



9 PM Compilation

7th to 12th November, 2022

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General Studies Paper –1

General Studies - 1

1. [Forgotten in India after fighting from world trenches](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Forgotten in India after fighting from world trenches**” published in **The Hindu** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1- Modern Indian history

News- The article explains India's contribution in two world wars.

What was the contribution of India in two world wars?

Almost 1.5 million men volunteered to fight in the Great War. Indians mobilised four days after Britain declared war on Germany, with the support of nationalist leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi.

India raised the largest ever volunteer army, of 2.5 million, for the Second World War.

It also provided material and money along with non-combatant labourers.

Why is India unwilling to acknowledge its contribution in two world wars?

It arises from the uneasy relationship between the Indian contribution to fighting fascism on a global stage and the nationalist movement for freedom at home.

It began with the betrayal of nationalist expectations of greater autonomy for India in return for support during the Great War. This was compounded by the bitterness of Viceroy Lord Linlithgow declaring war on Germany on India's behalf in 1939 without consulting Indian leaders.

The prevailing impression remains that wars were fought for somebody else, somewhere else.

General Studies Paper – 2

General Studies - 2

1. [Revive NJAC: The collegium system ultimately hurts the judiciary's credibility. Parliament's idea was better](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Revive NJAC: The collegium system ultimately hurts the judiciary's credibility. Parliament's idea was better**” published in **The Times of India** on **7th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the need for NJAC(National Judicial Appointments Commission)

News: Recently, the Union law minister has said that the government “won’t stay silent forever” on Supreme Court’s collegium system of appointing judges, and the apex court’s 2015 rejection of Parliament-cleared NJAC.

What is National Judicial Appointments Commission?

Read here: [National Judicial Appointments Commission](#)

NJAC was supposed to replace the collegium to make appointments to the higher judiciary more accountable. But SC rejected it before it could be tried out citing reasons such as **a)** Government interference in judicial appointments can undermine the independence of the judiciary, **b)** Executive overreach in judicial appointments in the 1970s and 1980s led to the collegium system.

Why India needs a system like NJAC?

An isolated judiciary raises suspicion of nepotism, which could raise questions about the judicial system’s credibility. Politics even plays a role in appointments decided behind the closed doors of the collegium.

So, India needs something like NJAC that aims to be a middle path to address apprehension of judges as well as meet standards of transparency and accountability.

Read more: [The Court and the problem with its collegium](#)

What can be changed in NJAC to make it more functional?

India needs to tweak the NJAC rule to improve the system further. For instance, the earlier NJAC rule that any two commission members can veto a candidate had raised objections. This can be changed to encourage consensus-building on candidates.

Read more: [A better NJAC: Politicians are right on the collegium. But can their solution rise above politics, that’s the question](#)

2. [India should incentivize state-level fiscal responsibility](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**India should incentivize state-level fiscal responsibility**” published in **Livemint** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

Relevance: About the state-level fiscal responsibility.

News: To ensure fiscal discipline, the government at all levels must be made to face financial consequences of their decisions.

What are the recent decisions that led to a debate on state-level fiscal responsibility?

Earlier, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh restored the old pension scheme. Following them, the Punjab government too has given in-principle approval to restore the old pension scheme.

These are the states with two of India’s highest debt-to-GDP levels taking such fiscally extravagant action. The move backtracks on one of the crucial reforms that helped state governments bypass a ‘fiscal bullet’.

What is the importance of fiscal devolution?

The transfer system is supposed to address the problem of imbalance between revenue and expenditure powers. The fiscal devolution aims to correct spatial imbalances to ensure the economic stability of the Union. It aids states that cannot raise sufficient revenue on account of historical and geographical limitations. This is inevitable as substantive revenues are mobilized from a handful of urban agglomerates.

Nearly half of the weight in India's devolution formula is income distance: i.e., the distance of a state's per capita GSDP from the state with the highest per capita GSDP. This can lead to cases of perverse incentives, wherein some states over-rely on these devolutions.

As per the state budgets for 2022-23, of the total revenue receipts for states, the share expected from the Centre (sum of tax devolution and grants) ranges from 76% in Bihar and 57% in West Bengal to 27% in Gujarat.

How fiscal devolution is causing a lack of state-level fiscal responsibility?

Protected revenue and high devolutions have disincentivized the states to carry out reforms. This is because,

a) Under-reliance on the state's own tax resources might be the reason Bihar prohibits the sale of alcohol, a significant tax source for most states, without affecting its fiscal health or sustainability, **b)** For a state, the primary source of budgetary resources is tax revenue (the predominant part being state GST) and the devolution of 41% of the general pool of taxes. This has resulted in a situation where a **substantive portion of the state's budget is an apportionment** from the Union government. This led to a poor fiscal decision by state governments, **c)** To get states on board for the GST regime, financial assurance was provided to them by a **'Protected Revenue' clause**. It has resulted in a scenario wherein the state's largest tax head (SGST) is divorced from the prevailing economic environment in the state.

What needs to be done to improve state-level fiscal responsibility?

1) Healthy competition between Indian states for investments, incentivizing political innovation and development, is critical to improving the fiscal responsibility of states, **2)** The Union government has to **adopt a competitiveness framework** that transfers fiscal resources based on the state's GSDP performance, **3)** The government has to **increase the share of conditional transfers** (possibly at least 5% of the divisible pool) based on reforms, quality of expenditure and fiscal sustainability in place of the current regime.

All this will raise revenues and improve the quality of public expenditure. Apart from that, it will also ensure state governments face the financial consequences of their fiscal misadventures.

3. [Explained | The Uniform Civil Code](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Explained | The Uniform Civil Code”** published in **The Hindu** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Significant provisions of Indian constitution

Relevance– Secularism and related issues

News- The article explains the Uniform Civil Code.

What is Uniform Civil Code?

It would be a **uniform set of laws** that would replace the distinct personal laws of each religion with regard to matters like marriage, divorce, adoption, and inheritance.

Article 44 says that the state shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.

What do the debates of constituent assembly say about UCC?

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Naziruddin Ahmad– Certain civil laws in all communities were inseparably connected with religious beliefs and practices. He felt the UCC would be **against the right to freedom of religion**, the time for UCC had not yet come. The **process had to be gradual and not without the consent of the concerned communities**.

KM Munshi– He **rejected the notion** that a UCC would be against the **freedom of religion**. The **Constitution allowed the government** to make laws covering secular activities related to religious practices if they were intended for social reform. **UCC will lead to benefits such as promoting the unity of the nation and equality for women**. If personal laws of inheritance, succession and so on were seen as a part of religion, then many discriminatory practices of the Hindu personal law against women could not be eliminated.

BR Ambedkar– He had an ambivalent stance toward the UCC. He felt that while it was desirable, it should remain **purely voluntary** in the initial stages.

What are various arguments around UCC?

There is plurality in already codified civil and criminal laws. The concept of **“one nation, one law “** for personal matters is very difficult. Constitutional framers also did not intend total uniformity, which is why personal laws were placed in **entry 5 of the Concurrent List**.

All Hindus are not governed by a homogenous personal law even after the enactment of the Hindu Code Bill, neither are Muslims and Christians under their personal laws. Hindu Code Bill was amended multiple times to finally be separated into four different Acts.

There is still no uniform applicability of Muslim personal law or the Shariat Act that was passed in 1937. The **Shariat Act** is not applicable in Jammu and Kashmir and Muslims continue to be governed by customary law which is at variance with the Muslim personal law in the rest of the country. The applicability also varies for certain sects of Muslims.

Goa case is more complex. The UCC has **legal pluralities**. The Goa Civil Code permits a certain form of polygamy for Hindus. The Code gives certain concessions to Catholics as well.

What is the stand of the Supreme Court?

Shah Bano Begum judgement, 1985 called for the implementation of the UCC.

The Court also called on the government to implement the UCC in the **1995 Sarla Mudgal judgement** as well as in the **Paulo Coutinho vs Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira case (2019)**.

What has the law commission said?

The paper on reform of family laws by the Law Commission stated that a **unified nation did not necessarily need uniformity**. **Secularism** could not contradict the **plurality** prevalent in the country.

UCC is **neither necessary nor desirable** at this stage. It recommended that **discriminatory practices, prejudices and stereotypes** within a particular religion and its personal laws should be studied and amended.

It suggested **certain measures in marriage and divorce that should be uniformly accepted** in the personal laws of all religions. Some of these amendments include **fixing the marriageable age for boys and girls at 18 years** so that they are married as equals, making adultery a ground for divorce for men and women and simplifying the divorce procedure. It also called for the abolition of the Hindu Undivided Family as a tax-exempt entity.

What is the stand of the government?

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijju said in Parliament this year that the government currently had no plans to set up a panel to implement the UCC. It requested the **22nd Law Commission** of India to undertake an examination of various issues relating to the same.

4. [Price regulation of UPI: Policymakers must be careful](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Price regulation of UPI: Policymakers must be careful**” published in **The Indian Express** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian economy

News- The article explains the issue of price regulation of UPI payment.

Why might a regulator want to intervene in the price setting of the payments market?

Goals of **financial inclusion** or viewing digital payments as a **public good**.

Addressing **market failures** such as the presence of dominant firms or **externalities**.

What are the challenges associated with intervention in the price setting of the payment market?

In the case of UPI, the government subsidises the operational costs of facilitating UPI transactions, which is reportedly inadequate. **In January 2022, the Payments Council of India reported** that the industry expected a loss of Rs 5,500 crore. This to be the best allocation of limited government resources.

Merchant discount rate on UPI payment is 0.25%. It is not reasonable. MDR cap is set at 0.9 percent for debit cards and an MDR of 2 per cent being proposed for RuPay credit cards on UPI. There are behavioural challenges in moving from zero MDR to a positive MDR. Anchored at a zero MDR since January 2020, merchants with thin margins may hesitate to accept an increase in MDR.

What can be the further course of action?

Consumers benefit more if the size of the merchant network accepting a payment instrument is larger. **Merchants** benefit more if many consumers use debit cards.

UPI involves payment service providers of payers and payees, the remitter and beneficiary banks as well as NPCI. The market for merchant acquisition is usually more competitive and can be left unregulated. If necessary the interchange fee between the two payment service providers can be regulated. If both markets are sufficiently competitive, regulation should focus upon establishing a floor charge.

A related example is available in the telecom industry. Facilities provision is regulated through the interconnection. Retail prices for the telecom services segment are left to the market. The next step is to determine the price level. The **optimal level** would depend on whether the regulator cares only about total welfare of all stakeholders and whether the issuing and acquiring banks make positive margins on each transaction.

In general, **benefits of regulatory intervention outweigh the costs of intervening**. The costs of intervening not only include the administrative costs, but also potential costs arising from setting the wrong interchange fee or cap.

Policymakers must collect more data on **costs of transfer, user preferences**, both merchants and consumers. They should undertake a thorough analysis of **substitutability and competition** in the digital payments sector.

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5. [EWS verdict underscores that judiciary has been a reluctant supporter of caste-based reservation](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

“EWS verdict underscores that judiciary has been a reluctant supporter of caste-based reservation” published in the **Indian Express** on **8th November 2022**.

“Economics, exclusion” published in **The Hindu** on **8th November 2022**.

“Explainer: Why EWS quota became such a tangled legal debate” published in **The Times of India** on **8th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the validity of 103rd constitutional amendment.

News: The Supreme Court has now upheld the validity of the 103rd constitutional amendment which provided 10% reservation for economically backward communities.

What are the salient features of the 103rd constitutional amendment?

Read here: [103rd constitutional amendment](#)

How courts viewed the reservation in various instances?

Right from the **Dorairajan case** (1951) to **M R Balaji** (1963) to **Indra Sawhney** (1992) to **M Nagaraj** (2006) shows that the Indian judiciary has not been quite supportive of such policies. In **Indra Sawhney** (1992), the Court even struck down a provision for 10% reservation for economically backward sections, on the ground that the Constitution does not provide for reservation solely based on economic criteria.

In many cases, the court created new conditions in the implementation of such policies by introducing several exclusions/doctrines/rules etc. For instance, **a)** Parliament had to amend the Constitution through the 77th amendment to overturn **Indra Sawhney judgment** against reservation in promotions, **b)** The 85th constitutional amendment was passed to undo the **Virpal Singh Chauhan** (1995) and **Ajit Singh** (1999) judgments that had introduced the “**catch up rule**.”

Note: Under the rule, general candidates, who are promoted after SC/ST candidates, will regain their seniority over earlier promoted SC/ST candidates.

About Courts vs Constitutional amendments

Constitutional amendments are rarely struck down. This is because the amendments can be struck down only on the narrow ground of being violative of the basic structure of the Constitution.

Since 1973, when the basic structure doctrine was propounded, over 70 amendments had been passed but only five have so far been struck down. The NJAC was the last one in 2016.

As per **M Nagaraj case (2006)**, there are two tests that courts use in any challenge on the ground of basic structure. They are **1) The Width test:** This test examines the boundaries of amending power and **2) The identity test:** In this, the Supreme Court examines whether the latest amendment alters the identity of the Constitution.

In the present case also making them invalid is difficult as EWS was virtually a fait accompli (mission accomplished). For instance, GoI had approved the creation of over two lakh seats in central universities. Rolling back such steps is easier said than done. A number of states have also begun implementing the EWS quota.

Must read: [103rd constitutional amendment present a more difficult judicial examination than usual](#)

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How does the 103rd constitutional amendment stand against basic structure according to the judgment?

According to judges,

-The **basic structure doctrine** does not bind Parliament from laying down the economic criterion. Such a basis does not impinge on the equality code of the Constitution.

-India's **affirmative action programme** so far was catering to only historical injustices and social backwardness. The extension of this benefit to others won't change the identity of the Constitution.

-In **exclusion of SC/ST/OBC categories** (from EWS quota), the court said such an exclusion was inevitable for the true operation and effect of the new policy. Also, If existing beneficiaries are not excluded, it would amount to excessive benefits and advantages.

- A number of judgments in which poverty was mentioned as a fundamental source of backwardness. Hence, the reservation on an economic basis is valid.

Read more: [Supreme Court, in a majority verdict, upholds constitutional validity of EWS quota](#)

What are the required changes in the 103rd constitutional amendment?

Opening up the EWS quota to all: The objective of economic emancipation could have been better achieved if the income-based reservation had been thrown open to all sections of society.

Reduce the income ceiling: The income ceiling perhaps can be kept at the same level as the income tax slab. In fact, the existing income criterion of ₹8 lakh a year has already been questioned by the Court in a separate case, as it is liable to result in excessive coverage of socially advanced classes.

6. [How India can contribute to the peace efforts in the Russia-Ukraine war](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"How India can contribute to the peace efforts in the Russia-Ukraine war"** published in the **Indian Express** on **8th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Relevance: About India's approach to the Ukraine crisis.

News: India's External Affairs Minister went to Russia on a bilateral visit.

What was India's approach to the Ukraine crisis so far?

The Western media and think tanks had been relentless in their criticism of the Indian approach to the Ukraine crisis as lacking moral and strategic clarity in the face of Russia's unprovoked aggression.

Though India refused to endorse Russian aggression, Indian made some crucial diplomatic contributions such as, **a)** Underlined the importance of respecting the United Nations Charter, **b)** Emphasised the inviolability of territorial sovereignty, **c)** Warned against the use of nuclear weapons, **d)** Sought to draw attention to the economic impact of the war on the "Global South", **e)** Helped to overcome issues over the grain shipment deal from Ukraine and **f)** Aided in reducing the growing risks of the war targeting the nuclear power station at Zaporizhzhia in eastern Ukraine.

What is the course of the Ukraine crisis so far?

1) The shifting politics of the war: Russia's special military operation that was to produce a quick victory in Ukraine has turned into a terrible misadventure. Russia has suffered huge military losses on the ground in manpower and equipment. **2) Russia's threat underline its weakness:** Russia currently focuses on destroying the Ukrainian cities and the occasional threat to use nuclear weapons underline Russia's weakness in the Ukraine war rather than its strength.

3) Backfire of sanctions on western countries: The western countries imposed massive sanctions on Russia after it launched a war against Ukraine to bring the Russian economy to its knees. But in reality, the sanctions have major effects on Western societies. For instance, Europe was right in the middle of the gravest conflict since the Second World War. So, there is growing political support in Europe for a quick resolution of the conflict, and **4) Liberalised stand of the US:** The US is beginning to recalibrate its current approach to the Ukraine crisis. For instance, recently, the US called for greater flexibility in Ukraine's approach to negotiations with Russia. The US said that Ukraine's hardline might intensify the "Ukraine fatigue" in the West and fracture the anti-Western coalition against Russia.

What will be the course of the Ukraine crisis in the near future and what role can India play in it?

The history of warfare tells us that room for diplomacy opens up only when there is a deadlock on the battlefield. The **onset of winter** will increasingly limit the possibilities for military operations in Ukraine and would give a chance to both sides to pause, regroup and rethink their strategy and tactics.

In that, there are many modest and practical ways in which Indian diplomacy could contribute to the peace efforts.

7. [The frontliners of the first 1,000-day window of life – on addressing child and maternal health](#)

Source- The post is based on the article **"The frontliners of the first 1,000-day window of life"** published in **The Hindu** on **8th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issue relating to poverty and hunger

News- The article explains the importance of child and maternal health to address malnutrition among children. It also explains the importance of frontline workers.

Why is addressing malnutrition important?

Optimal maternal nutrition and child feeding are the most effective set of interventions in reducing child deaths, preventing **malnutrition** and determining **cognitive development**.

Specifically, the first 1,000 days of life are critical in ensuring optimal growth, child survival and lifelong health and nutrition. In fact, 80% of brain development takes place in the first 1,000 days of life.

What are some facts related to POSHAN Abhiyan?

It is under the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD).

Its overarching goal is to improve nutritional outcomes by focusing on **capacity building, improvement of service delivery, community mobilization and participation**, use of technology, and **inter-ministerial convergent planning and review**.

There is an enhanced focus on documentation of interventions coverage in the first 1,000 days, such as registration of pregnancies, antenatal checkup, and exclusive breastfeeding.

What is the way forward to improve child health and nutrition?

Evidence-based interventions are needed to be delivered with high coverage, continuity over the first 1,000 days of life and across delivery channels, intensity, quality and equity.

The **health and nutrition status of women**, including the weight and hemoglobin level and age of conception need to be taken care of. These are important determinants of child health.

We need to improve **preconception care** before delivery. The program by MoHFW to improve preconception care in the Nashik district of Maharashtra shows its utility in improving child health.

Men play a very important role in **ensuring maternal and newborn health**. They can influence behaviors and good practices around child health within their households and communities.

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It is crucial to **empower our frontline workers** who are driving change at the last mile. There is a need for **regular skilling, supportive supervision and motivation** of frontline workers to deliver focused and quality nutrition and health services.

What is the importance of frontline workers?

All such interventions are needed to be delivered last mile by the network of the frontline work force like ASHAs, ANMs and Anganwadi Workers.

In many geographies, they are the only access point to basic nutrition and other health services. They are critical in promoting healthy practices, providing **on-ground support**, and **improving awareness**.

For example, during the Poshan Pakhwada in March 2022, in a remote village in Uttar Pradesh, the frontline workers made sustained efforts for child health and nutrition. All families with children below two were able to overcome **age-old fears and misconceptions**. It shows the importance of frontline workers.

8. [The age of minimalism in India-Pakistan ties](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The age of minimalism in India-Pakistan ties**” published in **The Hindu** on **8th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- India and its neighbourhood relations

Relevance– India-Pakistan bilateral relations

News- The article explains the new normal in India Pakistan relationship.

What is the new normal in India-Pakistan relations?

India-Pakistan relations have entered an **age of minimalism**.

There is very little bilateral contact today, even fewer expectations of a bilateral breakthrough.

‘Cold peace’ exists on the Line of Control, inside Kashmir and in the verbal exchanges between the two sides.

There is no political will for any better relationship, **grand gestures or grand outreach**. The bilateral contract is tactical, business-like and unemotional.

Several noticeable features characterize the age of minimalism in India-Pakistan relations. The interlocutors on either side appear to have adopted a clinical approach to dealing with the other side. They discuss and deal with only those issues that need urgent attention. The second feature is more focused on **conflict management, with little focus on conflict resolution**. Engagement is only for **tactical purposes**. A **larger political context** is missing.

The most important aspect of this minimalist approach is Delhi’s ability to shed its traditional hesitations about directly dealing with the **Pakistani army establishment**. The Pakistan army has taken this approach of direct engagement with the military establishment in Pakistan more seriously.

What has been the traditional character of this relationship?

The relationship is characterized by intense engagement, high value terror attacks, Indian responses, a breakdown of talks, and eventual resumption of talks; rinse and repeat.

What development took place in the relationship after 2014?

There was the invitation extended to Nawaz Sharif for Narendra Modi’s inaugural function in New Delhi which he attended.

Modi made a surprise visit to Lahore in December 2015, and there were discreet meetings between the two National Security Advisers.

In January 2016, even after Pathankot attack by a Pakistan-based terrorist organisation, India did not respond.

The Uri attack in December 2016 and surgical strike by India, practically froze the relationship.

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The February 2019 terror attack in Pulwama, and the BJP government's decisions made in August 2019 on Kashmir led to complete stalemate.

What are the reasons behind this new state of relationship?

Present relationship is the history of **missed opportunities**, failed attempts at conflict resolution, political inability to resolve conflicts due to the dual power centre in Pakistan, and the lack of **political will** on either side. These disappointments have led to a recognition in New Delhi that making comprehensive peace with Pakistan is very difficult.

Second, there is a recognition on both sides that there is no easy way to resolve their complicated conflicts and that, going forward. **Bilateral conflict resolution** may get harder due to **rising populism** fueled by online hate.

Third, India also realizes that the traditional logic in India that it should first settle its conflicts with Pakistan and then move on to addressing the bigger challenges is not paying any dividend.

Four, there is also a certain confidence in New Delhi today that it does not need to talk to Pakistan to ensure peace inside Kashmir. This growing confidence in New Delhi about its capability to defend Kashmir against Pakistan aggression and belief in **deterrence by punishment** will further moderate India's desire for conflict resolution.

Finally, both sides today are preoccupied with other **geopolitical challenges** like Pakistan with the Taliban-led Afghanistan, and India with an aggressive China on its borders.

What will be the future of this strategy?

The Current strategy of minimalist engagement with the **Pakistani deep state** is unlikely to be able to tackle the larger substantive political questions. The process may run into challenges over time or its **tactical utility** might eventually be exhausted.

9. [India's G20 presidency and food security](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**India's G20 presidency and food security**” published in **The Hindu** on **8th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issues related to poverty and hunger. Important international institutions.

News- The article explains the issue of food security across the world. It also talks about India's journey in achieving food-surplus status.

India's presidency of the G20 offers a historical opportunity for the country to address the growing challenges of food security for creating resilient and equitable food systems.

What are steps taken by India to ensure food security for its people?

India achieved equity in food through the **National Food Security Act, 2013**. It was supported by **targeted public distribution system**, the **mid-day meal scheme** and the **Integrated Child Development Services**. Today, India's food safety nets collectively reach over a billion people.

Since Independence, India initiated policy measures, **land reforms**, **public investments**, **institutional infrastructure**, **new regulatory systems**, **public support**, and intervention in agri-markets and prices and **agri-research and extension**.

India **diversified** its agriculture 1991-2015 period with greater focus on horticulture, dairy, animal husbandry, and fisheries sectors.

The Indian government provided a **swift and resilient response** to Covid pandemic. It has set a global example in alleviating hunger by bringing in the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana**.

Recently, India formally announced an export ban on wheat and rice due to decline in food production. However, it maintained a **flexible approach** to help countries like Afghanistan with humanitarian aid.

What are the global efforts to ensure food security?

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In 2021, through the **Matera Declaration**, G20 ministers recognized that **poverty alleviation**, food security, and **sustainable food systems** are key to ending hunger.

UN Food Systems Summit, held by the G20 leadership, for global **food systems transformation** created a mechanism focused on five identified action tracks:

Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all; shift to **sustainable consumption patterns**; boost **nature-positive production**; advance **equitable livelihoods**, and build **resilience** to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stress.

What is the way forward to ensure food security?

There is a need to fast-track the processes and commitments that were started through the UN Food Systems Summit.

The Indian government has institutionalised buying grains from farmers and providing protection to farmers through the MSP regime. These types of measures are needed for ensuring food security for countries across the globe.

There needs to be greater investment in agriculture; **food safety nets** for the poor and vulnerable; new ways of farming; and diversified livelihoods.

We need to expand **south-south cooperation** to share experiences on food and agriculture production.

10. [EWS quota provides social justice to the economically marginalised](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**EWS quota provides social justice to the economically marginalised**” published in the **Indian Express** on **9th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About social justice in India.

News: The Supreme Court has now upheld the validity of the 103rd constitutional amendment which provided 10% reservation for economically backward communities.

What are the salient features of the 103rd constitutional amendment?

Read here: [103rd constitutional amendment](#)

What are the Supreme Court rulings on the 103rd constitutional amendment?

Read here: [Supreme Court, in a majority verdict, upholds constitutional validity of EWS quota](#)

Why reservation and representation are still relevant and crucial for ensuring social justice in India?

Social justice has been one of the cherished goals of the makers of our Constitution. In his book *Why Socialism?* Jayaprakash Narayan writes “Socialism is not a code of personal conduct but a system of social reconstruction.” He mentions Poverty, hunger, filth, disease, and ignorance for the overwhelming many while comfort, luxury, position, and power for the select few hampers India’s social justice.

Veteran socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia was continuously vocal against the prevailing socio-economic disparities. His writings and speeches always inspired nuanced public debate on the issues of the socially and economically marginalised. Therefore, reservation and representation are crucial enabling mechanisms for millions of marginalised and dispossessed people in India. Hence, **a)** B R Ambedkar was instrumental in ensuring mechanisms for preferential treatment for socially marginalised sections in government education and employment, **b)** The EWS quota is a form of social justice for the economically marginalised.

Read more: [EWS verdict underscores that judiciary has been a reluctant supporter of caste-based reservation](#)

What are a few recent achievements in ensuring social justice in India?

a) After seven decades of independence, India witnesses the rise of a woman from a tribal community to the highest constitutional office in the country, **b)** Opening of more than 47 crore bank accounts under Jan Dhan yojana, a war has been unleashed on financial untouchability, **c)** India ensured a national bulwark to protect every citizen of our country, regardless of caste and community by providing more than 2 billion doses of Covid vaccines. From Gandhi to Deen Dayal Upadhyaya and from the principles of Sarvodaya to Antyodaya, Indian leaders always ensured the enfranchisement of the sarvahara (proletariat).

11. [The Supreme Court order on PF pensions](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“The Supreme Court order on PF pensions”** published in **The Hindu** on **9th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Relevance: About the recent court ruling on EPF Pension.

News: The Supreme Court upheld the amendments to the pension scheme made by the government in 2014. The court recognised the government's powers to amend the pension scheme prospectively or retrospectively under Section 7 of the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.

What is EPF Pension scheme, and what was the Supreme Court ruling on the 2014 amendments?

Read here: [All employees can opt for EPFO pension scheme: Supreme Court](#)

What is the reason for increased litigation after the amendment to EPF Pension scheme?

An option to increase pension is provided for in EPS-1995. For pension, 8.33% of the employer's contribution to the employee's PF account must be remitted into the pension fund on actual basic pay, dearness allowance and retaining allowance.

The request for a higher pension should be made in the form of an option exercised by both employee and employer. But due to information asymmetry, most members did not exercise this option and have been contributing to the pension fund only within a salary cap (which was revised from ₹6,500 to ₹15,000 eight years ago), and not on actual pay.

The Government amended EPS-1995 effective in 2014. The amendment provided a time limit of six months for the members, jointly with their employers, to opt for higher pension based on their actual salary.

The time limit was not known to the employees as there was no communication to them.

Even after the court set aside the time limit in R.C. Gupta case in 2016, many applications for higher pension were rejected by the EPFO citing the cut-off date.

In the present case, the court said that all employees can exercise this right within four months.

Read about: [Employees' Provident Fund Organization \(EPFO\)](#)

What will be the impact of the recent SC ruling on EPF Pensions?

a) The serving employees can opt for higher pension now, transferring the stipulated part of the employer's contribution to the pension fund, **b)** Members who contributed to the fund beyond that date but retired, would have to remit the stipulated dues into the pension fund of the EPFO, **c)** Persons retired prior to September 1, 2014 without exercising the joint option in the unamended scheme are excluded from the present four month time, **d)** The members opting for higher pension would have to contribute an additional 1.16% on salary exceeding ₹15,000 as a temporary measure for six months.

12. [During its G20 presidency, India can be a voice for developing world](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**During its G20 presidency, India can be a voice for developing world**” published in **The Indian Express** on 9th November 2022.

Syllabus: GS2- Important international institutions

Relevance– Global development agenda

News- The article explains the G20 summit that will be presided by India.

What should be the agenda of the G20 summit?

Development challenges– The developmental agenda must receive first attention.

Differences over **energy diversification** and the emerging challenges in trade and technology will need reconciliation.

Stagflation in the US, China and Europe threatens to affect the global economic outlook. Therefore, **policy coherence** in macroeconomics and trade is important. **Supply chain** related issues need urgent attention.

Digitalisation– It is important to develop a consensus on an **open source, open application programming interface (API) and an interoperable framework** for public digital platforms on which the private sector can freely innovate.

Climate change– There is a need to focus attention on climate finance. A new quantified goal beyond the existing annual \$100 billion pledge by Advanced Economies to assist developing nations in **climate change adaptation and mitigation** from 2020 to 2025 is required.

Clean energy– Clean energy related challenges should be discussed at G20. **Green hydrogen** can replace fossil fuels on an industrial scale. A viable international framework for development and international trade in GH2, together with green ammonia and green shipping is the key. The G20 could work toward an expanded and robust civilian nuclear energy cooperation framework, including for small modular reactors.

Global governance– Multilateral institutions are perceived today as **unrepresentative and ineffective**. G20 should call for a new multilateralism and reassessment of the Global Financial Order to ensure finance for **sustainable green transitions**.

What is the case for India's leadership?

India's stature is rising and has a high economic growth rate.

India's commitment to advancing **South-South cooperation** is well acknowledged. During the pandemic, India provided 250 million vaccine doses to 101 countries, apart from other medical assistance.

India has a strong commitment to **digital transformation**. The country's exemplary success with the Unified Payments Interface, Direct Benefits Transfer and Aadhar authentication in welfare schemes has growing relevance to the developing world.

The use of the CoWIN platform enhanced **vaccine accessibility and equity**. India has made a strong pitch for a TRIPS waiver to ensure equitable access to vaccine production.

The country's clean energy transition and global climate mitigation efforts demonstrate the commitment of its leaders at the highest level.

At the COP26 in Glasgow, Modi proposed Mission LiFE, which places individual behaviour at the centre of the global climate action narrative. Modi's “**Panchamrit**” **announcements** at COP26 established India as a climate leader.

India's global initiatives in recent years such as **SAGAR, blue economy, clean oceans and disaster-resilient infrastructure** have the potential to gain traction in the G20.

13. [India@75, Looking at 100: The new teacher – beyond a knowledge provider](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**India@75, Looking at 100: The new teacher – beyond a knowledge provider**” published in **The Indian Express** on **9th November 2022**.

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

News- The article explain the requirement for country to achieve excellence in the field of education

What is needed for our country in the field of education?

For global leadership, we need to tackle casteism, inequality, hatred and discrimination that remain in the contemporary **social fabric**.

We will have to educate our children and provide them **skill development** opportunities.

Many children still don't have access to **quality education**. We have to ensure that our children, growing up in villages and Tier-2 and 3 cities, do not lag behind and have the same access to opportunities.

We need to develop **digital models**, consisting of apps, digital tutorial content and virtual teachers to ensure that no child is left behind.

Our children also need vital lessons in **wealth management, financial literacy and entrepreneurship** to succeed in life.

What are the steps that are being taken to fulfill the needs of the country?

Curricular and co-curricular activities are being promoted along with an emphasis on vocational education and life skills. **Experiential learning** is facilitated through workshops and infrastructural adaptations. Integrated learning is implemented by incorporating art, music, dance and drama in curriculum transactions.

Atal Tinkering Lab, are providing opportunities to scientists to design mobile and AI applications, drone technology and Arduino-programmed robotics applications using 3D design. **Technology-integrated learning** is enabled through wi-fi-enabled zones, Hi-Tech Interactive Panels, Digital Library and Microsoft education tools.

Environmental conscientiousness is instilled through initiatives like Mission SDGs, tree plantation drives and paper recycling projects.

14. [No consensus is derailing counter-terror diplomacy](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**No consensus is derailing counter-terror diplomacy**” published in **The Hindu** on **9th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance– Global terrorism

News- The article explain the challenges related to global terrorism.

What are challenges related to terrorism?

Unequal response– Global war on terrorism has ended with US negotiation with Taliban. It was conceived by US after 9/11 terror attack. It was an unequal campaign. when India had asked for help to deal with the IC-814 hijacking; the U.S., the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan denied.

State sponsored terrorism from Pakistan was not given much attention due to USA and China friendship with Pakistan. UNSC designations of Masood Azhar and Hafiz Saeed, never mentioned their role in attacks in India. The maximum India received in terms of global cooperation was the grey listing of Pakistan by FATF.

Weak international reaction to the Taliban's takeover of Kabul, and its persecution of women and minorities in the country, demonstrate rising fatigue levels in dealing with terrorism

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Weak global response– UNSC is paralysed. It is unable to pass any meaningful resolutions that are not vetoed by Russia or western members. China has been able to block as many as five terror designations requested by India and the U.S.

UNSC Resolutions 1267, 1373 are being rendered outdated and toothless.

There is still no consensus on CCIT proposed by India. Very little progress has been made on the actual issues such as the definition of terrorism, concerns over human rights law conflicts, and the old debate on ‘freedom fighter vs terrorist’.

Emerging technologies– The next challenge comes from emerging technologies and the weaponization of a number of different mechanisms for terrorism purposes. Drones are already being used to deliver funds, drugs, weapons, ammunition and even improvised explosive devices. After the COVID-19 pandemic, worries have grown about the use of bio-warfare.

In a future that is already here, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) systems and robotic soldiers makes it even easier to perpetrate mass attacks while maintaining anonymity.

Terror financing uses bitcoins and cryptocurrency, and terror communications use social media, the dark web and even gaming centres.

Consensus over definition– There is growing global polarisation over the definition and meaning of terrorism. Russia-Ukraine war is not only shifting the focus from terrorism but is also blurring the lines on what constitutes terrorism.

What is the need of the day?

There is need for global consensus on regulating the use of these emergent technologies by all responsible states. Otherwise, it will be hard to distinguish their use from those by designated terror entities, or state-sponsored terrorism.

Globally accepted norms on how to respond to the terror attacks are needed.

What will be the future of terrorism?

The truth is global inequity, food and energy shortages, climate change and pandemics are going to be the next big drivers of strife and violence in the world

Terrorist acts of the future will grow more and more lethal. They will need fewer people to carry out the terror strikes. Their sponsors having more and more anonymity.

15. [Content moderation through co-regulation](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Content moderation through co-regulation**” published in **The Hindu** on **9th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2- Governance

Relevance: need for co-regulation intermediary law

News: The article discusses the amendment made in the IT Rules, 2021 and the need for the co-regulatory intermediary law.

What does Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 mandate and what is the recent amendment made?

IT Rules, 2021 mandate platforms to establish a **grievance redressal mechanism** to resolve user complaints within fixed timelines.

The government recently amended the rules and established **Grievance Appellate Committees (GACs)**. This will act as appeals over the platforms’ grievance redressal decisions.

This shows that the government has tightened the rules for online speech resembling Section 69A of the IT Act.

Section 69A of the IT Act provides the government with the power to issue directions for blocking public access to any information through any computer resource.

However, it will be difficult for the government to control the online speech as users have increased along with the increase in illegal and harmful content. Therefore, there is a need for the **intermediary law** that works on co-regulation.

What is an intermediary law and what kind of intermediary law is needed?

An intermediary law is where the government orders intermediaries to remove the content that does not comply with the law.

There is need for an intermediary law that empowers online platform for the moderation of the social media content under broad government guidelines. **For example**, the Digital Services Act (DSA) of the European Union (EU).

Therefore, coming up with co-regulatory intermediary law is important.

What purpose can be served by co-regulatory intermediary law?

First, it will help platforms to retain some amount of **autonomy** over their terms of service.

- It will give flexibility to the online platform to come up with **evolving standards** for harmful content. This will promote **free online speech** without the need of private censorship.

Second, co-regulation aligns government and platform interests. **For example**, platforms took measures to tackle disinformation during the pandemic which also helped the government.

Third, co-regulatory mechanisms allows the state to outsource content regulation to platforms which are better at tackling modern content moderation challenges.

What is the way ahead?

First, online platforms must follow **due process and be fair** to the user while removing content or redressing user grievances.

Second, co-regulation should give autonomy along with making online platforms **accountable**. Accountability can be increased through **algorithmic transparency** as platform often use tools to hide sensitive contents from being challenged.

Fourth, GAC should be removed because they concentrate censorship powers in the hands of the government.

16. [What Justice? – on acquitting the prisoners on death sentence](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “What Justice?” published in **Times of India** on **9th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2- Governance

Relevance: lapses in the criminal justice system

News: Supreme Court has recently acquitted three prisoners awarded death sentence by the trial court and Delhi HC in the 2012 Chawla gangrape murder case. This has raised concerns over the lapses in the criminal justice system.

Why did SC acquit the prisoners?

Lack of cross-examination: SC found that witnesses were not properly cross-examined which made the chances for wrong conclusions.

Lapses in the investigation: A test identification parade of the accused wasn't conducted despite there were some eyewitnesses to the victim's kidnapping.

Lack of proper hearing by the court: The trial court and Delhi HC accepted the police version on the accused's arrest without any supportive evidence.

Violation of procedures: The manner of discovering evidence, collecting samples and dispatching them for forensic analysis violated procedures. This created space for wrong conclusions.

The trial court and HC awarded death penalties despite such irregularities.

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What is the current position of acquittal cases in India?

NLU Delhi's Project 39A reveals 33 prisoners on death row were acquitted nationwide in 2021. This is a huge number as such acquittal raises doubt on the procedures followed by courts, wastes time of the accused and creates injustice to the victims. Therefore, a proper investigation and hearing should be done to bring justice and maintain the trust of citizens in the judiciary and police.

17. [Buckle up: The EU sustainability push will impact Indian business](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Buckle up: The EU sustainability push will impact Indian business**” published in the **mint** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Regional grouping

Relevance– EU-India trade and economic ties

News- This article explains the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive introduced by the EU and its impact on India.

What is the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive introduced by the EU?

As per this directive, larger European firms will be held accountable for human rights and environmental related violations in the global value chain.

What will be the impacts of these standards on India?

Indian companies will have to adapt their operations to meet requirements under the new EU law. If India value-chain partners falter on these obligations, large EU companies will face legal and financial costs. Our suppliers, buyers and exporters to large EU companies risk losing trust and business if they don't follow these standards.

The EU is important for India from the perspective of trade and business. The EU will play a central role in achieving the target of \$1 trillion exports by 2027-28. In 2020-21, the bilateral trade was \$88 billion. 6000 European companies in India provide 1.7 million direct jobs. Child and labour trafficking is still prevalent in India. As per 2011 census, there were over 11 million child labourers in India. Covid has led to an increase in these numbers.

How can Indian companies prepare to deal with these standards?

Companies must establish **clear and transparent contractual clauses** with all tiers of suppliers, contractors and sub-contractors for risk assessment and mitigation, disclosure and remediation for human rights violations.

Internal audit and training exercise should percolate to lower tiers of the supply chain, where maximum risk lies.

Companies can introduce technology and automation to help reduce tiers, informality and fragmentation in the supply chain.

Partnership with third party experts and the government can help integrate existing best practices in their operations.

18. [Ukraine: Peacemaker India? Jaishankar's Moscow visit was crucial. New Delhi seems more ready to facilitate dialogue](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Ukraine: Peacemaker India? Jaishankar's Moscow visit was crucial. New Delhi seems more ready to facilitate dialogue**” published in **The Times of India** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance– India and Russia relationship in context of Ukrainian conflict

News- The article explains the recent developments in Russia-Ukraine conflict. It also explains the recent development in India-Russia relationship.

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What are important aspects of Jaishankar's public statement on India-Russia bilateral relationship?

He emphasised on listing of high-level contacts, historical resilience of relationship, sharp rise in trade, multipolar and re-balanced world.

He repeated PM Modi's remarks that it was not the time for war. He made a plea for return to dialogue and diplomacy, respect for international law and support for human rights.

He said that India would be supportive of all economic, peace and stability initiatives.

What is happening in the Ukrainian conflict?

There are reports in western media about mediation on the Ukraine issue, including by India.

There is lowering in the rhetoric by major European leaders against Russia as inflation and recession loom for Europe.

There was a recent trip to China by the German chancellor.

The conflict stands today at a critical point. It can either go out of control or move towards de-escalation.

What is India's position in this conflict?

India appears willing to contribute to facilitate dialogue. Its comments in this direction are becoming more explicit. They reflect a genuine sense of concern at strategic and economic consequences of conflict.

Russia also understands the importance of relationships. Putin has spoken positively about India in recent speeches. India was one of five countries Russia choose to convey its allegation about a Ukrainian dirty bomb.

Why is resolving the dispute not easy?

Mediation is not easy in this conflict. It has deep-rooted historical origins.

Differing perception in the EU bloc makes the matter more difficult.

At the heart of conflict is security architecture in Europe, nature of transatlantic alliance and ability of parties to peacefully coexist.

There are few basic conditions for success.

What is the way forward to resolve the conflict?

India can be useful for de-escalation. It enjoys good relationships with all sides. There is a lack of leadership in Europe except France.

India equities may not be sufficient but its voice matters.

A realistic approach is needed. A coalition of two or three leaders may halt the conflict.

19. Enforcing the ban on the two-finger test

Source: The post is based on an article **"Enforcing the ban on the two-finger test"** published in **The Hindu** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2- Governance

News: Supreme court has banned on conducting the 'two-finger test' on rape or sexual assault survivors.

What was said by the SC?

The court said that two-finger test has no scientific basis as it neither proves nor disapproves allegations of rape.

Moreover, the SC in **Lillu v. State of Haryana (2013)** had also held that the two-finger test **violates the right of rape survivors**.

When was two-finger test for rape survivors started?

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It started in 2014 after the guidelines were issued from the Union Ministry of Health. It directed health providers to conduct a medical examination as per the guidelines and a copy of the report should be given to the victim.

These guidelines were circulated to hospitals. However, it seems that the instructions were not taken seriously by the doctors handling medico-legal cases.

What are the reasons behind misinterpretation of the guidelines by doctors?

Lack of awareness: There is lack of awareness amongst doctors regarding recent judgments and there is no institutional platform to share such judgments with medical practitioners. The Supreme Court has said that workshops must be conducted to spread awareness.

Lack of coordination: There is a lack of coordination and interaction between the Health Ministry and Home Ministry. These both departments get involved in any medico-legal cases.

Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS): The Health Department is not one of the pillars of the ICJS. It is an extension of the Crime and Criminal Tracking and Network Systems under the Home Ministry. This creates a gap between the two Departments.

Roll Call: It is an old system followed by police every day to share information, allocated duties and explain the orders of senior officers to the police personnel. However, this practice has lost its importance.

This is evident that cases under Section 66A of the IT Act were still registered despite being scrapped by SC. Therefore, the system of daily roll call must be revived at all police stations.

Inappropriate communication channels: The communication channels between the heads of department and the officers are never direct and straight.

What can be the course of action?

First, an **institutional mechanism** needs to be developed to ensure the proper sharing of information amongst the stakeholders in the criminal justice system.

Second, the medico-legal section of the Health Department needs to be integrated with the ICJS.

Third, training and communication channels need to be improved in the medico-legal cases.

20. [The government's push to facilitate international trade in domestic currency is a good idea](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **"The government's push to facilitate international trade in domestic currency is a good idea"** published in **The Indian Express** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2- International Relations

News: The government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are promoting international trade in Rupee instead of the US dollar.

What will be the benefits of promoting international trade in domestic currency?

Reduce depletion of forex reserves: Forex reserves of India have been continuously declining. Therefore, international trade in rupees will reduce the depletion.

Reducing dependence on dollars: International trade is generally conducted in the US dollars. However, with this effort, bilateral trading now will be done in rupee by opening a Vostro account in India. This will help in paying in rupees to the Indian exporters instead of dollars.

However, it is not a new concept. India has already done trading in rupee with Iran and it is now looking to expand this with other countries such as Sri Lanka, Maldives, Russia, etc.

However, there are few limitations to such domestic currency-based trade settlements especially with Russia.

What are the limitations of using rupee trade settlements with Russia?

Geopolitical: There are geopolitical concerns related to trade with Russia. Russia has now emerged as India's biggest crude supplier despite sanctions. This may raise geopolitical issues.

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Trade imbalance: India's import with Russia is greater than its exports. This trade imbalance would leave too much unused rupees in the Vostro account.

What can be the course of action?

Rupee pay settlement in international trade is a great move. However, India should first look at its national interest. It should focus more on exporting with improving bilateral payment settlement mechanism.

21. Reservation criteria: The EWS judgment and the shadow of Pandora

Source: The post is based on the article **"The EWS judgment and the shadow of Pandora"** published in **The Hindu** on **10th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About India's reservation criteria.

News: The Supreme Court of India has upheld the constitutional validity of granting 10% reservation to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of the upper castes.

What are the salient features of the 103rd constitutional amendment?

Read here: [103rd constitutional amendment](#)

What are the Supreme Court rulings on the 103rd constitutional amendment?

Read here: [Supreme Court, in a majority verdict, upholds constitutional validity of EWS quota](#)

How India's affirmative action programme defined reservation criteria?

The constitution inaugurated the world's oldest and farthest-reaching affirmative action programme. Such as guaranteeing Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes not only equality of opportunity but guaranteed outcomes, with reserved places in educational institutions, government jobs and seats in Parliament and the State Assemblies.

The addition of the OBC category — after the acceptance Mandal Commission recommendation — also did not change the basis on which reservation benefited: despite the "C" in "OBC" referring to "classes", the OBC lists contained castes and sub-castes.

What are the Supreme Court observation on reservation criteria?

The court while upholding the validity of the 103rd constitutional amendment said that recognition of backwardness has been associated with caste in India owing to historical conditions, particularly in Hindu society.

It also held that **a)** Caste may be a prominent factor for 'easy determination of backwardness. But new practices, methods and yardsticks have to be continuously evolved moving away from caste-centric definition of backwardness, **b)** The gates of reservation would be opened only to permit entry of the most distressed. Any other inclusions would be a serious abdication of the constitutional duty of the State, **c)** Social backwardness is a "distinct concept" that emerges from multiple circumstances ranging from the social and cultural, to economic, educational and even political.

Citing its own decision to recognise transgenders as a distinct community with justiciable rights, the Court congratulated itself for identifying a form of social backwardness that had nothing to do with caste or class.

Why does the present judgment is a death knell for caste as a factor in reservation criteria?

The judgment's proverbial can be a gateway for policy-makers. From now on the historical wrongs are no longer sufficient grounds for government benefits. New methods have to be developed to identify the backwardness of a group of people.

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But the court does not define the criteria to apply. One could imagine a list of differently-weighted categories, ranging from income, family situation, disability, education level, etc.

22. [Could India be a mediator between Russia and Ukraine?](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Could India be a mediator between Russia and Ukraine?**” published in **The Indian Express** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance: Russia- Ukraine conflict

News- The article explains the scope for India’s role in mediating between Russia and Ukraine.

What has been the stance of India on the Ukraine issue?

India has strongly advocated for dialogue and diplomacy from the beginning of war. It has called for peace, respect for international law and support for the UN charter.

This has been India’s stance since the beginning of the war. However, the Indian position articulated by Jaishankar had a new element. He positioned India’s request in the context of the “Global South”.

Prime Minister Modi conveyed to President Putin in Samarkand in September that this is not an era of war. The global economy is simply too inter-dependent for a significant conflict anywhere. The Global South is feeling this pain very acutely.

Which events show the scope for mediation role by India?

Prime Minister Modi has had at least five phone conversations with President Vladimir Putin and at least three phone calls with Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. It indicates that New Delhi has communication channels with both sides.

Mexico had suggested that Modi, Pope Francis and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres mediate the Russia-Ukraine crisis, but there has been no progress on the proposal.

India is concerned over the rising oil price amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict. In Moscow, he offered help with issues including food grains and fertiliser shipments, and support for any initiative that de-risks the global economy.

What is the importance of strong bilateral ties with Russia?

The most important aspect of relations is energy issues. India is buying Russian oil at discounted prices even when there is a threat of western sanctions.

India has strategic stakes in defence ties with Russia.

A closer Russia-China strategic embrace is detrimental to India’s interests, given the US-China rivalry.

India might become a frontline state in the 21st century rivalry between China and America. In this context, India needs Moscow to keep its defence supplies going strongly with India, and not share sensitive technologies with China.

Putin has said that Russia does not transfer to any other country the military technologies shared with India. This is an assurance that India must constantly verify in respect of the weaponry and technologies that Moscow supplies to Beijing.

23. [Should Chief Ministers have a say in the appointment of Governors?](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Should Chief Ministers have a say in the appointment of Governors?**” published in **The Hindu** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Functioning of executive and issues related to federalism

News- The article explains the mechanisms and powers of office of Governor.

What are the roles and responsibilities of a Governor?

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The post of Governor is actually inherited from the past. The Mughals had Governors in order to be able to reach out to vast territories of the empire. The British also had Governors to be able to govern India.

The Governor has administrative and political functions to perform. These include addressing the joint session of the Assembly and the Budget session, and signing Bills that have been passed by the Assembly.

We are a federal country. So, there is a need to ensure unity and some level of uniformity across the Union. The post of Governor as a link between the Centre and the States.

Why did the Sarkaria Commission recommend that CM should be consulted in appointment of Governors?

Many times, Governors take decisions as directed by the Union Home Ministry and the Central government. They have shown little regard for the Assembly or the State and changed governments at their will.

The Governor is supposed to be an independent, non-partisan person. He/she is supposed to keep the interests of the State in mind. The relationship between the Governor and the Chief Minister is what determines smooth functioning.

Should the CM be consulted in the appointment of the Governor?

Governors have to make independent decisions. These are deciding a government, the numbers, or the vote of confidence. The Governor at times has to go against the will of the Chief Minister. The Governor has to be independent to function in a non-partisan manner. He should not be beholden to the ruling party or to the Chief Minister.

There should be general consultation. The opinion of the Chief Minister would go a long way in helping make the functioning of the Governor in a State more effective.

What about the NCRWC suggestion for a committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chief Minister of the State concerned to select a Governor?

The total composition of the committee is of the ruling party at the Centre. It should be the Vice-President, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Leader of the Opposition, and maybe the Chief Minister of the State.

We have no criteria, no minimum qualifications laid out for a Governor. These are often retirement perks or rewards for loyalty to a particular party. Governors cannot be called before a court of law. These are things which have to be kept in mind. The appointment of Governors cannot be according to the whims and fancies of the Prime Minister.

What should be the way forward for the Governor?

Therefore, there has to be cooperation and coordination between the State government and the Governor, irrespective of their political loyalties.

The majority and vote of confidence has to be decided on the floor of the House.

The Governor is supposed to be a friend, philosopher and guide. He should help from the back for sorting out issues and resolving disputes, even between political parties. The Governor should also advise the Centre on what is happening and what needs to be done.

24. [Content slot: On guidelines for television channels](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

“Content slot: On guidelines for television channels” published in **The Hindu** on **11th November 2022**.

“It’s pointless pushing TV to serve national causes” published in the **Livemint** on **11th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About mandatorily broadcasting content.

News: Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the “Guidelines for Uplinking and Downlinking of Television Channels in India, 2022”. Under this, the channels would have to mandatorily broadcast content on themes of national importance and socially relevant issues for at least 30 minutes every day.

What are the key provisions of the guidelines?

Read here: [Centre devises new guidelines for TV channels; broadcast of socially relevant topics compulsory](#)

Why mandatorily broadcasting content is justified?

The idea of such a mandate has been around since 2008 because,

a) According to the government, airwaves and frequencies are public property and need to be used in the best interest of society. So, all channels (except foreign channels) will have to air content for the service of the public.

b) According to a FICCI-EY report, India’s television subscriptions are estimated to add another 42 million by 2025 from 178 million in 2021. Under these circumstances, public service broadcast is not a bad idea in a diverse country with myriad issues.

What are the concerns associated with mandatorily broadcasting content?

Creates room for further interference: The guidelines says “the Central Government may, from time to time, issue a general advisory to the channels for telecast of content in the national interest, and the channel shall comply with the same”. This suggests that the centre will keep an eye on the media.

Issues related to funding: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India in 2008 suggested a public service obligation. The Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry has on-boarded it. But, there is still no clarity on compensation norms and who will fund the bill for the public service component on TV. This issue is still persistent with the recent guidelines also.

News channels could claim the first right to protest: The air-time devoted to this exercise can easily exceed 30 minutes. So, news channels might protest the mandatory move.

So, the government has to drop its diktat of mandatorily broadcasting content.

25. [Autonomy oils the wheels of higher education excellence](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Autonomy oils the wheels of higher education excellence”** published in **The Hindu** on **12th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: Higher education

News- The article explains the autonomy related issues with Indian universities.

What are some facts associated with ranking of Indian universities?

The 2023 edition of the **QS world university ranking** includes only three of India’s higher educational institutions amongst the top 200 of the world. Another three are counted among the top 300 whereas two more in the top 400.

The *Times Higher Education Ranking* places only one Indian institution among the top 400 of the world. Barring one of the most eminent public-funded deemed universities of the country, all the rest are Institutions of National Importance.

What are issues related to autonomy of universities in India?

Best universities in the world enjoy a great degree of **academic, administrative and financial autonomy**. Autonomy is regarded as a necessary and sufficient condition to attain excellence. Institutes of national importance in India are not only better funded but also generally enjoy a greater degree of autonomy than universities. They fall outside the regulatory purview of the UGC and the AICTE.

Universities are funded through the University Grants Commission. They are all subject to a very **strict regulatory regime**. They Abide by UGC regulations and AICTE guidelines in almost all aspects of their functioning be it faculty recruitment, student admission and the award of degrees. In many cases, they are micro-managed by the regulatory authorities.

Central universities in the country are also ranked on the basis of their **obedience to regulatory compliances**. Even in the academic domain, many of them are comfortable in publicly stating that they have adopted the model curricula, pedagogy and syllabi prescribed by the regulatory bodies.

What shows the importance of autonomy?

The best universities in the world are continuously sensitised about the importance of their autonomy and are trained and enabled to make their own decisions. The European University Association prescribes a **‘university autonomy tool’** that lets each member university compare its level of autonomy with the other European higher education systems across all member countries. A large number of commissions and committees, including the national policies on education have highlighted the need for higher education autonomy.

Higher learning centres in ancient India enjoyed no less academic, administrative and financial autonomy than the most autonomous universities in the world today.

What National Education Policy, 2020 says about autonomy?

The new education policy seeks to completely overhaul the higher education system. To attain this objective, it repeatedly emphasises the need for institutional autonomy.

The policy considers a lack of autonomy as one of the major problems of higher education. It promises to ensure faculty and institutional autonomy through a highly independent and empowered board of management which would be vested with academic and administrative autonomy.

It argues for a **‘light but tight’ regulatory framework** and insists that the new regulatory regime would foster a culture of empowerment. It says that by relying on a robust system of accreditation, all higher education institutions would gradually gain full academic and administrative autonomy.

But it depends on implementation of policy.

26. Research first: On the UGC move on research papers by Ph.D. scholars

Source– The post is based on the article **“Research first: On the UGC move on research papers by Ph.D. scholars”** published in **The Hindu** on 12th November 2022.

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

News- The article explains the recent move by UGC for removing the mandatory requirement of publishing papers for Ph.D. students.

What is the rationale behind this move?

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This move is aimed at stemming the unhealthy practice of many scholars **paying substandard, predatory journals to publish** their papers without sufficient review. It has weakened the quality of India's doctoral education.

The majority of doctoral students publish their papers in such journals. They do not go through the more time-consuming process of submitting their drafts to reputed journals, awaiting review and revising. **Insufficiency of scholarship and stipends** also compels the students to do so.

The removal of a compulsory requirement is also **in line with global regulatory standards**.

The removal of the mandatory requirement is also an **acknowledgement of the diversity in academic disciplines**. In some branches of the humanities, the publication of a monograph is a more accepted method of communicating with academic peers than journal papers.

UGC hopes that by removing the mandatory requirement, it can help create a more conducive atmosphere for self-motivated research by students and universities.

What are the concerns related to this step of UGC?

Publishing papers is certainly **considered essential** for any top researcher. The UGC has also emphasised that it would be **advisable for scholars to publish papers in high-quality journals** for their own sake. It would **add value to their PhD** for any post-doctoral opportunities.

The removal of mandatory requirements may **result in a further dilution of quality**, as the worth of a researcher and a university is judged on the basis of papers published and cited. Funding is also dependent on such benchmarks.

What is the way forward?

To encourage students to publish their paper in mandatory journals, put the onus on university research advisory council and doctoral supervisors.

Higher levels of funding are urgently needed to ensure that the UGC's move does not backfire.

27. [In EWS verdict, a discrimination antithetical to equality](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"In EWS verdict, a discrimination antithetical to equality"** published in **The Hindu** on **12th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About India's reservation criteria.

News: The Supreme Court of India in **Janhit Abhiyan vs Union of India case** upheld the constitutional validity of granting 10% reservation to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of the upper castes.

What are the salient features of the 103rd constitutional amendment?

Read here: [103rd constitutional amendment](#)

What are the Supreme Court rulings on the 103rd constitutional amendment?

Read here: [Supreme Court, in a majority verdict, upholds constitutional validity of EWS quota](#)

Can the state provide reservations and alter the reservation criteria?

The 103rd amendment provides reservation exclusively on economic grounds. The Constitution demands equality, but it does not tether Parliament to any precise version of the concept.

So State could plausibly be acting within its power in deciding that a classification resting solely on economic status furthers substantive equality. Further, the inclusion of an additional layer of affirmative action does not by itself rise to the level of a basic structure violation.

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What will be the impact of the recent judgement?

Reservations permitted for SC, ST and OBCs are intrinsic to the guarantee of equality. This position has been regarded as an axiom of constitutional law at least since the five-judge Bench ruling in the State of Kerala vs N.M. Thomas (1975).

This is because they together constitute 82% of the country's population. By reversing the existing logic of affirmative action the court opened the Pandora's box of more such reservation requests. This in the long run creates a form of discrimination that is antithetical to what equality truly demands.

28. [India & EU: Standard deviations](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"India & EU: Standard deviations"** published in the **Business Standard** on **12th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) rules.

News: Recently, the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) has said that Indian clearing corporations will not be recognised as such in Europe because "no cooperation arrangements" could be signed between ESMA and the Indian regulators. The ESMA regulations could kick in from April 2023, unless the parties to the negotiations agree to extend the deadline. What are the reasons behind the ESMA rules?

Negotiations have been ongoing since 2017 to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) under which ESMA can inspect the six clearing corporations that operate under RBI and SEBI licences. ESMA also demands six clearing corporations pay a licence fee of €50,000 each per year, to join the ESMA certified panel.

Under the proposed ESMA rules, any investor based in Europe will not be able to use India's clearing house mechanism to invest in government bonds. Instead, the investor will have to deploy his/her own capital as a counterparty to guarantee the trade, making it a costly exercise. What was the view of Indian regulators on ESMA decision?

The RBI and SEBI officials blame ESMA for insisting on clauses that supposedly dilute Indian sovereign rights on domestic financial markets. This is because both Japan and the US have obtained the rights under which these checks will take place only with prior authorisation from the RBI or SEBI.

What are the potential impacts of ESMA rules?

a) This can be considered a precursor of similar controversies in other sectors as Europe tries to tighten standards across all types of markets, such as carbon credit, green hydrogen and data.

b) While the ESMA step affects all financial markets, the primary impact will be on government bonds. The decision encouraged FTSE Russell and other global fund managers to drop plans to include Indian government and public sector bond papers in their index funds.

Indian entities such as Clearing Corporation of India, Indian Clearing Corporation Limited and NSE Clearing Limited are considered puny – the difference in size is almost 10 times.

What are the other areas in which India is unwilling to comply with European standards?

European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): India does not recognise it and insists it will set its own data protection standards under a law to be passed by Parliament. The Minister of electronics and IT has said that this is because India "has a thriving ecosystem of innovators".

Management of crypto assets: The EU this year has brought issuers and crypto asset service providers under a regulatory framework for the first time. But India has refused to accept the domain of private crypto and considers labelling them is equivalent to the lottery.

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Global corporation tax: India levies a 2% DST on revenues generated from digital services offered in India. So, India opposed the so-called Pillar One that entails the removal of the Digital Services Taxes.

European Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: It is essentially a carbon tax coming into force in 2023. It will first apply to any imports of steel, cement, aluminium, and fertilisers from third countries into the EU. India's G20 Sherpa has described the upcoming carbon tax as the biggest challenge for Indian exporters.

Euro New Car Assessment Programme: Recently the European Commission proposed new standards to reduce air pollution from new motor vehicles.

But, India has pushed the road transport and highways ministry to develop comparable Indian standards instead of following the European ones.

How this will impact India-EU free trade agreement?

EU trade agreements have **provisions for mutual recognition of standards**. Europe argues that these new international standards give its industry and businesses the advantage to establish worldwide partnerships and sell their products or services globally.

On the other hand, India views these as **non-tariff barriers**. As those standards offer Europe an advantage to overcome the disadvantage of low costs elsewhere.

29. [More judges please: Till collegium's there GoI must clear names fast](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**More judges please: Till collegium's there GoI must clear names fast**" published in **The Times of India** on **12th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the delay in judicial appointments.

News: The Supreme Court issued notice to the Union law secretary over the delay in accepting the collegium-cleared judge appointments.

What are the concerns of the Judiciary and Government on Judicial appointments?

Recently, the Union law minister has criticised the collegium system.

The judges criticise the Centre for neither appointing nor communicating its reservations on the names reiterated by the collegium. The court observed that the collegium ensures judicial independence.

The collegium system can do with more transparency and diversity in appointments. But, neither has GoI attempted to revive the [National Judicial Appointments Commission](#) since 2015, nor has SC taken meaningful, proactive steps towards fostering transparency or diversity.

Read more: [The Court and the problem with its collegium](#)

What should be done to ensure proper Judicial appointments in time?

a) There must be no inordinate delays in appointing judges cleared by the body – GoI should object only in rare cases and do so quickly, **b)** The Centre should to enact an NJAC. But until then, both the collegium and GoI must adhere to set timelines in clearing Judicial appointments. There are seven vacancies in SC and 335 in HCs. Each vacancy filled could have shrunk their combined pendency burden of 60 lakh cases by hundreds of cases every month. So, the court and government should understand that the delays are hurting ordinary litigants.

30. [A court of the future: There is need to finetune mechanisms of accountability within judiciary](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**A court of the future: There is need to finetune mechanisms of accountability within judiciary**” published in the **Indian Express** on **12th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About accountability within the judiciary.

News: The Supreme Court need some course corrections to ensure accountability within the judiciary.

Why does the SC need accountability within the judiciary?

This is because **a)** The Supreme Court sits in final judgment over decisions not only of the high courts in the states and UTs but also over a hundred tribunals functioning throughout India, **b)** The verdicts of the Supreme Court, including constitutional amendments, is binding on all other courts and authorities in the country (Article 141), and **c)** There is virtually no area of legislative or executive activity which is beyond the highest court’s scrutiny.

Read more: [The Court and the problem with its collegium](#)

How can the Supreme Court ensure accountability within the judiciary?

The judiciary as an institution needs to preserve its independence. To do that the court must strive to maintain the confidence of the public in the established courts.

Enacting a law like the American model: In the United States, under the Judicial Councils Act, 1980, the independence of the judiciary has been undertaken by the judges. The Act protects the higher judiciary from some of its own members who have gone wrong.

The Act confers powers on bodies comprised of judges to take such action against a federal judge “as is appropriate, short of removal.” Indian citizens need the reassurance of a system of judicial accountability. This can be done by separate legislation along the lines of the US model.

Create a case management blue print: Innumerable reports of Law Commissions focussed on all aspects of judicial governance. But due to a lack of a case management plan, high courts are having the largest number of roadblocks and delays.

In the **Salem Advocate Bar Association case**, the justices had requested the high courts to implement a detailed case management blueprint. The top court has to come up with such a blueprint.

Ensure proper judicial governance:

-The Supreme Court must be entrusted with direct responsibility for the functioning of the high courts. Only then **a)** The SC be an effective apex court, **b)** The Supreme Court can be made answerable for judicial governance for the entire country.

-All judges who are constitutionally entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the rights of citizens must also be seen to be persons of righteousness. So, they must make annual financial disclosure statements publicly like the judges in the US.

Be a role model institute: Judges must set an example for ministers, central and state, for members of Parliament and of state legislatures, and for all high officials of government.

General Studies Paper – 3

General Studies - 3

1. [About winter pollution in Delhi: Severe policy lapse](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles “**Severe policy lapse-Pollution control needs a holistic approach**” published in the **Business Standard** on **7th November 2022**. “**What will finally save us from toxic air isn’t democracy**” published in the **Livemint** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environmental pollution and degradation.

Relevance: About winter pollution in Delhi.

News: The winter pollution in Delhi is devastating. North India’s vehicular, industrial and agricultural pollution does not blow away and instead fills the lungs of hundreds of millions, damaging many in irreparable ways.

What is the reason for winter pollution in Delhi?

Apart from stubble burning, climatic factors like the temperature dropping and the wind speed slowing are also reasonable. Instead of dissipating the pollutants, they make them hang in the air near the surface in the form of smog.

A private study by the Centre for Science and Environment confirms, local sources of pollution, especially vehicular emissions, constituted 51 per cent of the PM2.5 content of the air. The contribution of other activities was relatively small — about 11% by industrial units, 13% by household activities, 7% by construction work, 5% by the burning of garbage and other wastes, 4% by road dust, and the rest by other factors.

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

How can North India solve winter pollution in Delhi?

a) Self-interests of politicians: The governments need to increase awareness around the long effects of smog on weak lungs.

b) Farsighted influential stands: The problem of pollution does not lie in checking stubble burning alone. Curbing the local sources of pollutants is equally important. This can be done by, -Experts suggest that an improvement in the public transport services in the metropolis, with a well-planned integration of metro rail and bus services, and greater use of non-polluting means of travel like electric vehicles are essential. These steps should be incorporated.

-The traffic-control system also needs to be spruced up to avoid traffic snarls and jams on the roads, which aggravate air pollution.

-Manually sweeping roads and burning tree leaves and other wastes should be strictly barred at all times of the year.

c) Consider the issue as nationalism of shame: Instead of indulging in blame games, the governments of the states concerned need to discuss joint strategies to combat this calamity. Unless a holistic approach is adopted to curb all sources of pollution simultaneously, winter pollution in Delhi is hard to surmount.

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

2. [New hope for malaria vaccine: the science, challenges, opportunity](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**New hope for malaria vaccine: the science, challenges, opportunity**” published in the **Indian Express** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Relevance: About Malaria vaccines and India’s vaccine research.

News: Malaria kills nearly 600,000 people every year, the majority of whom are children under the age of five in sub-Saharan Africa. The need to develop an effective vaccine against the disease has long been a top priority.

What are the promising breakthroughs in Malaria vaccines?

RTS,S/AS01 (RTS.S): Its trade name “Mosquirix” was endorsed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) recently.

Read here: [What is Mosquirix, the first malaria vaccine to get the WHO’s backing?](#)

Although RTS,S/AS01 has modest efficacy and reduces severe malaria cases by only about 30% after four doses given to children under age 5, it still provides significant public health benefits and could save thousands of lives every year.

However, RTS,S/AS01 fails to meet the WHO’s own benchmark for malaria vaccine efficacy of 75 per cent set in 2015.

R21/Matrix M: It is a modified version of Mosquirix and has been developed by researchers at the University of Oxford.

Read here: [R21/Matrix M: a new malaria vaccine](#)

This vaccine demonstrated an efficacy of 77% in phase 1 and 2 trials among 450 children in Burkina Faso. In early September 2022, a booster dose of R21/Matrix-M showed a high efficacy of 80%.

Phase 3 trials of R21 are already underway in four African countries.

What are the commonalities of both Malaria vaccines?

RTS,S and R21 both contain the **same part of a major protein** that is found on the surface of the liver stage parasite, called **sporozoite**.

Both contain hepatitis B virus surface antigen (HBsAg), a protein that has the ability to self-assemble and that helps in the formation of virus-like particles of the CSP antigen fused with it.

What are the differences between both Malaria vaccines?

The amount of the HBsAg: RTS,S has about 20 per cent of the fusion protein, with the remaining 80 per cent made up of HBsAg antigen, produced separately.

R21, on the other hand, is made up entirely of the CSP fusion protein moieties, resulting in much higher proportion of CSP antigen displayed on the virus-like particle surface, which significantly raises its exposure to the immune system of the host.

Read more: [Malaria Vaccine and India’s Malaria burden – Explained, pointwise](#)

Why has India not been more successful in developing the Malaria vaccine and other vaccines?

Basic malaria research in India has been robust and there are well established malaria research and control centres across the country. Despite that, India is not able to develop vaccines because,

a) There is a major gap in the establishment of safe and scientifically robust control human infection models in India for diseases like malaria or influenza, b) **Absent of Controlled Human Malaria Infection (CHMI) model:** Scientists have carried out phase 1 safety trials of two experimental blood-stage malaria vaccines developed and produced in the country. But further development of these vaccines has been a challenge in the absence of the CHMI model in India.

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What needs to be done to promote vaccine research in India?

The government should provide **long-term continuous funding**. Further, **regulatory and logistic processes** need to be better coordinated to assist scientists in the development of novel vaccines against infectious diseases.

India should **capitalise** on the highly successful and deeply committed **vaccine-producing biopharma industry and a strong scientific base**. This will make India in leading the world in developing and producing vaccines.

3. [About the proposed telecom bill: Do not let a licence raj for apps set India back](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“Do not let a licence raj for apps set India back”** published in **Livemint** on **7th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the proposed telecom bill

News: India's proposed telecom bill could transform how the internet is used in India.
About the proposed telecom bill

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

What are the concerns associated with the proposed telecom bill?

Definition of telecommunication services: This includes almost every aspect of the present online experience instead of limited services.

Government's monopoly: The government claims a default monopoly over all such services in India, with private players needing a licence to operate, just as telecom firms do. So Gmail, WhatsApp and Zoom, among other apps on handsets, would suddenly need a government nod.

Impact right to free expression: The internet is not owned by any state. Nor do apps use the state-allotted spectrum to work. But the licensing would imply a new level of control on the users might right to free expression.

Encompassing licence raj: Licensing would hand the state arbitrary authority over market entry. This tends to promote toll collection and suffocate innovation.

Only a maximalist ownership role of the state would allow state overlordship of chat enablers. This is an approach taken by colonial and communist regimes, not democratic administrations that prioritize business and social freedom.

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

What needs to be done?

The Supreme Court has held privacy to be part of fundamental rights, which makes it essential to our democratic freedoms. The draft telecom bill violates them in both commercial sense and Constitutional wisdom. Parliament must not enact it in its current form.

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

4. [Tap Diaspora Dollars ... Now – on forex reserve issue](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“Tap Diaspora Dollars ... Now”** published in **The Times of India** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Economic Development

News: India's economy is currently facing problems due to the increasing Current Account Deficit (CAD), declining forex reserves, inflation amongst others.

What are the concerns for Indian economy?

US Federal Reserve: The monetary policy adopted by the US Fed Reserve has impacted worldwide currencies including the rupee in India.

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Forex Reserves: India's forex reserves have fallen over \$100 bn this year because India is spending its reserves to control the volatility of the rupee in the currency market. Even the value of other currencies included in the forex reserves have depreciated against dollar.

Slowdown in exports: Exports have slowed down in India due to the slow economic growth in the West as it is the largest export market for India.

What steps can be taken by India to control the volatility of the rupee?

First, it can leave rupee to depreciate totally depending on the market forces. However, this may increase inflation and disrupt businesses.

Second, RBI can raise interest rates higher and faster. However, they may affect the borrowers of loans and will impact the people with low incomes.

Third, India can raise a large amount of dollars through a special focused program. This would increase its forex reserves and control the rupee volatility. India has used this program in the past.

How has India raised dollar in the past through different programs?

India has previously raised dollars through various programs from the Indian diaspora.

1. **a)** the first time India brought dollars in 1998 due to the sanction imposed on it. It raised **Resurgent India Bonds**, **b)** the second time was in 2000 when rupee depreciated. It was tackled by issuing **India Millennium Deposits**, **c)** the third time was in 2013 when rupee witnessed a freefall. RBI raised \$35 bn through a special **FCNR deposit scheme**.

However, raising dollars might be expensive but it shows India's potential to tackle the economic situation and trust of India's diaspora on India.

It also shows that India does not have funding constraints for its external liabilities and it doesn't need to depend on foreign investment to finance its public debt.

What can be the course of action?

India's domestic economic conditions are better than the past three time when it raised dollars. Therefore, India should consider raising dollars through various programs to control the volatility of the rupee and increase its forex reserves.

5. [Helicopter accidents in October point to broader concerns](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Helicopter accidents in October point to broader concerns**" published in **The Hindu** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Infrastructure

Relevance: helicopter accidents In India

News: There has been increase in the helicopter accidents in India. According to a report, between 1990 and 2019, more than 150 people lost their lives in accidents of commercial helicopters.

What are the reasons behind helicopter accidents?

There are many reasons behind the accidents such as **pilot error, bad weather, and hitting of the cables**.

These cables are used by locals in mountains to transport goods. They are not marked by warning signs and are not visible especially in the poor weather conditions.

However, the number of accidents of helicopter and flights have decreased in the last decade compared to the earlier periods. Moreover, there also concerns with the **Indian aviation standards**.

What are the concerns with the Indian aviation standards?

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According to an audit conducted on eight parameters, India scored above the world-average in six of the eight parameters but lagged behind in two – **personnel licensing and training, and civil aviation organization**.

These two parameters require procedures to ensure that personnel and organizations meet the established requirements before they are licensed to fly.

Therefore, a poor score in the licensing regime and organizational processes along with pilot errors raise deeper concerns about Indian aviation.

6. [What the chip industry and the petroleum sector have in common](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“What the chip industry and the petroleum sector have in common”** published in **The Indian Express** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

News- The article explains the similarities between the petroleum and semiconductor industry.

What are similarities between the petroleum industry and semiconductor industry?

Both industries are dominated by a handful of countries and corporations. Both are **capital intensive and cyclical**. Both sit at the centre of **interdependent global relations**. Both are in the **cross hairs of international geopolitics** and are characterised by **technological dynamism**.

Domination by few– The supply of petroleum is dominated by the OPEC and mega-sized public and private multinational companies, often referred to as the **“super majors”**.

The US is the most powerful player. Every chip produced in the world has a direct or indirect connection with the country. The software for chips is provided by three US based companies.

Samsung and Hynix, which together produce 44% of the world’s memory chips. TSMC, fabricates 37% of the world’s logic chips and 92% of the most advanced chips. Both companies are Korean and Taiwanese respectively. Both are protected by the US military security blanket.

Geopolitics– Geopolitics is at the core of both industries. Every oil import dependent country has reached to the Middle East to secure access to petroleum. At times, they have weaponized their efforts to safeguard this objective. The Saudi embargo of exports to the pro-Israeli Western world in 1973; the US intervention in Iraq in 2003 and the current cutback of Russian gas to Europe are three examples of this phenomena.

Semiconductors have also been the consequence of the **“technology Cold War”** between the US and China. The US has imposed sanctions on the **physical and intellectual export** of chip technology to China. President Xi has called for a **“full scale assault”** to **“rejuvenate” China**.

Global scale– Both petroleum and semiconductor chips have a **global footprint**. Petroleum is tradable across the world. Oil and gas prices are **cyclical**. They reflect the **capital intensity** and long lead times of the **investment cycle**.

The value chain of semiconductors straddles the globe. Investment to create part or all of this value chain runs into billions and the returns depend on engineering precision and technical talent.

What is the case for India?

India has struggled for more than five decades to reduce its dependence on external sources of petroleum supply. It has not been successful. India’s import dependence is now more than 80 per cent.

India has recently embarked on a journey to develop domestic chip fabrication facilities.. There are two lessons they should internalise from historical experience-

One, chip nationalism will be economically costly and could be technologically regressive. They should be cautious about decoupling from the **international supply chain**.

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Two, government support should be limited to financial support, nimble cooperation, and the creation of an **innovative ecosystem**. **Bureaucratic intervention** should be minimal.

7. [The questions that CoP-27 must answer to ensure climate justice](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The questions that CoP-27 must answer to ensure climate justice**” published in **Live Mint** on **8th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Climate Change

News: The 2022 United Nations Conference on Climate Change also known as CoP-27 (the UN’s 27th Conference of the Parties) has begun. It will discuss the issue of climate change and measures to mitigate it.

What are the reasons behind climate change?

Climate change is caused by concentration of greenhouse gases from human activity.

The current atmospheric concentration of CO₂ is mostly a result of past emissions from the developed countries. They argue that there was insufficient awareness or scientific knowledge about the harmful effects of burning fossil fuels.

Therefore, they **shouldn’t be held accountable** for it and focus should be made on future actions to control climate change. However, it is a misleading statement as past and future actions go hand in hand.

How can developed countries help other emerging countries in reducing the impact on climate?

First, developed countries should **provide creative, constructive and fair support** to the emerging countries to move from fossil fuel-based energy emission to renewables.

Second, developed countries should provide required **financial resources** on affordable terms to developing countries to recover from the impact of climate change and adapt themselves to mitigate future challenges.

Third, developed countries should focus on helping developing countries moving to non-fossil fuel-based energy. Some of the ways of providing resources are – supporting labour employed in the fossil fuel-based industries, skilling them for the jobs for green economy, providing rare earths and technology, etc.

What can be the course of action?

Efforts are needed from both developed countries and developing countries to mitigate climate change.

Developed countries can focus on changing lifestyles that impact the climate least whereas developing countries can focus on adopting non fossil fuel-based technologies.

Therefore, a proper balance is required between mitigating the past emission and adopting technologies for future.

8. [Welcome write-off: Acknowledging failure of 116 projects is the first step](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Welcome write-off: Acknowledging failure of 116 projects is the first step**” published in **Business Standard** on **8th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Infrastructure

News: A report from the NITI Aayog has recommended the removal of 116 infrastructure projects from the overall project-monitoring system.

These public funded projects have not been completed and have been delayed due to various reasons.

What are the reasons behind the delaying of the projects?

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Land acquisition – This is one of the major problems faced by any infrastructure projects. Land acquisition with private parties is not the only problem, at times there are also disputes between the Union and state governments over land issues.

Share of Funds: There have been tussles between the central and state government over sharing the fund on infrastructure projects. State governments have stepped behind funding the projects which has caused delay in those projects.

Environmental clearances –These have also caused delay in the projects.

Other reasons behind the delay of the projects are **red tape, internal disagreements, etc.**

What is the way forward?

Land acquisition problems have been reduced from the past due to the increasing financialisation of savings, greater financial literacy, and the spread of bank accounts.

However, there is a need that the government should come up with a proper **compensatory mechanism** that can help land acquisition and help to gain trust of the landowners.

9. [Regulation could help ONDC counter an e-com duopoly](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Regulation could help ONDC counter an e-com duopoly**” published in the **mint** on **8th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance– E-commerce

News- The article explains the concept of Open Network for Digital Commerce proposed by the government to counter the platform power of e-commerce majors.

What is ONDC?

It will **decentralise** e-commerce. It will allow buyers and sellers to transact via multiple apps without being locked into a specific platform.

Interoperability will foster competition, lower e-commerce entry barriers and reduce the ability of larger platforms to charge exorbitant commissions from sellers.

It will institute an “**issue and grievance management**” structure . It will also institute the reputation profile of all network participants.

What are the issues with ONDC?

Big platforms have **technological capability**. They provide consistent management of **customer satisfaction** and **dispute resolution**. ONDC needs to ensure it.

ONDC runs into conceptual problems from an **operational and privacy perspective**. Different entities in a transaction means disaggregated responsibility.

The issue of reputation is problematic. All customers, sellers and logistics providers must be visible through all buyer and seller sides apps. It requires badging of all network participants. This badging will have to be centralised and publicly available. It has privacy implications.

What is the way forward?

There is a need for regulations to manage **conflict of interest, mandating interoperability and data portability**.

Privacy issues can be solved by limiting the badging to sellers. But it will raise overhead costs.

10. [The irrelevance of regional rural banks](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The irrelevance of regional rural banks**” published in the **Business Standard** on **9th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy.

Relevance: About regional rural banks (RRBs).

News: Several of the regional rural banks (RRBs), are now facing an existential crisis due to dwindling business and soaring bad assets.

About the present status of RRBs

The RRBs set up in the mid-1970s to provide financial services to agricultural workers and labourers. Many of them have either collapsed or got merged with their parent banks.

The overall business of rural financial institutions has generally gone up in the last decade. But the performance of RRBs does not go up. For instance, **a)** The number of RRBs has nearly halved from 82 to 43, **b)** RRBs non-performing assets have more than doubled from 2.05% to 4.68%, **c)** The volume of the credit disbursed by the RRBs, on the other hand, has shrunk from 13% to 11%. But the share of commercial banks in agricultural loans increased from 65% in 2010-11 to 76% in 2021-22.

What are the steps taken by the government to improve RRBs?

a) Merged some stand-alone RRBs with larger units to cut their overhead costs and scale up the business volumes, **b)** Inducted funds to expand their capital base, **c)** Over Rs 4,000 crore has been provided towards recapitalising the RRBs in last fiscal year.

Why there is a growing irrelevance of the RRBs?

-The RRBs have been left primarily with the government-sponsored business of servicing the official schemes involving direct benefit transfers.

-RRBs have **1)** Limited business activity, **2)** Swelling operational costs, **3)** Lack of internet banking facilities, **4)** Some of the RRBs, even today, have not fully digitised their operations, and **5)** Many of them do not expand their business operations beyond farm-related activities such as reaching out to micro, small and medium enterprises located in the rural areas and offer them banking services.

So, most people in rural areas, therefore, prefer to deal with commercial banks.

-Further, most of the RRBs are ineligible for being listed on the stock exchanges because they do not meet the required pre-conditions. This is because, the RRBs need to have earned an operational profit of over Rs 15 crore in three out of the previous five financial years, besides a net worth of at least Rs 300 crore and a capital adequacy ratio of above 9 per cent to qualify for listing on the stock exchange.

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

What will be the better course of action for RRBs?

The best course for most RRBs is to either merge with their sponsoring banks or close down. They have very little space to survive as stand-alone financial enterprises.

Read more: [Regional Rural Banks \(RRBs\) have been successful in fulfilling the financial needs of agriculture sector and rural economy](#)

11. [After the dust, a clearer picture of Agnipath's direction](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**After the dust, a clearer picture of Agnipath's direction**” published in **The Hindu** on **9th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security

Relevance– Recruitment reforms in army

News- The article explains the rationale behind the Agniveer scheme.

What are arguments in support of the Agniveer scheme?

Nothing is ever constant and change will always be the order of the day. Therefore, our policies also need to change and be aligned with the future. The **merits or demerits of a particular policy can be debated** and feedback is given to make it more robust. **But to denounce it outrightly is not appropriate.**

The present system of almost one year of training was devised when the standard of education of recruits was low and they had lower technical skills. They required more time to learn.

Nowadays, **youth are technologically savvy**. Everyone has a smartphone. **To continuing with old training methodologies is irrational.**

Another aspect that has been much discussed is whether the Agniveers **will be able to deliver when the time comes**. It is not right to have disbelief in their capabilities.

Prior to the 1971 war, recruits were inducted into units after a curtailed training period. They had to face battle within months. They were able to stand up and deliver. Young soldiers have more risk-taking abilities. Most gallantry award winners have had a younger profile.

Agniveers can have lateral absorption into the Central Armed Police Forces, State police and even in other Ministries. The Home Ministry and certain State governments have announced 10% lateral induction. The aspects such as pension and medical cover would be automatically addressed in case of lateral induction.

12. [The master map fast-tracking infra](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The master map fast-tracking infra**” published in the **mint** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Infrastructure

News- The article explains the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan.

What is PM GatiShakti National Master Plan?

It is like the google map of infrastructure. It offers a dashboard with a bird eye view of bridges, roads, tunnels, pipelines, power transmission cable, forest, water bodies and airports in any region of the country.

It has over 2000 layers of data.

It aims to solve the complex problem of delay in important projects.

It includes projects that cost over 500 crore. The projects will be screened before they use this database because of the amount of data and information provided by it.

A three tier system monitors the plan. At the bottom of the pyramid is the technical support unit. The middle layer is the National Planning Group. At the very top is an empowered group of secretaries headed by Cabinet secretary.

What are the benefits associated with this initiative?

Earlier, the information was not centralised. It was available in silos. This led to bureaucratic delays. The GatiShakti database breaks the departmental silos.

Because of the lack of a unified database, agencies worked at cross-purpose with each other. The database will increase coordination between agencies.

The database will save time and money. It could optimise the project performance.

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What are the roadblocks ahead for PM GatiShakti?

The database is loaded with sensitive information. It is not easy for the government to open it up for the private sector.

Lack of digitised land records is a big hurdle. Without private sector participation, the benefits of this tool can be limiting. Private sector has to rely on bureaucrats to access the platform. It would add another layer to the process.

13. Policing with talent, resource sharing, not squabbling

Source– The post is based on the article “**Policing with talent, resource sharing, not squabbling**” published in **The Hindu** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Internal security

News- The article explains the centre-state relations in the context of policing. It also suggests the way forward for better coordination.

What is the contribution of Sardar Patel for internal security?

He placed great value on professional policing. This was the reason for his insistence on an elitist and well-trained corps such as IPS which worked alongside the IAS.

The two all-India services have been a cementing force and have greatly contributed to establishing nationally accepted standards of governance, especially in the area of law and Order.

What are the issues with policing today? There is conflict between the MHA and some States over utilising talent in the IPS and the sharing of resources available in the States. Both sides have to be partially blamed for

this unfortunate state of affairs. Differences in personnel management has occasionally affected administration in the Centre and States.

There are frequent spats between States and the Centre over the use or alleged misuse of the Central Bureau of Investigation. Insensitive action by a few States to withdraw consent to the CBI to function in a State. This is influenced by politics and vindictiveness, which diminishes the fight against public servant graft.

What is the way forward?

Friendly conduct between states and centre is needed.. The Centre has always been provided with support from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

There have also been other outfits such as the Border Security Force (BSF), the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) which have also worked in tandem with the State Police.

Crime and bureaucratic corruption have inter-State ramifications and only a national agency can bring in a much-needed and wide perspective. So, Body like the CBI is the need of the day. Police is a State subject under the distribution of powers laid down in the Constitution of India. But that does not mean the Union government has no say in the matter.

Training and technology are two areas where the Centre does greatly contribute to sharpening police ability to combat terrorism and other major public disturbances. The Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad is a world-class institution that has resources and the professional excellence which are generously available to State Police forces.

We need a political leadership that does not care about petty differences but promotes a free exchange of talent and resources between New Delhi and the States.

14. [Our choking cities: How we can improve air and water quality in urban spaces](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

“Our choking cities: How we can improve air and water quality in urban spaces”

published in the **Indian Express** on **10th November 2022**.

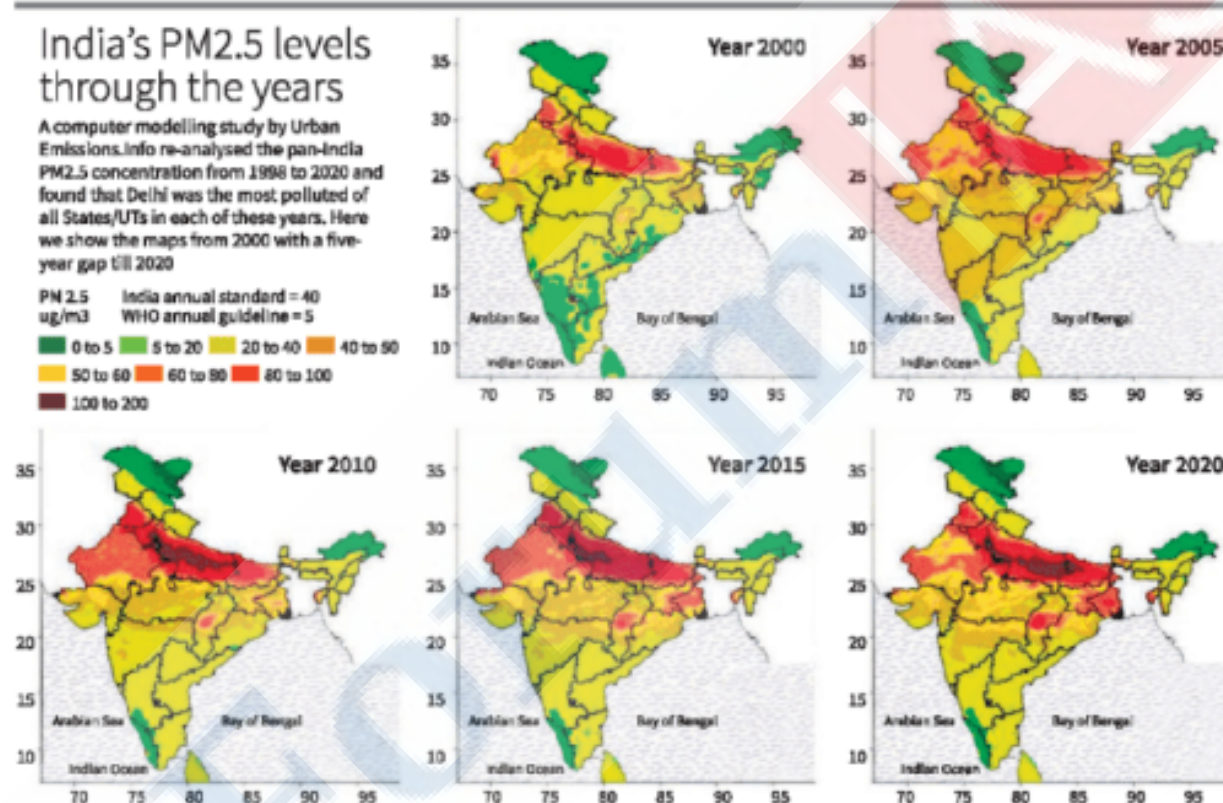
“Reduce year-round pollutants to make Delhi’s air less hazardous” published in **Livemint** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environmental pollution and degradation.

Relevance: About India’s air and water pollution.

News: Recently, in Delhi, pollution-related curbs were lifted and schools opened, despite air quality continues to be in the “very poor” category.

About air and water pollution in India



Source: The Hindu

Air pollution: More than 1,10,000 infants are likely to have been killed by air pollution in India in 2019. Long-term exposure to outdoor and household air pollution was estimated to be responsible for about 1.67 million annual deaths amongst the adult population in the country.

Water pollution: The Central Pollution Control Board reckons that more than 50 per cent of 351 river stretches (on 323 rivers) are polluted. About 72% of urban sewage is untreated in India’s urban freshwater bodies.

What needs to be done to reduce air and water pollution in India?

A massive improvement in public bus services: Public bus services must procure services from private operators on structured contracts, **b)** Special services to the airport, railway stations, employment hubs and local circulators will help bring down the extent of personal motor-vehicle use.

Deployment of clean technologies: electric mobility must be taken forward aggressively. For instance, electric buses can be significantly cheaper than diesel/CNG options so they needed to be procured more.

Infrastructure upgrades for non-motorized modes of conveyance: It needs a safer infrastructure for cycling and walking. India should develop pedestrian and bicycle masterplans to ensure that walking and cycling in urban spaces become safe and pleasant is essential.

A plan to reduce travel demand: This can be done by **a)** Improving online delivery of public services, **b)** Mixed land-use planning to reduce trip lengths, **c)** Encourage policy and support to work from home or shop online options and **d)** Commercial and residential areas should be co-located

Increase green cover across urban areas: For instance, Ahmedabad's municipal corporation using the Miyawaki technique has more than urban forests. Chandigarh has about 1,800 parks. Close to 46% of the city was classified as a green area in 2019.

Read more: [About winter pollution in Delhi: Severe policy lapse](#)

Involve more Civil society: In Chennai an NGO has been able to grow 25 Miyawaki forests, raising over 65,000 trees. Such plantations are now being replicated in other cities including Tuticorin, Vellore and Kanchipuram. This can be done in other Indian cities as well.

Implement globally successful airshed management systems: **a)** In the US, the passage of the Air Quality Act (1967) saw the state of California being divided into 35 districts and pollution was regulated at the state level. This approach was successful in reducing emissions by 98% from 2010 to 2019, **b)** London's air pollution revolution has initiated an **Ultra Low Emission zone** in Central London. It has a hefty daily fee on cars that emit more than 75g/km of pollution.

Protect water and riverine pollution: India needs to adopt a systems-based approach along with a push for protecting "blue infra" areas — places that act as natural sponges for absorbing surface runoff, allowing groundwater to be recharged.

At the **household level**, India needs to encourage rainwater harvesting, urban roof terrace greening, urban roof water retention tanks and green corridor around residential buildings.

At the **city level and beyond**, policymakers should push for "sponge cities" and incorporate disaster planning.

For example, Mangalore's City Corporation (MCC) has wastewater treatment plants with end-user linkages. The MCC offered to supply treated water to such industrial end-users in the city's special economic zone if the latter agreed to fund about 70% of the operations and maintenance cost of the pumps and the sewage treatment plant.

15. [Global banking is a bright spot – on challenges to Global financial system](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **"Global banking is a bright spot"** published in the **Business Standard** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance– Economic situation around the world

News- The article explains the present economic situation across the world and future of the world economy. It also tells about the challenges to the world financial system.

What are the challenges to the world financial system by the IMF's Global Financial Stability Report, October 2022?

China's housing market woes: Stringent lockdowns in China have impacted home sales. Buyers do not want to make advance payments for the purchase of properties. As a result, developers face liquidity pressures and many have gone bankrupt. Banks' exposure to the property is 28 per cent of total loans.

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Poor market liquidity: Central banks are tightening monetary policy and shrinking their balance sheets. This has meant less liquidity in the market. Investors would like to sell securities when interest rates rise. Investors trying to exit their holdings of securities end up incurring losses that can trigger panic.

Corporate debt at risk: Rising interest rates pose challenges for firms with high debt. The IMF's sensitivity analysis shows that under conditions of stress 50% of small firms would have difficulty servicing debt. Banks are bound to be impacted.

Leveraged finance under pressure: Leveraged finance is lending to companies with high debt or a poor credit history. It is, therefore, of the high-yield variety. An increasing share of leveraged finance in recent years is credit that is outside the regulated bank market and the financial markets and is of poor quality.

Housing price declines: Rising interest rates could trigger a steep decline in housing prices worldwide. This will have adverse implications for banks.

What is the present economic situation?

The Ukraine conflict poses the biggest challenge to growth since the global financial crisis of 2007. As per IMF, the world economy will grow at 3.2 per cent in 2022 and 2.7 per cent in 2023. Growth in 2023 will be the lowest since 2010, leaving aside the pandemic year of 2020.

GSFR report is that the world's banks seem well-placed to cope with the very worst.

All growth forecasts at the moment are based on the economic conditions continuing same as present. Like, if the Ukraine conflict remains at the present level, oil prices will be around \$92 per barrel, and inflation will start getting normal in the next couple of quarters.

What if the situation worsens?

Global economic growth will be severely hit. The IMF looks at this scenario. Growth will drop from the baseline projection of 3.2% to below minus 3% in 2023 before recovering to around 3 per cent in 2024.

The global Common Equity Tier I ratio in banking will be well above the regulatory minimum of 4.5%.

Banks in emerging markets would face a serious problem. Banks accounting for a third of banking assets would lack the minimum capital required.

How do we explain these outcomes?

There has been a big change in the banking system following GFC. Bankers have come to realise that **it pays to have capital way above the regulatory norm**. As a result, banks have performed well when it comes to capital adequacy. That is the reason for the robustness of the banking system even in these difficult times.

That is true of the Indian banking system as well. The 12 public sector banks together have reported a second quarter increase of more than 50 per cent in profit after tax over the previous year. Loans in the banking system are growing at 17 per cent.

16. What the Vande Bharat train says about the lopsided priorities of Indian modernity

Source: The post is based on an article **"What the Vande Bharat train says about the lopsided priorities of Indian modernity"** published in **The Indian Express** on 11th November 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3- Growth and Development

News: India has developed in all fields but the problem still persists which gives us the real image of India.

What are the achievements made and problems associated with them?

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Railways: Vande Bharat express was launched with all modernity but it collided with cows on the track. This shows that with modern trains there should also be development amongst local governments, fencing of the tracks, etc.

Medical facilities: India is considered to be the home to medical facilities around the world but most of the primary care clinics in India don't have enough doctors and India has amongst the worst health indicators of any country.

Unvaccinated children: India has produced the highest vaccines in the world but it is also the home to the largest number of unvaccinated children in the world.

Food stock: India is a country where foods are stored as buffer stock while tens of millions of Indian children go hungry and are stunted.

Illiteracy: India has the most prestigious engineering institutions that offer visas to serve US's university while half its children are unable to read and write at the minimum level expected for their age.

Laws: Laws in India say that all cars must have seat-belts while basic road laws are broken in India by jumping the red light, over-speeding, etc.

Sports: India has the richest sports leagues in the world while performance is dismal at most global sporting competitions.

Digitisation: Most of the children in India do not have the digital devices or access to the internet which they needed during the school closures in the pandemic, even though India is said to be leading in the use of technology.

Slum areas: Luxurious houses and colonies in India are built alongside overflowing sewage, garbage storage areas, etc.

Rivers: Modern infrastructures are built alongside the banks of the holy rivers while the rivers themselves are not clean.

Poverty alleviation: India's economic development is expected to lift millions out of poverty while the recent estimate of World Bank shows that the number of people living in extreme poverty had increased by 5.6 crore in 2020.

These all gives the problems existing with the development made in India. Therefore, these needs to be addressed.

What can be the way forward?

India can learn from other modern countries and priorities its development accordingly.

Some of the areas that India can focus are – improving primary health care and primary education, improving public infrastructure, comprehensive sanitation infrastructure, environmentally friendly roads and policies, etc.

These were the areas where today's modern country has focused to reach the modernity.

Therefore, India should also focus on these things because developing modern trains, infrastructure will not serve the purpose when the base is itself weak.

17. COP-27: An opportunity for rich nations to help vulnerable communities

Source: The post is based on the article “COP-27: An opportunity for rich nations to help vulnerable communities” published in **The Indian Express** on 11th November 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3- Environment

News: The article discusses the developments made at CoP-27 Summit.

What were the major developments made at CoP-27 Summit?

There are two important developments – a) inclusion of “loss and damage” and b) early warning of the hazardous weather globally.

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The UNFCCC has decided to compensate countries that suffered loss and damage and came up with a plan to ensure that everyone on the planet is warned of hazardous weather in the next five years.

These concepts are not new as loss and damage was first discussed at COP 19 in Warsaw in 2013. Efforts were made in developing warning systems to protect people in the past. However, the required progress wasn't made.

What are the Challenges?

One of the major concerns is the **investment**. Developing countries are not taking efforts to fulfil their funding commitments while the harm caused by the extreme weather condition is increasing.

For example, the economic loss from cyclone Amphan in India and Bangladesh in 2020 was assessed at \$15 billion.

Therefore, there will be a need to solve the issue of funding of the developed countries.

18. C-DOT emerges as govt's biggest bet for India's ongoing 5G rollout

Source: The post is based on the article "**C-DOT emerges as govt's biggest bet for India's ongoing 5G rollout**" published in the **Business Standard** on **11th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT).

News: The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) has emerged as the government's biggest bet for India's ongoing 5G rollout.

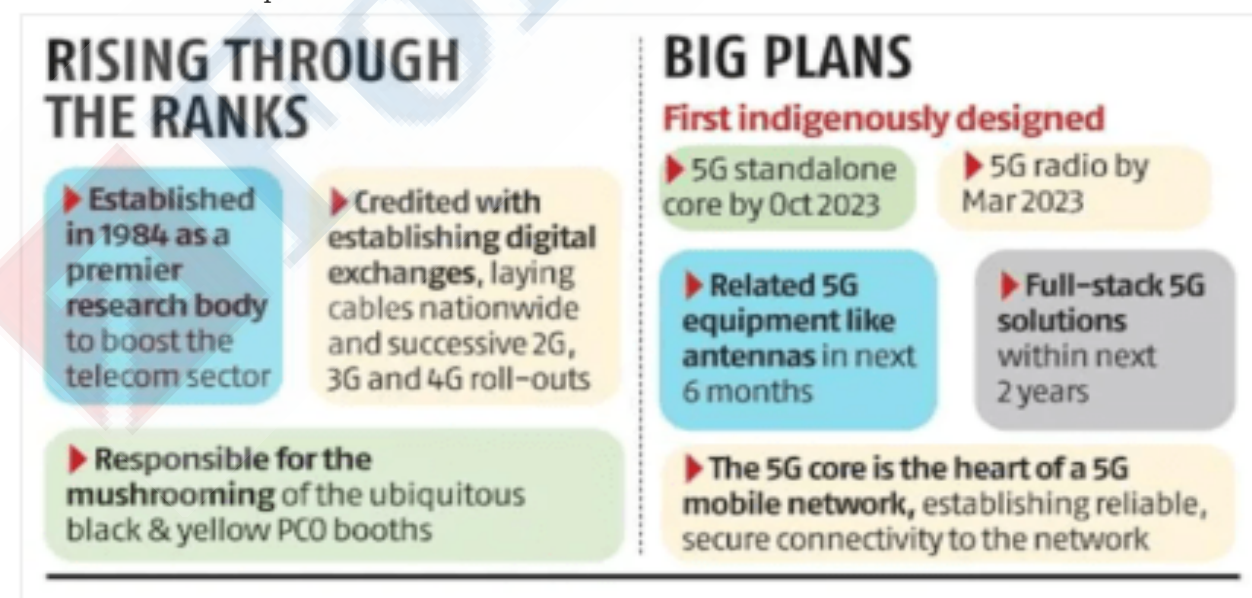
The Department of Space, the home ministry and other key ministries plan to leverage C-DOT's capabilities on artificial intelligence, cyber security, optical fibre, machine-to-machine communication, and even reconnaissance.

About Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)

C-DOT was established in 1984 as an autonomous Telecom R&D centre of the Department of Telecommunications. It is a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

It is also a registered public-funded research institution with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research(DSIR), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India.

How did C-DOT help in India's telecom revolution?



Source: Business Standard

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C-DOT research has focused on the design and production of 'Made in India' telecom technology suited to the Indian landscape. This helped India to **a)** Set up reliable telecom infrastructure that allowed public call offices or PCOs to mushroom nationwide, **b)** Establish digital exchanges, **c)** Create network infrastructure that supported successive waves of 2G, 3G and 4G rollouts and **d)** Recently, it designed a fully indigenous non-standalone (NSA) 5G core in record time. This NSA core has been installed at the state-owned telecom company, BSNL's premises in Chandigarh.

Note: The 5G core is the heart of a 5G mobile network. The core domain handles a wide variety of essential functions in the mobile network, such as connectivity and mobility management, authentication and authorisation, subscriber data management and policy management, among others.

As of August 2022, India had 1.17 billion telecom connections, of which 98 per cent were mobile phone connections, and an estimated 65% were smartphones. This phenomenal rise over the past three decades in an economically distressed nation is credited to C-DOT.

Why C-DOT is essential for India's ongoing 5G rollout?

Development of standalone (SA) 5G core

At present C-DOT is working on the development of India's first-ever indigenously built standalone (SA) 5G core. It is a technological improvement on the NSA core. The NSA core technology leverages existing networking infrastructure, but the SA core modernises network infrastructure to suit the myriad needs of enterprises.

Need for SA Core: **a)** The SA core will be necessary for achieving optimal capability in many of the classic use cases of 5G that have been showcased by both the government and industry, **b)** Only an SA Core can provide a long list of high-tech applications, ranging from robotics, advanced manufacturing and remote surgery, to advanced retail and logistics operations, requires ultra-low latency.

5G radio and antennas

C-DOT is also set to launch the first domestically developed 5G radio and antennas in the next six months.

5G Radio Access Network (RAN)

5G RAN allows the disaggregation of network equipment components, enabling a telecom company to source hardware and software from different vendors for network building.

5G alliances program

Under it, C-DOT has set up 10 consortiums to deliver a complete suite of 5G products by 2024. The focus is on domestic companies from across the value chain. This helps in quickly identifying export opportunities for India's telecom tech.

Read more: [Telecom secretary asks C-DoT to work on 6G, launches Quantum Communication Lab](#)

What are the present challenges faced by C-DoT?

Charges of recruiting favourites to crucial posts, and of furnishing false progress reports about C-DoT

a) Commercialising the newly developed technologies remains the bigger challenge, **b) Amount of customisation:** **c)** C-DOT's longtime partner BSNL has often proved to be a problem. BSNL was unhappy with a C-DOT-Tata Group consortium currently working to provide BSNL with 5G equipment because of the higher costs, **d)** C-DOT often struggled to hire the required number of researchers. Further, researchers often have to get into administrative roles which drains their time.

19. We must break 'lock-ins' of water usage in agriculture

Source: The post is based on the article “We must break ‘lock-ins’ of water usage in agriculture” published in the **Livemint** on **11th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage.

Relevance: About breaking India's lock-ins of water usage.

News: The annual United Nations climate conference is underway in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. The conference has entire days devoted to two crucial sectors agriculture and water. We must enable farmers to make choices that improve their earnings while helping them reduce their demand for water.

Water 'lock-ins' are among the factors that prevent progress in reducing water usage. So, lock-ins surrounding the use of water in agriculture must be tackled.

About the water crisis in India

India's current system is focused towards growing high water-using and energy-intensive crops. The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) estimates that over 60% of irrigation in India is done through groundwater.

As of 2015, there were about 20 million pump sets using energy in India. Hence, the agricultural sector accounts for about 20-22% of total electricity consumption.

About lock-ins of water usage in India

Lock-ins dictate how farmers choose their crops, irrigate their fields and use energy. When generations of farmers follow certain patterns of behaviour in terms of crop choices or cultivation practices, it is hard for them to break out of it.

Most of the water is used to grow water-intensive crops like paddy. Almost a quarter of India's net cultivable area is under rice cultivation. It is predominantly grown in the Punjab-Haryana belt. This is because there is less risk associated with such crops, given their large-scale procurement by the government at minimum support prices (MSPs).

Why breaking lock-ins of water usage is challenging?

There are many reasons for lock-ins that are carbon and water intensive.

a) Physical infrastructure in terms of cold storage, granaries and markets have all been set up to support current crop choices. New crops would require new supply chains that may be expensive to set up, **b)** Conventional agricultural methods have developed over centuries based on specific skills and expertise. Shifting to new methods of farming would need additional investments in capacity, **c)** Consumption patterns are based on crops that are currently grown. For instance, rice and wheat continue to dominate Indian kitchens. Adapting to less water-intensive crops such as millets will take time, even if there are nutritional benefits and **d)** The Indian farm sector displays siloed ways of thinking and working.

How India can break lock-ins of water usage?

1) Different government ministries and departments need to work in conjunction at the policy design stage to solve complex challenges that span sectors. For instance, India needs to assess changes in farmers' energy consumption with green technologies, increase farmers' income and also achieve less water use.

2) Changes required from production to consumption: Due to insufficient demand, the Haryana government's introduction of maize in the MSP system has failed to divert farmers from rice and wheat cultivation. So, the government has to create an ecosystem for farms to transition as done by Odisha's Millet Mission.

Under the Odisha Millet Mission, the Odisha government ensured the complete procurement of millets, ensured its distribution, and encouraged the consumption of millets at local levels

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through Public Distribution System (PDS), Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and even the Midday Meal Scheme at schools.

20. [What India needs to do to plug its defence gap](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**What India needs to do to plug its defence gap**” published in **The Indian Express** on **12th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security

News- The article explains the challenges associated with defence manufacturing in India. It also tells about the achievements of India in this sector.

What are the issues related to defence manufacturing in India?

There is a high dependency index foreign suppliers for major military inventory items. This dependency is a challenge to national security and dilutes India's quest for credible strategic autonomy.

Global level crises like Covid and Russia invasion of Europe that disrupted the global supply chain and weakening rupees adds to challenges faced by the defence sector.

India does not yet have the domestic competence to fully design and manufacture any significant combat platform and. It is dependent on the foreign supplier for the critical components.

India is now going to manufacture the C295 transport aircraft in a collaboration with Airbus. But the reality is that the engine, avionics, landing gear, etc, will come from abroad and the integration will be done by the Indian entity.

India has not invested enough in the national research and development (R&D) effort. As per data collated by the World Bank, India has been able to allocate only 0.66% of GDP towards R&D in 2028, while the world average is 2.63 per cent. Israel spent 5.34% and the USA 3.45%.

India missed the industrial design and manufacturing bus, a national competence demonstrated by nations like South Korea and China, over the last five decades.

Technological advances have made the design and manufacture of the semiconductor chip the new currency of national prosperity and military power. India is yet to acquire a strong credentials in this field.

What are the achievements of India in defence manufacturing?

Our defence exports have grown eight times in the last five years. We are exporting defence materials and equipment to more than 75 countries of the world. In 2021-22, defence exports from India reached about Rs 13,000 crore. The government has now set a target of Rs 40,000 crore.

India has commissioned indigenously-designed and built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. It fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile from the INS Arihant. It awarded the manufacture of a military transport aircraft (C 295) to a major private sector entity;

The induction of the made in India Prachand LCH and the conclusion of a deal with Russia to manufacture a Kalashnikov-type light weapon in India are other achievements.

21. [Raising money for green transitions](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Raising money for green transitions**” published in **The Indian Express** on **12th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environmental degradation

Relevance: Climate change related issues

News- The article explains the issue of finance for green transition.

What are the challenges associated with green transition?

Besides technical and economic challenges, it has a **human dimension** also.

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Workers that are currently engaged in the non-renewable energy sector may face livelihood related issues.

There can be **political opposition** to the shutting down of industry. The opposition could also come from trade unions and other local bodies. This can be counter-productive because the transition can appear insensitive at worst.

What are issues related to climate finance?

Shifting to renewables requires **planning and resources**. Emerging countries face challenges related to **access to capital**.

Not only the source and scale of finance, but the **channel of this finance** is also important to consider. Take the case of South Africa where the mechanics of finance have some interesting lessons. At COP26 in Glasgow, five developed countries agreed to channel \$8.5 billion to South Africa. But very little of this materialised. With more time, it has become clear that almost all of this finance is loans.

Several multilateral development banks are also supporting projects for just transitions. But the limitations of these MDBs remain. They continue to have **inflexible governance structures** in terms of voice and vote, leadership selection. This undermines the legitimacy of these institutions in the eyes of the emerging market countries.

The GCF was established to address some of the prevalent challenges of climate finance. But it has its own challenges. It is slow and hard to access. It appears less able to engage directly with countries; in fact some of us are arguing that the GCF should have more strategic clarity rather than try to do it all.

What is the way forward for green transition? There is a need for **“just transitions”**. The negative impacts on workers and communities should be reduced, and the benefits should be fairly distributed.

There is a need to strengthen GCF. It is the only institution which combines a very large scale with **legitimacy and ownership**. It could reduce dependence on the policies and concessionality imposed by MDBs, and avoid **fragmentation of finance**.

22. [How Northeast Finally Took Wings](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“How Northeast Finally Took Wings”** published in **The Times of India** on **12th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Growth and Development

News: The efforts taken by the current government have changed resulted in the growth and development in the North eastern states of India.

What progress has been made by PM Modi?

Government launched **“Purvodaya” mission** in 2014 to bring development, especially basic infrastructure to the Northeast.

The region was declared as a priority area and pledged to turn it into a growth engine for India. All the ministries were asked to spend at least 10% of their budget in the northeastern region. These efforts brought change in the North eastern states, especially in the aviation sector.

What changes came in the aviation in North-East?

A separate budget was allocated for the aviation sector which led to the inclusive growth on aviation. Further, **UDAN** (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme acted as multiplier effects for the local economies with the increase in the number of flights.

For example, airports in five northeastern states Mizoram, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland have seen flights take off for the first time in 75 years.

Airports of Sikkim and Assam are attracting travelers from all over the world. The airport in Arunachal Pradesh has also been brought on the civil aviation map for the first time. **Krishi UDAN** has also helped in the exporting agri-products worldwide.

Advance Landing Grounds (ALGs) are now developed for commercial air services to connect the remote areas. These were airstrips built shortly before the 1962 Sino-India war and are strategically important for India.

These developments in the aviation sector along with the improvement in rail and road connectivity has helped North-eastern states to get **inclusive development**.

What are the future projects for the North-Eastern States?

The routes under UDAN have been planned in such a way that ensures connectivity both **vertically and horizontally**, i.e., within the Northeast region as well as, connectivity with the rest of India.

There are also plans to provide helicopter services in the remotest areas. Two **international air routes** under PM's "**Act East Policy**" – between Imphal-Mandalay and Agartala-Chittagong will be operationalised soon.

These all development will attract private investments in the North-eastern states ensuring that they are not excluded from the nation's overall development.

23. [Idea of war: The battlefields are changing](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Idea of war: The battlefields are changing**" published in **Business Standard** on **12th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Technology

Relevance: defence technologies

News: The article discusses the need to adapt to advance defense technologies.

How has the battlefield changed?

The battlefield has seen the development of machine guns, tanks, anti-tanks and now the use of drones in the battlefields have changed the scenario.

Further, the latest warfare in the Ukraine has raised concerns and challenges on the future of large armoured formations, big battleships and manned fighter aircraft.

Why are the challenges?

The use of **Advanced Technologies and weapons** have made it difficult to stand in the war.

The Ukraine Russia war is a great example of it. Ukrainians have used defence technologies in the war against Russia and it made it difficult for the Russian army to fight the war.

They never get within the visual range of the Russian army and attack with the use of drone and satellite communication or by small guerrilla-like bands armed with American or British equipment.

This has made it difficult for the Russian Army to completely invade Ukraine.

This also shows Russia's inability to adapt to the technology in its defence even though it saw drones earlier being used in the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Further, Missile technology has developed so much that big warships and any other defence assets will be vulnerable to the attacks.

The same applies to aircraft technologies. If advanced technologies are not adopted then it would be difficult to launch air attacks as it is being witnessed in the case of Russia.

Therefore, this shows that there is an urgent need to sync defense with the latest technology to withstand the attack from the opponent.