrossed by multiple rivers prone to annual flooding. GoI estimates that about 12% of the area is prone to floods. It makes bridge building critical.

They are an important part of the rail network. In 2018, the rail track length of 67368 km included 1.47 lakh bridges. Many of them have been in existence for over a century.

What steps are being taken by the government to improve bridge management?

Technology will play an important role in extending the longevity of bridges. Stainless steel is being used in bridge construction in coastal areas. Railways have begun to use drones to inspect bridges. Use of drones is expected to improve oversight, particularly during the monsoon.

GoI announced the establishment of the Indian bridge management system to collect information on bridges. It will enhance the quality of maintenance.

13. [The weakest link in air pollution fight](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The weakest link in air pollution fight**” published in **The Hindu** on **2nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environmental pollution and degradation

Relevance– Regulatory structure to fight pollution

News- The article explains the institutional constraints faced by the State Pollution Control Board and Pollution Control Committees of UTs. It also explains the mandate of these institutions.

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What is the mandate of SPCBs? The SPCBs were initially constituted under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

Under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, the SPCB mandate was expanded to include **air quality management**. Subsequently, several new environmental regulations added to their roles and functions.

Their primary role is to **regulate emissions** from point sources such as industries and power plants. More recently, they have also been tasked with guiding cities in meeting targets under the National Clean Air Programme and spending Finance Commission grants for air quality improvements.

What are the institutional constraints faced by SPCBs?

Composition of board– The composition of SPCBs is a matter of serious concern. Over 50% of the Board members across the 10 SPCBs and PCC represent potential polluters: local authorities, industries, and public sector corporations. Their presence raises fundamental questions around **conflicts of interest**.

There is a lack of **multidimensional expertise** in the composition of boards. Scientists, medical practitioners, and academics constitute only 7% of the Board members.

Leadership issues– The chairperson and the member secretary do not enjoy a long, stable, and full-time tenure. In many States, persons in these two posts hold an additional charge in other government departments. For example, the shortest tenure for a chairperson has been 18 days in Chhattisgarh and 15 days for a member secretary in Haryana.

Human resources– SPCBs are **critically under-staffed**. At least 40% of all sanctioned posts are vacant across nine SPCBs and PCCs.

14. [A leg-up for logistics](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**A leg-up for logistics**” published in the **Business Standard** on **2nd november 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Infrastructure

Relevance– Logistics

News- The article explains the logistical related issues. It also explains the **National Logistics Policy**.

How is the performance of India in logistics?

A 2018 **logistics performance index** prepared by the World Bank put India at rank 44. China is ranked at 26th position.

India's logistics costs add up to around 13% of gross domestic product. It is quite high compared to developed economies such as the US, South Korea, Singapore, and EU. Here, costs are estimated to be 7-10%.

But this cost is disputed by some scholars.

Which are Initiatives by the government that will help in improving logistics?

Transport infrastructure has been put in place. It is evident from **greenfield expressways to dedicated freight corridors**.

The goods and services tax and e-way bill system have transformed the nature of **transport documentation**.

Coastal zones are being developed. **GatiShakti platform** seeks to build the necessary connectivity.

How will the National Logistics Policy be implemented?

The National Logistics Policy will be implemented Through **a five-pronged strategy**–

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One, the share of the railways is to be pushed up from the current 28 per cent to 40 per cent. The current emphasis on “**dedicated freight corridors**” with committed time-tables, along with RORO will help enormously.

Two, multi-modal logistics parks are to be set up.

Three, special emphasis is to be given to **inland water transportation, coastal shipping**, and moving liquid bulk cargo via pipelines.

Four, specific plans are to be drawn up for 15 industries that constitute the majority of bulk cargo movement.

Five, **digital integration** is to be achieved for tracking and monitoring. A new platform called **Unified Logistics Interface Platform** or Ulip will offer open access to relevant data crucial to tracking and expediting cargo movement. It will be done by integrating e-portals of the railways, customs, aviation and commerce authorities.

The outcome of all these efforts is to be monitored by a **Logistics Ease Across Different States** survey.

What are the issues that need to be resolved?

The adoption of **standardised multi-use containers** is to be emphasised. Agricultural mandis to aerotropolises, modern reefer trucks and refrigerated warehouses as **viable cold-chains** need to be established.

The **capacity and efficiency** of Indian ports have improved considerably. The average turnaround time of a container vessel has come down to 26 hours from 44 hours. But **maritime freight-pricing-power** needs some bold reforms.

The issues related to perennial navigable channels, night navigation, and, crucially, the absence of appropriate river-ports and related connectivity need to be resolved.

15. [Gene-altered food crops: Enhancing mustard yields](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Enhancing mustard yields**” published in **Business Standard** on **2nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country

Relevance: About the benefits of GM Mustard and gene-altered food crops.

News: Recently, the government cleared the [GM Mustard Hybrid DMH 11](#) for commercial cultivation. It is a bid to pave the way for the introduction of gene-altered food crops, which can revolutionise Indian agriculture.

Must read: [Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee approves commercial cultivation of genetically modified mustard yet again](#)

About the approval of GM Mustard

The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) approved GM mustard for general cultivation in 2017. But the government then blocked this move under pressure from the anti-genetic modification lobby.

The same lobby once again tried to block the commercialisation of DMH-11 mustard

Agricultural science bodies, such as the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, have now prepared to carry out field tests, demonstration trials, and seed multiplication of DMH-11 in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the GEAC.

What are the other gene-altered food crops allowed for field-testing by GEAC?

GEAC has granted permission for the field-testing of four more genetically engineered crops, which include two food crops — potato and banana — and two commercial crops — rubber and cotton.

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No new **Bt-cotton** hybrid has been approved since the release of Bollgard-II in 2006. The new strains of Bt-cotton are required to replace the existing ones that have outlived their useful life.

Read more: [GM Crops in India: Issues and challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

How GM Mustard will aid mustard yields?

India is a net edible oil-deficit country. India at present imports as high as 55-60% of its edible oil. GM mustard will have a yield advantage of nearly 28% over the available mustard varieties. So, it can help substantially reduce the gap in the domestic demand and supply of edible oil.

How do global countries take advantage of Indian gene-altered food crops?

a) Australia has released **GM Mustard** developed in India for general cultivation to take advantage of its high-yield potential, **b) GM brinjal** developed in India was adopted for cultivation by Bangladesh with good results and without any environmental or health hazards.

So, India should take advantage of indigenous GM crops to increase both productivity and profitability and double farmers' income.

16. [Seeds of hope: On GM crops and scientific consent](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles "**Seeds of hope: On GM crops and scientific consent**" published in **The Hindu** on **3rd November 2022**.

"Science can help India regain traditional cooking mediums" published in **Livemint** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country

Relevance: About the benefits and concerns associated with DMH-11.

News: The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) last week cleared the DMH-11 or Dhara Mustard Hybrid-11 for environmental release. The seed can now be grown in fields for producing more of its kind and is a precursor to it being approved for commercial release.

About India's oil consumption pattern

Coconut oil is popular in south India, while the western regions like to deep fry in groundnut oil. Mustard oil is used more in the east and north. But for almost 25 years, local oilseed production has fallen short of demand.

None of the traditional, cold-pressed, filtered oils have managed to hold their ground against imported palm, soy and sunflower oil. Almost 70% of demand is now met with imports. India became the world's largest importer of soybean and sunflower oils.

Due to marketing, traditional favourites like mustard, coconut, groundnut and sesame oil have reduced in their share.

Must read: [Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee approves commercial cultivation of genetically modified mustard yet again](#)

What are the benefits of DMH-11?

Aid in self-sufficiency of edible oil: Self-sufficiency in food has to be a legitimate public-policy concern. At present, Indian kitchens spend \$19 billion annually on Indonesian palm, Ukrainian sunflower and Argentinian soybean oil.

Improve health: The most price-conscious segment of the oil market was cornered by palm oil. Getting rid of the 8 million tonnes of imported palm oil could help India lower its ischemic heart disease mortality rate associated with it.

What are the other GM Crops approved in India and rolled back?

In 2009, GEAC cleared Bt Brinjal, a transgenic food crop. But the decision has been overruled by the government due to protest.

Read more: [Gene-altered food crops: Enhancing mustard yields](#)

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What are the concerns associated with the DMH-11?

DMH-11 alone may not be the panacea for India's edible oil crisis. This is because,

1) The barnase-barstar system, used in DMH-11, is promising but already outdated given that cutting-edge technology such as CRISPR is in popularity, **2)** The DMH-11 represents a platform technology that requires seed companies to invest and develop their own hybrids. But, there is uncertainty around regulatory policy regarding seed development in India, **3)** Instead of making India's oilseed economy self-reliant, GMO mustard would render farmers "seriously dependent" on a multinational giants like Bayer AG, which holds the ultimate patent on the technology.

Read more: [GM Crops in India: Issues and challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

Overall, India's imbalance of three decades in oil market won't be fixed in a day. But science can help put traditional oils back on Indian kitchen shelves.

17. [Draft telecom Bill: A move that turns back the clock](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Draft telecom Bill: A move that turns back the clock**" published in the **Indian Express** on **3rd November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill and ways to improve it.

News: The draft Indian Telecommunication Bill reimagine and reshapes the digital architecture in India.

About the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill

Read here: [Draft Telecommunication Bill, 2022 – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the concerns associated with the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill?

Read here: [Draft Telecom Bill enhances unease of doing biz amid regulatory overlaps](#)

What needs to be done to improve the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill?

Liberalise the regulatory regime in the telecom sector: After 1991, India focused on liberalisation. For instance, electricity-generating plants were liberated from licensing under the Electricity Act, of 2003.

On similar lines now, the internet economy requires a supporting and facilitative legal framework and regulatory mechanism that is simple and easy to navigate and aids the digital economy.

Limit the application: The new law should only regulate the hard infrastructure/network layer, the essence of telecommunications, and not the software layer.

This is because, the Telecom service providers (TSPs) operate at the network level while the OTTs function at the software layer. Also, the OTTs are governed by the Information (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 and the Information Technology Act, 2000.

Avoid regulatory supremacy: The Supreme Court recently resolved a 10-year long jurisdictional battle between the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission and the Security and Exchange Board of India to regulate and control forward trading/future contracts in the electricity markets.

The telecom sector has, in the past, witnessed a tussle for regulatory supremacy between TRAI and the Competition Commission of India. So, instead of having an overlapping jurisdiction, a clear Lakshman Rekha has to be drawn.

Do not offend the doctrine of equality: The inclusion of OTTs under the regulatory regime for TSPs will be tested on the principles enshrined under Article 14 of the Constitution — "unequal cannot be treated equally". This is because of the merger of two distinct service providers. So, the government should reexamine these contentious issues and course correct them.

Read more: [What are the limitations of auctions as a method of spectrum allocation? How does the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022, try to bring reforms to this area?](#)

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The regulatory framework offers stability, predictability and legal certainty. A legal architecture based on the concept of “one sector one regulator” can help provide clarity to stakeholders and facilitate the growth of the digital economy.

18. [Empowering Gati Shakti](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Empowering Gati Shakti” published in **Business Standard** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Information Technology

Relevance: reforms in Internet connectivity and its benefits

News: The article discusses the importance of telecommunication in the development of India and Gati Shakti.

What is Gati Shakti and what are its aims?

Gati Shakti or the **National Master Plan for logistics development** on a digital platform was introduced in October 2021.

It is based on the recommendations of the **National Transport Development Policy Committee** in January 2014.

It establishes digitised institutional processes for comprehensive, integrated project planning and execution to assist ministries and infrastructure sectors. Thus, aiming at more efficient outcomes at reduced cost and time for logistics.

Gati Shakti also includes **digitised database** and portal along with **geographic positioning capabilities**. However, the effectiveness of Gati Shakti platform depends on telecommunications reform.

What does the different reports highlight on the importance of telecommunication?

A study conducted by **World bank** shows the importance of telecommunications (and electricity) for growth.

Further a report published by **Asian Development Bank** confirms that internet and mobile density contribute to their high rate of growth in India and China.

Therefore, there is a need to change the policy for telecommunication as it impacts many sectors.

Which sectors have impact of telecommunication?

Environmental care & climate mitigation: Effective broadband coverage and shared networks improve both.

Education and work life: Effective broadband coverage will enable learning in rural areas and provide employment opportunities.

There are other areas such as e-commerce, distributed healthcare, government services, entertainment where broadband services are required.

Therefore, there is a need to bring the reform in the policy to enable the use of internet services on wide-range.

What are the reforms required?

First, there is a need for inexpensive, higher capacity connectivity by enabling spectrum usage for wireless and shared networks.

Second, there is a need to increase the network coverage along with high-speed wireless network at a reduced cost.

Third, India has enabled restricted use of 60 GHz but government should permit telcos to use 60 and 70-80 GHz “mmWave” technology for **pay-for-use backhaul** with no extra cost (auctions, extra taxes).

- This would provide huge service and cost benefits in India as in San Francisco and London.

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Fourth, there a need to establish easier access to spectrum for authorised institutions and researchers so that India's R&D for commercial and defence is free from any obstacle.

Moreover, the features of Gati Shakti portal should also be changed to cater the demand of the users while balancing the security of the portal.

Therefore, there is a need to develop effective telecommunication policy to improve the infrastructure gap and increase the productivity and efficiency of Gati Shakti.

19. India must lead the creation of a citizen-centric digital economy

Source: The post is based on an article "**India must lead the creation of a citizen-centric digital economy**" published in **Live Mint** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Information Technology

Relevance: measures and need to develop citizen centric digital economy

News: The article discusses the needs for developing citizen centric digital economy in India.

"There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen." This **statement by Vladimir Lenin** is relevant to the context of India.

India has shown remarkable achievement in leveraging technology during the pandemic when rest of the world was behind. It has shown the world the power of an inclusive citizen-centric innovation framework.

The upcoming G20 presidency will also give India a platform to shows its success to the world.

How has India achieved success in digitization?

India has executed many citizen-friendly programs over the last 75 years. However, the **Digital India Initiative** has been a turning point for India.

Today around **20 platforms run on this initiative** which has made Indians to adapt technology in their lives. The digitization is expected to offer a \$700 billion opportunity for India by 2030.

These **digital initiatives are present across various sectors** such as health, agriculture, finance and urban governance and have shown success.

Some of the examples are: **Co-Win** enabled over 2 billion vaccination doses, the **Aadhaar ecosystem** has scaled to 1.3 billion registrations, and **Bhim UPI** has recorded over 6.28 billion transactions in July 2022.

These platforms show India's success in tech inclusivity, innovation, scale and impact. However, there is a need to focus on other aspect of technology also i.e., **using technology to improve human lives**.

What steps can be taken by India to improve lives of Indians by using technology?

India has all means (growing technology and innovation ecosystem, etc.) to provide its citizens required digital services.

However, the success of a digital economy depends not only on available means but using those means to provide all citizens equal opportunity and access to critical services.

Therefore, India would need to utilize its opportunity of **G20 presidency** to create a framework for **a citizen-centric digital economy**.

The framework should include principles of trust and inclusion, digital public infrastructure, a robust datafication strategy and focus on security.

This would give India an opportunity to lead the world in creating a citizen-centric digital economy.

How can India create a citizen centric digital economy?

A citizen centric economy means that an economy that focuses on the development along with the development of its citizens. i.e., providing affordable healthcare for all, clean energy, food for all, and clean water.

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India would need to create strategically important projects that focus on solving real-world challenges and create equal access and opportunities for everyone.

For example, an artificial intelligence (AI)- enabled new or repurposed diabetes drug discovery program.

It should be built on population health data with real time or past data gathered through a network of **Internet-of-Medical-Things (IoMT)** devices at primary healthcare centres.

This could solve problems of healthcare **access and affordability** and promote **self-reliance** in drugs.

It will also help in reducing **premature mortality rate** from non-communicable diseases and address the needs of a diabetic population of around 100 million in African and West Asian countries

Therefore, as India has done progress in its digital economy, it also requires to develop a citizen centric digital economy to show the path to the world.

[20. A chance to expand the world biosphere footprint](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**A chance to expand the world biosphere footprint**” published in **The Hindu** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

Relevance– Mechanism to protect the ecosystem

News- The article explains the concept of biosphere reserves. It explains the importance of South Asia in promoting this concept.

What is WNBR (World Network of Mountain Biosphere Reserves)?

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves was formed in 1971. It helps in **biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration**, and living in **harmony with nature**.

There are now 738 properties in 134 countries, including 12 in India.

All biosphere reserves are internationally recognised sites on land, coast, oceans. Governments alone decide which areas to nominate. Before approval by UNESCO, the sites are externally examined. If approved, they will be managed based on a plan.

What are the benefits associated with biosphere reserves?

WNBR promotes cooperation through **sharing knowledge, exchanging experiences, building capacity and promoting best practices**. Its members are always ready to support each other. Biosphere reserves have all developed **science-based management plans**. Local solutions for sustainable human living and nature conservation are tested, and best practices are applied.

Why is South Asia important?

In South Asia, over 30 biosphere reserves have been established. The first one was the Hurulu Biosphere Reserve, in Sri Lanka.

India is a vast sub-continent. It has become an important global player on environmental sustainability issues. India is likely to become the world's most populated country in 2023.

Spain has a landmass of 50600 square kms. It has 53 biosphere reserves. In comparison, India has a larger surface area of 3287000 square kms. It offers great potential.

Some of the countries in South Asia do not yet have any or enough biosphere reserves. In most, the political will is certainly there. But there is a lack of know-how and financial resources.

The existence of the new **World Network of Mountain Biosphere Reserves** provides a welcome opportunity for Bhutan and Nepal to establish their first biosphere reserves and participate in the world network.

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21. [Curious collage shows rhino horns are shrinking due to impact of hunting](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Curious collage shows rhino horns are shrinking due to impact of hunting**” published in **The Hindu** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Technology

Relevance– Species evolution

News- The article explains the study published in the latest edition of People and Nature by the British Ecological Society related to decreasing length of horns of rhinos.

What has been found by the study?

It found evidence for declining horn length over time across species. It is perhaps related to the **selective pressure of hunting**.

Rate of decline in horn length was highest in the critically-endangered Sumatran rhino and lowest in the white rhino of Africa.

This observation follows patterns seen in other animals, such as tusk size in elephants and horn length in wild sheep.

What were the sources of study?

It relied on a repository of images maintained by the **Netherlands-based Rhino Research Center (RRC)**.

It only included photographs where the animal was side-on to the camera to facilitate more accurate and repeatable measurements. It excluded photos of any individuals where the horn had been cut.

What are lessons from the study?

Online image repositories can offer a **freely accessible, information-rich and cost-effective alternative** to museum collections. It is useful for studying long-term changes in human interactions with nature and ecological and evolutionary change.

22. [Unprofitable, growing bad assets: The tale of existential crisis at RRBs](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Unprofitable, growing bad assets: The tale of existential crisis at RRBs**” published in the **Business Standard** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- India Economy

Relevance– Financial institutions

News- The article explains the concept of RRBs. It also explains the financial condition of RRBs.

What are RRBs?

RRBs are jointly owned by the central government, state governments and sponsoring banks.

They were set up in 1975 with the intent of bringing financial services and products to agricultural workers and labourers.

What are the steps taken by the government for RRBs?

Last month, the finance ministry issued draft guidelines setting the criteria for the listing of regional rural banks on the stock exchange.

The guidelines included listing banks that have earned an **operating profit** of more than Rs 15 crore in three out of the past five financial years, a **net worth** of Rs 300 crore and a **capital adequacy ratio** above the required 9 per cent in the past three years.

The government has amalgamated various standalone RRBs at different points in time to cut overhead costs. A decade ago, there were 82 RRBs. Since then, their number has reduced to 43.

What is the financial condition of RRBs?

There has been a steady decline in the number of profit-making RRBs from 75 in FY11 to 34 in FY22. Only 20 have made a profit of over Rs 15 crore in the past three years.

Between FY11 and FY22, **net NPAs** have doubled from 2.05% to 4.68%.

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Agriculture sector borrows more from commercial banks than the RRBs. The **share of institutional credit** by the commercial banks for agriculture and allied activities has increased from 65 per cent to 76% between FY11 and FY22. While, the share of RRBs in the total credit has remained constant between 11 per cent and 13 per cent.

In FY22, **institutional credit** in the RRBs marginally declined to 11% from 12% in the previous year.

23. [Indian military's capabilities: Handling a high-tech Chinese military](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Handling a high-tech Chinese military**” published in the **Business Standard** on **4th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Security challenges and their management in border areas.

Relevance: About the challenges and advantages of the Indian military's capabilities.

News: Recently, Prime Minister has laid the foundation stone for the C-295 transport aircraft manufacturing facility. He talked about his vision of “atmanirbharta” in the defence sector. But there remain serious questions over the Indian military's capabilities.

What are the concerns associated with the Indian military's capabilities?

India's ability to prevail in the two-front war: China is fighting its version of an “informatised war.” In this killer robots, driven and enhanced by artificial intelligence, machine learning and quantum computing quickly will threaten the Indian Army that is driven in a more conventional manner. An opportunistic Pakistani military might not ignore the opportunity to jump into battle.

So, the Indian military going to such a battle in future using tactics and equipment very similar to those used in the 1999 Kargil conflict will severely limit India's ability to prevail in such a battle.

Technological advancement in battle: The glimpses in Azerbaijan-Armenia and Ukraine show the new threat to ground forces is posed by remotely piloted vehicles (RPVs), or weaponised drones, that are driven by ultra-modern technologies. These can overleap the enemy's forward defences to strike its reserve echelons and tactical infrastructures.

While Pakistan enjoys parity with India in legacy weapon systems, it is beginning to enjoy superiority in drone warfare. This is due to RPVs supplied by China, including the Wing Loong and RPVs obtained from Iran and Turkey.

India does not have a doctrine to counter new threats: India does not have a tactical, and operational doctrine for drones. This is a painful absence of a National Security Strategy (NSS).

India's weakness in [Grey Zone warfare](#): This involves information, disinformation, cyber-attacks, gathering electronic, signals and satellite intelligence and altering historical records. For instance, China did these in Tawang, Doklam and Ladakh.

India's lag in conventional fields: China has dominance over India's conventional fields, such as long-range fires and missiles to support ground operations.

Read more: [Will Agnipath energise or demoralise the military?](#)

How advantages are the Indian military's capabilities compared to China?

Resilience and fighting quality of India's combat forces: India has a significant advantage in this domain. Indian soldiers face high mountain terrain severely tests even the most rugged of them.

In contrast, the average Chinese soldier is a lone male child, pampered by an adoring family and ill-prepared for the hazards and discomforts of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

However, this will be diluted by the so-called Agniveers having only short-service tenures.

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India is not alone: With India's growing relations with Indo-Pacific democracies such as Japan, Australia, the UK and the US, India would quickly align and combine the Indian forces with the AUKUS and Quadrilateral groupings. This will split Chinese forces in two directions — the land border with India and the South China Sea maritime theatre.

Read more: [Today's weapon of choice, its expanding dimensions](#)

24. [Global Energy Transition: Blurred energy nirvana: The world is fast turning green](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Blurred energy nirvana: The world is fast turning green**” published in the **Business Standard** on **4th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the Global Energy Transition to renewables.

News: Coal energy is getting increased, but renewable energy is growing rapidly.

What is the present trend of Global Energy Transition?

Few regions are expanding their coal power plants. For instance, **a) Europe** is extending the life of its coal plants, **b) India** is expanding coal production.

On the other hand, a few regions are expanding their renewable energy. For instance, **South Africa** and **Indonesia** have just secured \$1 billion from the climate investment funds to prematurely retire coal plants to transition to renewables.

Solar energy: As much as 250 gigawatts of new solar capacity is projected to come online this year. This is 38% higher than in 2021. The top five markets would be China, the US, India, Brazil and Germany.

Solar installations far outpace wind because combined with batteries, Solar power factories provide a compelling choice to households, businesses and utilities.

Wind energy: A record 106 gigawatts of wind will be installed globally this year, with cumulative installations surpassing 1,000 gigawatts next year. Offshore wind represents 13% of total installations in 2022.

Increase in Corporate power purchase deals: **a)** Alphabet's Google signed its largest solar deal agreeing to buy 942 megawatts to eliminate emissions from its operations, **b)** According to a private report, almost 22 gigawatts of corporate power purchase agreements have been signed globally, **c)** Corporate power purchase deals hit a record high in 2021, with more than 30 gigawatts procured.

Increase in EVs: BNEF's latest update projects passenger EV sales at 10.6 million this year. India EV sales are also rising, but there is a skew towards two- and three-wheelers.

Read more: [Ministry of Power notifies 'Green Energy Open Access' Rules to accelerate ambitious renewable energy programmes](#)

What are the challenges ahead in the Global Energy Transition?

a) Widening gap between energy transition asset finance in developed countries compared with emerging markets and developing economies (EM&DEs). For instance, while global energy transition asset finance hit a record \$785 billion in 2021, EM&DEs saw only a fraction of that with \$67 billion, the lowest share in 10 years. **b)** There is skewed finance among EM&DEs also. For instance, just handful of countries, such as India, Brazil and Vietnam have more finance allocation to green energy transition.

Read more: [Government initiatives to tap green energy: Centre explodes plan to run ships fully on clean energy](#)

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What will be the next phase of the Global Energy Transition?

Battery storage: Power from a battery is the next energy revolution. Storing solar, wind or other kinds of power for later use is becoming increasingly common. Battery technology is also evolving to lean more on metals that are easily acquired and at lower costs such as sodium-ion batteries.

Vehicle-to-grid or V2G technology: The growing number of electric vehicle (EV) batteries open another avenue for storing excess power for later use. Millions of EV batteries can be used to import or export power to the grid.

EV owners would get some revenue for participation, and grid operators would save on costly upgrades.

25. [Non-Proliferation Treaty to ban fossil fuels: Vanuatu's big plea does little to arrest climate change](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Vanuatu's big plea does little to arrest climate change**” published in **The Hindu** on **4th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Climate change

Relevance: About the Non-Proliferation Treaty to ban fossil fuels.

News: The President of Vanuatu, a small Pacific island, wanted the UN General Assembly to adopt a universal Non-Proliferation Treaty to ban the use of fossil fuels across the world.

Vanuatu represents a strong and vocal group of small island developing states. Many including the Mayor of Kolkata (the capital of one of the largest coal-producing States in India) have lent their support to such a treaty.

About the previous instances of phasing out of coal

Last year at the Glasgow climate conference, there was a call for phaseout of coal. India argued that a phaseout was unfair to countries that were heavily dependent on coal power in the medium term.

So, the call was toned down **from phaseout to phase down** of unabated coal power and inefficient fuel subsidies.

Read more: [Significance of greening of the coal sector](#)

What are the challenges in implementing a Non-Proliferation Treaty to ban fossil fuels?

a) A call to end fossil fuels through a mandate in the UN has very different implications than when it is presented under the UN Climate Change Convention, **b)** The UNGA treaty will dilute the legal responsibility of the polluting countries to reduce their emissions on the basis of responsibility, capability and national circumstances, as required by the Climate Change Convention, **c)** The treaty will also make no provision for technological and financial innovations that are necessary to ensure the transition.

Read more: [Greening Initiatives of India's Coal Sector](#)

Why targeting coal through Non-Proliferation Treaty to ban fossil fuels is not desirable?

1) Coal phasedown is not the only way to reduce global emissions. This is because a substantial share of rising global emissions is accounted for by the unsustainable levels of consumption of natural resources and lavish lifestyles led by the consumers in developed economies, **2)** Coal is the mainstay of primary energy supply in many countries such as India and forms the basic and essential component of their energy system, **3)** A plan to drastically reduce coal fired power may create insurmountable difficulties in securing the progress of developing economies towards key sustainable development goals, **4)** While the developed economies have full access to alternative sources of energy the developing nations are handicapped.

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What needs to be done instead of creating a Non-Proliferation Treaty to ban fossil fuels? A **just transition needs to be built** on the promise that green energy and a green future will be available to all.

Consumers in countries that consume at an unsustainable pace and contribute to rising emissions have a much greater responsibility to clean up the planet and support the growth of green energy. For instance, the [Lifestyle for Environment \(LiFE\)](#) movement in India.

Building **climate-resilient infrastructure** in developing and growing countries has to be given as much importance as phasing down coal and investment in energy innovations and alternative technologies.

26. [Delhi's air quality crisis: Why we are all culpable](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Delhi's air quality crisis: Why we are all culpable**” published in the **Indian Express** on **4th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environmental pollution and degradation.

Relevance: About Delhi's air quality crisis and ways to control it.

News: Almost every year after Diwali — for about a decade or so — an invasion of particulate matter makes Delhi unhealthy for people whose air passages are vulnerable to irritants.

Delhi's air quality gets attention only when people have severe impacts. There has been no concerted activism to push the authorities to clean up the city's air. Hence, the problem requires a long-term solution.

Read more: [CAQM Policy to Combat Air Pollution in Delhi NCR – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the reasons for Delhi's poor air quality?

A combination of geographical factors, industrial activities and lifestyle choices of its residents are the major reasons for heavy pollution in Delhi. Geographical factors include the city's location, wind speeds, etc. A large fleet of the city's private vehicles makes the air unhealthy for the most part of the year.

The movement of pollutants and smoke from neighbouring states make the condition worse.

What are the other polluted cities worldwide, and how did they control pollution?

a) London's tryst with smog is well-known, **b) In the 1950s and '60s**, the air in **Los Angeles** became so unhealthy which resulted in athletes training indoors, parents keeping their children out of school, etc.

Los Angeles: It adopted a combination of environmental legislation that gave autonomy to regulatory institutions and citizen activism that kept the government on its toes.

Read more: [CAQM formulates comprehensive policy to abate the menace of air pollution in Delhi-NCR](#)

What needs to be done to improve Delhi's air quality?

Regulation is not only limited to imposing bans. Instead, the government has to persuade industry — most of them small factories — to adopt environment-friendly measures.

Read more: [The action plan against Delhi's air pollution](#)

27. [The real issue at COP27 is energy security](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The real issue at COP27 is energy security**” published in **The Hindu** on **5th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Environment

Relevance: Climate change and associated issues

News: The article explains the global energy inequality across the world.

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What are issues related to climate change negotiations?

Climate declarations by developed countries are not enough to limit the temperature rise by 1.5-degree celsius.

Four-fifths of the **global carbon budget** to limit warming to 1.5°C has already been exhausted. Developed countries are responsible for more than half of these historical CO2 emissions. But they are not assuming their historical responsibility.

What are some facts related to global energy inequality?

In 2021, 733 million people had no access to electricity. Almost 2.6 billion people lacked access to **clean fuels and technologies**. The average per capita energy use of the richest 20 countries is 85 times higher than that of the 20 poorest countries.

The reality of global inequality was acutely evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America are facing severe **agricultural and industrial slowdowns** in the post-pandemic period.

In 2022, these inequalities have been aggravated by **rising energy and food prices**. Poor and energy-importing countries of the global South suffer the most. Almost 90 million people in Asia and Africa, who gained access to electricity recently, cannot afford to pay their energy bills.

Why addressing the issue of energy inequality is important?

There is a strong correlation between energy supply and **human development**.

The average annual per capita electricity consumption of sub-Saharan Africa is 487 kilowatt-hours. It has an **infant mortality rate** of 73 per 1000 live births and per capita GDP of \$1,645. On the other hand, the OECD group of countries have a per capita electricity consumption of 7750 kWh. It has an infant mortality rate of 18 and per capita GDP of \$42,098.

What is the hypocrisy of the global north?

In the United States, 81% of primary energy is from fossil fuels. In Europe, fossil fuels constitute 76% of energy consumption.

The **level of decarbonisation** in the global North has been minuscule.

In July 2022, the European Union voted to classify the use of natural gas for some uses as **“green and sustainable”**. Natural gas was responsible for 7.5 billion tonnes of CO2 in 2020.

They are advocating the need for shifting to green energy by the developing world. They are using this argument for banning the financing of fossil fuels in poor countries.

What is the way forward?

At COP27, the question of energy poverty and the global inequalities in energy access should be the centre of all discussions.

The world needs to achieve **zero hunger, zero malnutrition, zero poverty, and universal well-being**. There is a need for **global cooperation** against energy inequality.

Developing countries should show leadership to ensure that discussion is based on **equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities**.

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28. [Don't Delhi And Punjab Govt Breath The Same Air?](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Don't Delhi And Punjab Govt Breath The Same Air?**” published in **The Times of India** on **5th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Environmental pollution and degradation

Relevance: Air pollution in large cities.

News: The article explains the issue of poor air quality in Delhi.

Why is stubble burning in Punjab the leading cause of pollution in Delhi?

In the month of November, the contribution of stubble burning to Delhi pollution is more than 30%. More than 90% of farm fires in the months of October and November are reported from Punjab.

What are other factors responsible for air pollution in Delhi?

There is a lack of **robust public transport infrastructure** in Delhi. It has fewer buses today than it had 10 years back.

Biomass burning for cooking and heating leads to poor air quality in Delhi. The pollution intensity of open biomass burning is 100 to 1000 times more than those from vehicle and industries

There is reluctance on part of the government to grass the sideways and open spaces.

What is the way forward?

There is a need for more investment in well-connected **public transport and roads**.

Greening of open spaces should be prompted to reduce the dust.

Delhi has to work with neighbourhood states to reduce pollution from open biomass burning and coal.

There is a need for **no-harm agreements** with neighbour states. It should be a **formal and binding agreement** to stop fires.

29. [Data goes private: Positive for India but also a challenge for the govt](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Data goes private: Positive for India but also a challenge for the govt**” published in the **Business Standard** on **5th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy

Relevance: Importance of data for the economy.

News: The article explains the increasing importance of private data in India. It also explains the issues related to government data.

What is the importance of private data?

Developing economies will have **new and multiple sources of data sets**. Digitisation has made a huge difference. The growth of online selling and payment systems has created new sources of data on consumer behaviour. For instance,

-**CMIE data** provides the members related to employment. Its sample size matches those used by the government.

-The most trusted source of data on the true state of Indian school education is the Pratham foundation.

-**IHS Markit's purchasing manager's index**, which serves as a reliable guide to the economic indicators. **CRISIL** tells about the creditworthiness of companies.

-A private monsoon forecaster like Skymet has in at least some years done better than the government's meteorology department.

What is the case of government data?

The quality of important economic statistics by the government which has no private substitute is questionable and its frequency is low.

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There is no consumption survey data beyond 2011-12. The situation of employment statistics is similar. The government has suppressed numbers while trying to substitute the old accepted statistics with partial substitutes like the number of people with provident fund accounts. The census survey which was due in 2021 has not begun yet.

Some data by the government have become more frequent like the quarterly GDP data. Some data sets have seen improvements in methodology. Some have come out faster than before, like trade statistics and some are more transparent, like tax and fiscal data.

What is the way forward?

The dream of the third-largest economy is not possible without data. The data should meet the tests of **speed, frequency, reliability and completeness**. So, the government should improve its record of producing **timely and reliable statistics**.