



**9 PM**

# **Compilation**

**17<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2022**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October, (Third Week) 2022

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# General Studies Paper – 1

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### General Studies - 1

#### 1. [The dire need to talk about 1962](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “The dire need to talk about 1962” published in **The Hindu** on **19<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 1 – Post-Independence History

**Relevance:** reasons behind the defeat of India on Sino-India war of 1962

**News:** It has been almost 60 years to India-China (Sino-India) war in 1962. The war went for 30 days (October 20 – November 20, 1962).

In this war India’s 1,383 soldiers were killed, 1,047 were wounded, 1,696 went missing and over 400 prisoners of war were captured by China. India lost the war.

**What are the main issues linked to Sino-India war of 1962, that requires attention?**

**Lack of preparedness:** The then PM Jawaharlal Nehru had friendly relations with nations around the world including China. This made him believe that China would never attack as it tried to have peaceful relations with India. This misbelieve resulted in lack of preparedness of the Indian Army which further became one of the reasons for the defeat.

**Lack of trust on IAF:** The strength of the Indian Air Force (IAF) was not used and was underestimated. According to various reports the use of fighter aircraft would have been a game changer as Chinese air force was operationally handicapped due the high altitude of the airfields.

**Hierarchy:** The war involved people from politics, bureaucrats and military. This multiple involvement and hierarchical nature of the decision led to insufficient managements of the events from the top to bottom.

**Insufficient effort:** There were lack of coordination and efforts made from the senior military officers as most of the work was done by the junior grade officers. This caused lack of expertise in the field and led the defeat of India.

#### 2. [The politics of madrasa survey](#)

**Source–** The post is based on the article “The politics of madrasa survey” published in **The Hindu** on **20th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS1- Communalism. GS2- Vulnerable sections

**Relevance–** Issues regarding minorities

**News-** The article explains the issues raised by some state government moves to undertake the survey of madrasas. It also tells about the findings of the Sachar committee report.

**What are the concerns regarding the survey?**

There are concerns about the ideological aspect of this survey.

There are questions regarding the majoritarian agenda behind the survey.

Whether it is inspired by prejudice towards the Muslims.

**What are the main arguments about madrasas in India?**

The first is that Muslims are economically backward because most of them are educated in madrasas.

The second argument is that madrasas are nurseries of radical Islam. This view gained momentum globally after the 9/11 attack.

**What are the findings of the Sachar Committee report?**

It found that only 3% of Muslim children of school-going age go to madrasas at the national level. It also drew a distinction between madrasas and maktabas. Maktabas are neighbourhood schools, often attached to mosques. They offer religious education to children who attend other schools to get mainstream education. The share of Muslims who attend madrasas and maktabas is not more than 6.3%

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Muslims are aspirational. The Muslim parents want good education for their children. But there are financial constraints on them.

The report therefore recommended scholarships for Muslim students so that they don't drop out of school.

The authors of the Sachar Committee report deliberately chose to stay away from discussions over party politics or issues of secularism or communalism and the implications of these for the welfare of Muslims. They pretended as if no causal relationship exists between ideology and development.

### **What is the history of madrasas?**

They emerged after 1857 mutiny to save Muslim identity from colonial intervention. They suspected the imposition of Christian values.

Deoband and Aligarh Muslim University did not seek state support. They focussed on autonomy. They also opposed the partition.

### 3. [This Hindi – and Hindi alone – counsel is flawed](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“This Hindi – and Hindi alone – counsel is flawed”** published in **The Hindu** on **21st October 2022**.

**Syllabus**: GS1- Regionalism. GS2- Indian Constitution

**Relevance**– Regionalism based on language

**News**- The article explains the need for continuation of English as an official language. It also explains constitutional and statutory provisions related to language.

### **What are the recommendations of the official language committee?**

Hindi should replace English as the language of examinations for recruitment to the government. Hindi should be the only medium of instruction in Kendriya Vidyalayas, IITs, IIMs and central universities.

It should be constitutionally binding on State governments to propagate Hindi.

### **What is the official language committee?**

The official language committee is a statutory committee constituted under Official Language Act, 1963.

Its duty is to review the progress made in the use of Hindi for the official purposes of the Union and submit a report to the President. Committee's recommendations are required to be acted upon by the government.

### **What are the constitutional provisions related to language?**

**Article 343** of the Constitution declares that Hindi in Devanagari script shall be the official language of the Union. The English language will continue for 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution.

Parliament may provide by law that English will continue even after the period of 15 years. Parliament enacted the official languages Act in 1963. It provided for the continuance of English indefinitely as official language along with Hindi for the official purposes of the Union and for transaction of business in Parliament.

### **What can be the consequences of Hindi imposition?**

Language is an emotive issue. It has the potential to divide people. It was evident in violent protests in southern India during the 1960s when the Union tried to replace English with Hindi. Once Hindi replaces English, the language used in the examination for recruitment to the all India services will be Hindi alone. Therefore, candidates from the non-Hindi States, the south in particular, will face a great disadvantage.

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India has two major groups of languages, the Indo-European language group and the Dravidian language group. It was English which brought the northern and southern regions together. If Hindi is imposed, it may be a threat to the unity of India.

### **Why is it necessary to continue with English language use?**

It is necessary to address the concerns of the people of the southern region on account of language. The overwhelming public opinion in the south is that English should continue as one of the official languages.

The mood of the Constituent Assembly was in large measure influenced by the freedom struggle, the nationalistic aspirations and Gandhiji's strong advocacy of a national language.

That mood slowly changed over the years as India began interacting with the world.

English was crucial in acquiring knowledge in science and technology as well as in other fields of human activity.

In these circumstances, the policymakers should seriously think of making the constitutional provisions that Hindi and English should be the official languages of the Union. Other countries like Canada also have two official languages.

#### 4. [Not Hindi or English, the real language question is status of vernacular](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Not Hindi or English, the real language question is status of vernacular**” published in **The Indian Express** on **22nd October 2022**.

**Syllabus: GS1**- Regionalism

**Relevance**– Languages related issue

**News**- The article explains the issues related to the status of vernacular language in India. It also explains the state performance in solving the challenges posed by linguistic diversity.

### **What are the challenges posed by linguistic diversity?**

**Imposition of Hindi**– It is related to establishing Hindi as primary language.

**Status of vernacular language**– The Indian language experiment has given political accommodation to so many languages. But the accommodation comes with a hierarchy. The main issue is that language identity and culture are different from the language of knowledge, privilege and access.

The vernacular had become increasingly confined to identity, culture, and a marker of second-class status.

English has been the language of power. It opens the frontiers of knowledge and access to privilege. Hindi language is seen as closing off the access to frontiers of knowledge in science, law and civic studies.

### **What is the Indian state record in resolving language related issues?**

The state has a good track record in resolving issues related to Hindi imposition. But it has not been able to resolve the issues related to the status of vernacular.

India's two-language formula produces a **superficial bilingualism**. We may speak two or three languages. But we don't have access to knowledge in two languages. The teaching of the third language is totally wasted. It gives no competence in that language.

Our translation mission has not been successful in translating knowledge in vernacular.

The parents are demanding English education. Many Dalits have glorified English as a sign of emancipation. But the state also fails in providing equal access to English learning. Divisions have been created that are based on English fluency.

### **What is the way forward?**

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The focus should be on **pedagogical rather than political issues**. Knowledge should be provided in English in areas like research and science where access to knowledge in vernacular is not possible.

The ability to communicate fluently in vernacular languages will be a great asset. Those who did not get an English education, continuing vernacular education should be a medium of expanding their opportunities.

### 5. [A crisis is brewing in coffee industry](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“A crisis is brewing in coffee industry”** published in **The Hindu** on **22nd October 2022**.

**Syllabus: GS1**- Economic geography

**Relevance**– Major plantation crops in India

**News**- The article explains the challenges faced by the Indian coffee sector and suggests the solutions.

Coffee plantations in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu have suffered high losses due to heavy rains between July and September this year.

#### **What are the issues faced by the coffee sector?**

**Climate change**– Over the last few years, it has adversely impacted India’s coffee production and the quality of the crop. According to the Coffee Board of India, production for the 2022 crop year was estimated at 393400 metric tonnes. But given the extreme climatic conditions, it is anticipated to be some 30% Lower.

**Cost of financing**– There is volatility in market prices. Influence of producers in the value chain has reduced. They are getting marginalised. This has rendered coffee cultivation a loss making enterprise.

Around 75% of coffee is exported. The producers from other exporting countries have competitive advantage of low cost finances.

The cost of financing is one of the biggest challenges of the coffee sector. Most private banks provide financing against collaterals. Since small and medium-size growers are not in a position to provide collateral, the interest rates are high.

**Debt issues**– There are debt issues faced by farmers. As per the information compiled by United Plant Association of Southern, there were short-term and long-term loans amounting to ₹395.54 crore and ₹40.4 crore respectively at the end of year 2019.

Banks have not restructured the loans. The accounts of many coffee growers have turned to NPAs. These growers are now facing recovery proceedings under the SARFAESI Act.

**Low production and higher input cost**– The productivity of coffee is low. The cost of production is on the rise compared to other coffee countries such as Vietnam and Brazil.

Labour costs are on a higher side. In Brazil, labour charges account for 25% of the entire production cost. But in India They account for about 65%. India’s coffee terrain and topography makes mechanisation difficult.

There is a shortage of labour in the coffee sector. Plantations have to be dependent heavily on migrant labourers who are unskilled. Wage costs are not linked to productivity. growers are mandated to pay the usual wage along with other social costs such as housing and medicines. It adds up some 30% more to the wages.

The cost of production per acre has gone up substantially to ₹80,000-85,000 from ₹50,000 five years ago. The cost of inputs such as fertilisers and agrochemicals has increased by almost 20% in a year.



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The plantations face power cuts during the summer months. This makes irrigation expensive as the cost of diesel is high.

### **What is the way forward?**

**Additional income**– Growers should create additional revenue streams through inter-cropping or through innovative measures like fish farming, dairy farming or green tourism.

**Branding and promotion**– There is a need for better branding and promotion of Indian coffee in the global market. Indian coffee is highly rated and commands premium prices in the global coffee markets. India has several speciality coffees and over three dozen estate brands for the global markets. It provides better opportunities for marketing.

# General Studies Paper – 2

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October, (Third Week) 2022

### General Studies - 2

#### 1. [In putting GN Saibaba back in jail, after Bombay High Court acquittal, Supreme Court gives rise to questions](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Colin Gonsalves writes: In putting GN Saibaba back in jail, after Bombay High Court acquittal, Supreme Court gives rise to questions**” published in the **Indian Express** on **17<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

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

**Relevance:** About the sanctions under UAPA.

**News:** A day after the Bombay High Court discharged a former Delhi University Professor and four others in a case under the [Unlawful Activities \(Prevention\) Act, 1967](#) over alleged Maoist links, the Supreme Court suspended the HC judgement till further orders.

About the Bombay High Court ruling and reason for discharge

**Read more:** [The question of sanction under UAPA: why Bombay HC has acquitted G N Saibaba](#)

The High Court judgment had two core findings. **1)** The cognisance was taken by the trial court without sanction being granted by the sanctioning authority as required by the UAPA, **2)** Section 45 (2) of UAPA requires an exhaustive review of the prosecution evidence by an authority independent of the prosecution. Thus the “Sanction for prosecution ...shall be given only after considering the report of such authority appointed by the Central Government”.

The High Court described the Director of Prosecution’s report as “laconic” and said “the report contains the conclusion sans reasoning.

What is the reason for suspending the High Court ruling?

The SC said, “the High Court has not entered into the merits of the case and considered anything on merits of the judgment and order of conviction and sentence passed by the learned trial court”. But, these are “important questions of law and facts to be considered”.

The court also said it is unnecessary to waste time going through a lengthy trial because the initial flaw is fatal.

**Must read:** [UAPA and the recent judgments – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the challenges associated with suspending HC’s decision?

-The Supreme Court in **Baij Nath Prasad Tripathi case**, held that if cognisance is taken without complying with the requirement of valid sanction, the entire trial shall stand vitiated.

-This was not a civil case where a suspension approach could be taken. This was a criminal case.

#### 2. [Food day as a reminder to ‘leave no one behind’](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article “**Food day as a reminder to leave no one behind**” published in **The Hindu** on **17th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Issues related to hunger. GS3- Agriculture

**Relevance-** Food security challenges

**News-** The article explains the scenario of food security in India. It also explains the way forward for ensuring food security.

Today, around 828 million people worldwide do not have enough to eat, and over 50 million people are facing severe hunger.

According to **Hunger Hotspots Outlook (2022-23)** by the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Food Programme, over 205 million people across 45 countries will need emergency food assistance to survive.

**What is the scenario of food safety in India?**

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India has achieved self-sufficiency in food production and now one of the largest agricultural product exporters. During 2021-22, it recorded \$49.6 billion in total agriculture exports.

**National Food Security Act, 2013** along with **Targeted Public Distribution System, the PM POSHAN scheme**, and the **Integrated Child Development Services** have provided food equity in India.

India's food safety net and inclusive nature was visible during COVID-19 and the global food crisis in 2012-13. An **International Monetary Fund paper titled 'Pandemic, Poverty, and Inequality: Evidence from India'** asserted that extreme poverty was maintained below 1% in 2020 due to the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana.

However, recent climate shocks have raised concerns about India's wheat and rice production. Therefore, it is important to place a greater focus on climate adaptation and resilience building. By 2030, India's population is expected to rise to 1.5 billion. There is a need to move away from conventional **input-intensive agriculture** towards more **inclusive, effective, and sustainable agri-food systems** that would facilitate better production.

### **Why is there a need for renewed focus on millets?**

They are **climate smart crops** and are good for nutrition and health. They can help in sustainable agriculture practices as they need fewer inputs and revive soil health.

Millet production has been proven to enhance biodiversity. It can increase yields for small holder farmers, including rural women. The International Fund for Agricultural Development's Tejaswini program with Madhya Pradesh showed that growing millets meant a nearly 10 times increase in Income with better food security.

### **What is India's contribution in millets production?**

It has led the global efforts in reviving millet production. Its efforts at UNGA led to the declaration of 2023 as international year on millets.

It is the world's leading producer of millets. It is producing around 41% of total production in 2020. The national government is also implementing a Sub-Mission on millets as part of the National Food Security Mission.

### **What can be potential solutions for ensuring food security?**

There is a need to ensure environmental sustainability. Soil degradation by the excessive use of chemicals, and non-judicious water use needs urgent attention.

There is a need for transforming food systems by making them more **resilient and sustainable** with a focus on equity.

Enhancing food and nutrition security and social protection networks is necessary. Providing non-distortionary income support can ensure it.

Global and regional supply chains need to be **robust and responsive**. It can be done by strengthening transparency in the agricultural system through systems that promote labelling, traceability.

### 3. Why does the SC collegium hold primacy over transfers?

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“Why does the SC collegium hold primacy over transfers?”** published in **The Hindu** on **17th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Judiciary

**Relevance**– Judicial appointment

**News**- The article explains the recent cases of the government unilaterally delaying or segregating names recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium.

**What are cases of segregation and delays by the government in the names recommended by Collegium?**

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Justice Muralidhar's transfer as the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court was along with the name Justice Pankaj Mithal were recommended by collegium. Both names were proposed jointly in a single batch. The government approved Justice Mithal's transfer while keeping silent about Justice Muralidhar.

In 2014, the Collegium headed by then Chief Justice of India (CJI) R. M. Lodha had recommended former Solicitor General Gopal Subramaniam for direct appointment to the Supreme Court. The government turned down Mr. Subramaniam's name while clearing the names of other senior advocates.

### **Why has collegium been given primacy in judicial appointments?**

The Three Judges Case establishes the primacy of the Collegium in making judicial appointments. It will be the collective opinion of collegium.

CJI was given primacy as he was best equipped to know and assess the worth of a candidate for appointment as a superior judge.

The executive was to act as a mere check on the exercise of power by the Chief Justice of India, to achieve the constitutional purpose. Political influence was eliminated by this process.

It was for this reason that the word '**consultation**' instead of '**concurrence**' was used in the Constitution.

### **What is the way forward?**

There is a need to introduce checks through the Memorandum of Procedure against unilateral segregation by the government.

A new MoP could also bring in a clause to clear names for judicial appointments within a reasonable time to avoid delay.

#### 4. [Internet age needs better international policing](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article "**Internet age needs better international policing**" published in **The Times of India** on **17th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Vulnerable sections. GS1- Social empowerment

**Relevance**– Sexual exploitation of children

**News**- This article explains the issue of online child sex abuse. It also explains the steps taken by India to deal with this challenge and suggests the way forward.

### **What are challenges associated with tackling online child sexual abuse?**

Online child sex abuse is increasing exponentially. Large number of images and videos related to child pornography are available online.

Encryption makes it difficult to trace the source of these pornographic material.

The continuous production and distribution of such material demands for new and more bad images. It helps to further perpetuate the abuse of children.

Law enforcement agencies across various countries lack credible and coordinated response.

There is a **lack of real-time actionable data** for investigation due to territoriality, complications in sharing data across countries and fake IDs.

### **What steps has been taken by India to curb such practices?**

India has one of the largest populations of children in the world. The 2011 census shows that there are 472 million children below the age of 18.

Online child sex abuse is criminalised through IT Act and POSCO Act. It includes mechanisms for child-friendly reporting, recording of evidence and investigation through designated special courts. NCPDR monitors the status of POSCO implementation.

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CBI has setup a dedicated cell to collect, collate, investigate and disseminate information regarding online child sex abuse. It has joined International Child Sexual Exploitation database by Interpol for support on child sexual abuse material.

CBI has also conducted three pan-India operations in recent years like operation Megh Chakra in 2022.

### What is the way forward?

There is a need for a **multidimensional fight** against online child abuse. Criminalization of offenses, proper investigation, identification of victims, and prosecution of offenders need to be ensured. Prevention and proactive detention and curbing the propagation are key to stopping such practices.

Children must be educated about the use of the digital world.

There is a need for **synergy** across law enforcement agencies of various countries.

Social media platforms need to develop protocols for proactive detention and blocking of such content.

### 5. [Making a case for the Old Pension Scheme](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Making a case for the Old Pension Scheme**” published in **The Hindu** on **17<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Governance

**Relevance:** benefits of old pension scheme

**News:** The governments of Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, Punjab has announced to revert back to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) from the New Pension Scheme (NPS).

#### What is Old Pension Scheme (OPS) and New Pension Scheme (NPS)?

OPS is an assured inflation-indexed monthly family pension till a government employee or her spouse live(s). The OPS payment level is linked to the last pay an employee drew while in service. Whereas, the NPS is the amount that an employee can draw as a pension after retirement. Its value is determined by the market value of the contributions made by the employee.

#### What are the benefits of Old Pension Scheme (OPS)?

**First**, the pension drawn in NPS is lower than the OPS (**Chart 1**).

**Second**, NPS is dependent on the market prices of equity/bonds in which the amount is invested. Therefore, a crash in the markets can affect the pensioners.

Whereas, OPS is a fixed government expenditure irrespective of an economic slowdown or a stock market crash. This makes it useful in counter-cyclical policy measure during a crisis.

#### What are the arguments against OPS?

It has been argued that the **OPS acts as burden on the exchequer** as it accounts for 25% of the States’ budget.

However, it may not be correct because three other parts of States’ revenue receipts (tax the Centre collects on behalf of the States, non-tax revenue that the States collect and non-tax grant that the Centre shares with the States) have not been taken into account.

Therefore, if OPS expenditure is calculated correctly then it would be half of 25%. (**Chart 2A**)

Further, the share of pensions falls when the revenues (as a share of State GDP) go up. Therefore, the government should focus on increasing the revenues rather than cutting the expenditures.

#### How can government focus on increasing the revenue for OPS?

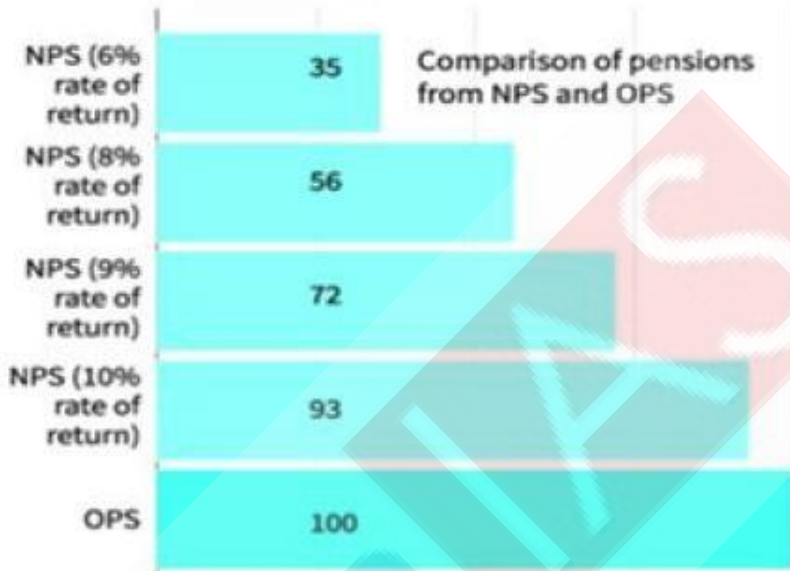
Government earns revenues mostly from the indirect taxes and the share of direct taxes is low. (**Chart 3**)

Therefore, government can focus on increasing the revenues by increasing the direct taxes (ex-corporate taxes) to ensure proper pension can be given to all.

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Further, income can also be generated from property and wealth taxes which are almost zero at the present.

**Chart 1 |** OPS and NPS have been calculated assuming the employee has worked for 35 years. The pension from the OPS has been taken as 100 and the rest are ratios of that. The NPS calculator from the NPS Trust website has been used for calculating the monthly pension. Annuity of 40% is assumed for the calculations. 9% is the current rate of returns in the NPS Central Government scheme

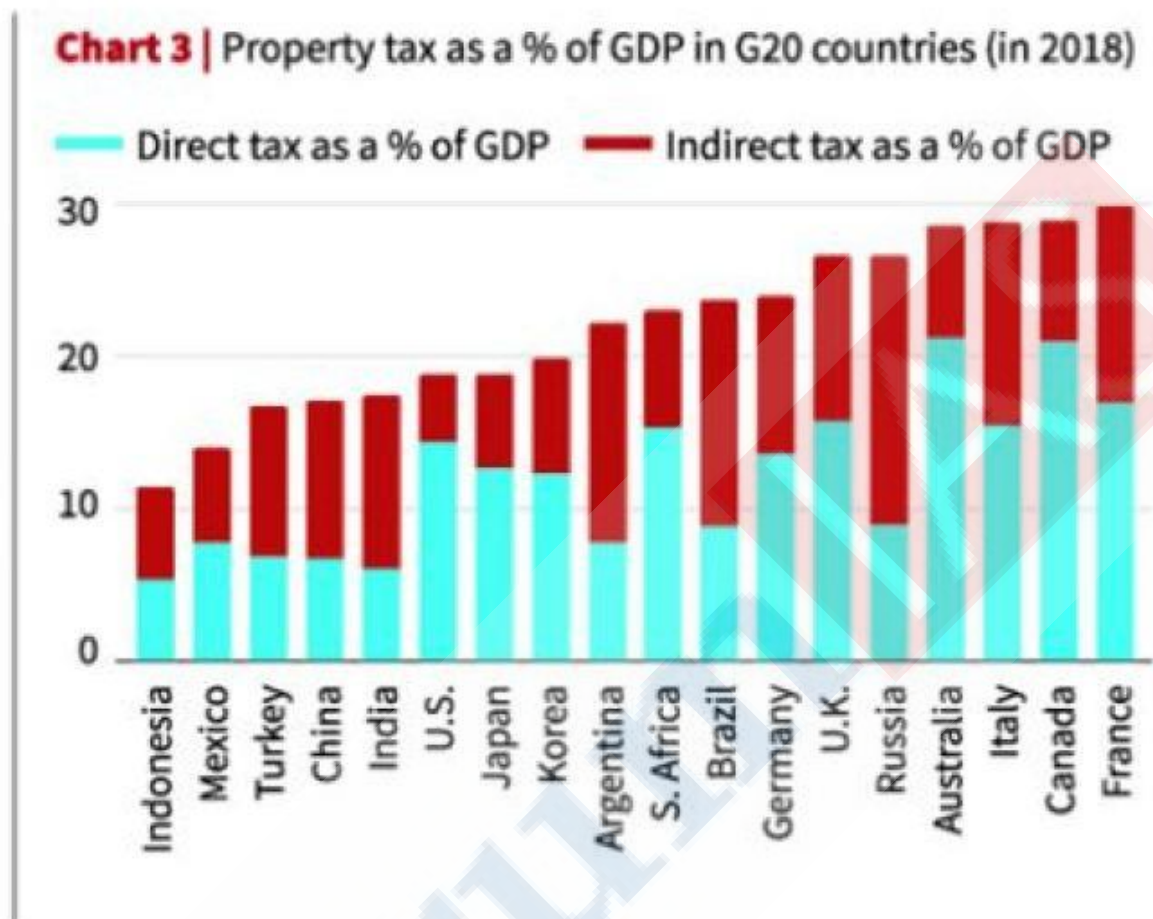


Source: The Hindu

**Chart 2A |** Pensions as a % of revenue receipts and own tax (in 2022)



Source: The Hindu



Source: The Hindu

#### 6. [Reducing the legal burden](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Reducing the legal burden**” published in **Business Standard** on **17<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Governance

**News:** The government is planning to come up with a bill that will be aimed at increasing the ease of doing business in India. The bill is being drafted by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in consultation with the states.

The bill will focus on reducing the punitive measures from imprisonment to fines for a range of minor offences.

**What are the earlier changes made in punitive measures by the government?**

There have been significant changes made in the Companies Act by the government since last year.

**For example**, provisions related to foreign companies and non-compliance by auditors to report fraud have reduced from a prison sentence to monetary fines.

In Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), failure to spend the required amounts attracted a maximum sentence of three years in prison earlier but this has been replaced by a high fine.



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Government has also created an “in-house adjudication” framework with adjudicating officers with the change in some provisions from criminal to civil.

### **What are the advantages of easing the punitive burden on companies?**

**First**, it can create a positive impact on the business environment, especially foreign direct investors, as it reduces the compliance burden.

**Second**, as per the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, these measures will help to focus on major issues rather than focusing on every minor issue.

**Third**, it will also reduce the burden on the National Company Law Tribunal as it will no longer have to give judgements on minor offenses.

### **What are the concerns associated with the reduction in punitive burden?**

**First**, the risk of corruption and political influence remain high as these measures do not reduce the encounter between corporations and the state. It is because adjudicating officers are government employees.

**Second**, companies may view penalties as an acceptable cost of doing business rather than a punishment of non-compliance.

**Third**, the decriminalization of provisions may be wrongly used if it is indiscriminately applied to the laws governing corporate activities.

## 7. [Why Andhra's face recognition system for teacher attendance won't reform education](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Why Andhra's face recognition system for teacher attendance won't reform education**” published in **The Indian Express** on **18th October 2022**.

**Syllabus**: GS2- Issue related to development and management of education

**Relevance**– Issues related to teachers

**News**- The article explains the issues related to the face recognition attendance system that has been put in place in schools in Andhra Pradesh.

### **What is the logic behind this move?**

This policy change is aimed at raising the quality of education and improving the learning experiences of students.

The assumption is that the mere presence of teachers in a school is enough for the students to acquire these abilities.

**What are the issues related to this system?** Teacher absenteeism got recognised as a systemic issue almost four decades ago and became a policy goal soon after that. The policies framed to ensure this have an **inspectorial character rather than a reformatory one**. It focuses on **surveillance mechanisms**. It has not yielded results. The app based system is part of that solution.

A teacher who has to be offered incentives to download an app is expected to build intellectual abilities and make learning inquiry-driven. How marking a teacher's face on an app will lead to the development of intellectual abilities in students remains a puzzle.

### **What is the way forward?**

Issues related to teacher absenteeism require a humanist understanding of teachers as professionals, their predicaments and needs.

Surveillance mechanism fails to understand that teaching is fundamentally a social interaction. It is about students and teachers putting their minds together.

8. [Judicial comity over arithmetic](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Judicial comity over arithmetic**” published in **The Hindu** on **18<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Governance

**Relevance:** Supreme Court judgement

**News:** A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court has held that a judgment delivered by a larger Bench will prevail over the decision of a smaller Bench if the decision is given by the majority of the judges of the larger bench.

This means that out of 7 judges of the larger bench even if 4 judges give the ruling then it would overrule the judgment of the smaller bench. Even if all the judges of the smaller bench have given the judgment unanimously.

**What is the present rule?**

It is a well-established fact in law that the decision of a superior court will always be binding on a lower court and that the decision of a larger Bench will always prevail over a smaller Bench of the same court.

This has been done to ensure stability and consistency in the decisions of the court.

A vast majority of cases before the Supreme Court is heard and decided by a Bench of two judges (Division Bench) or three (full Bench).

The bench with equal number of judges cannot overrule or reconsider a decision of a coordinate Bench.

Further, the doubt and conflict between decisions of co-equal Benches is referred to the Chief Justice of India and this leads to the formation of larger benches.

**What are the problems associated with the larger bench?**

The decision of the majority of the judges is treated as the decision of entire judges of the bench. This raises the issue whether number of judges supporting the judgment should be given priority over the larger bench.

SC cleared this doubt that if number judges is given importance and not the strength of the bench then every decision of a larger bench could be doubted and overruled.

This could make the decisions of the larger bench to fall and be instable. Therefore, the current decision of the SC highlights the **Rule of Precedents**.

**What is the Doctrine of Precedents and what are the problems associated with it?**

The Doctrine of Precedents states that “a decision that has already been taken by a higher court is binding to the lower court and at it also stands as an example to the lower court judgment which cannot be altered by a lower court.”

If this doctrine is followed blindly then it could have serious consequences as the correctness of a decision will be dependent on the decision of the higher court’s bench rather than based on reasons.

However, SC has also said that a decision merely considered by a greater number of judges does not mean that it is correct, especially in the case of decision that has been arrived by a slim majority (4:3).

Therefore, the Doctrine of Precedents holds importance in India but this does not mean that the larger bench/higher court is always correct and there is a way to review its judgment.

**How the Doctrine of Precedents is followed in other countries?**

The issue of the precedent is generally avoided in countries like the US and South Africa.

Whereas, the U.K. and Australia follow a system similar to that of India but the entire act of ‘reconsidering a precedent’ is viewed as a delicate and grave judicial responsibility in these countries.

### **What is the way forward?**

A certain change is required in the composition of larger bench to avoid conflicts arising out of the number judges supporting a ruling.

For example, if a five-judge unanimous decision is referred to a larger Bench, it should be considered by a nine-judge Bench rather than seven, so that it would in any case be decided by a majority of at least five judges.

This will ensure a quorum with a greater majority coming up to the decision than the lower Bench.

### 9. [Let's step up strategic efforts to mobilize India's labour potential](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article **“Let's step up strategic efforts to mobilize India's labour potential”** published in **Live Mint** on **18<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Governance

**Relevance:** ways to utilize demographic dividend in India

**News:** India is at a stage where population growth is expected to slow down in the next two decades along with a significant increase in the share of the working-age population.

This will provide India with a demographic dividend opportunity window. Therefore, India needs policies for its majority working age population to ensure labour force mobilization.

### **What does the data say?**

As per the National Sample Survey Office's Periodic Labour Force Survey 2020-21, India's labour force participation rate for all age groups is around 41.6% (57.5% for males, 25% for females).

It is also expected that India's working age population will grow roughly by 9.7 million per year from 2021 to 2031 and 4.2 million annually in the 2031-41 period.

However, mobilizing the demographic dividend into the workforce is major issue. Therefore, the competitiveness framework can act as a base for India to understand the drivers of labour force mobilization.

### **What is competitiveness approach and how can it be beneficial?**

The competitiveness approach defines national competitiveness in terms of the expected level of output per potential worker.

The 'output per potential worker' indicates a larger productivity. It includes the productivity of the employed as well as the ability of a country to mobilize its working-age population.

The term 'potential' indicates the economic growth by not only including the employed workforce but also including the total workforce that can be utilized in an economy.

Therefore, competitiveness is linked to both components of output per potential worker – a) output per employed person and b) the ability of a country to mobilize its workforce.

This competitiveness approach could be useful for understanding drivers of labour mobilization and it would also help in utilizing the country's demographic dividend and formulate policies accordingly.

However, the potential to mobilize the labour force depends on multiple factors. One of the most important factors is the creation of jobs. Jobs should increase with the increasing working-age population.

### **What steps have been taken by India to ensure job creation?**

As per Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme across 14 sectors has the potential to generate 6 million jobs over the next five years.

Around 55.6 million people have undergone skill training since 2015 under the Skill India Mission and through various skill development programmes.

However, out of these workforces the participation of women is not up to the mark.

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### What are the problems with the women in labour force market?

As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey Annual Report 2020-21, the all-India female labour force participation rate (LFPR) has increased to 25.1%, as compared to 22.8% a year ago.

However, female workforce participation continues to remain at a low level in India due to a number of factors such as lack of jobs, the burden of unpaid care work, and cultural norms.

### What is the way forward for India?

**First**, India needs efforts to promote greater labour force mobilization that facilitates multiple entry points for an individual into the labour force.

**Second**, skilling should not only be limited a working age (20 to 65) but it should be a lifelong task along with the regular upgradation of skills.

**Third**, India also needs to make efforts for greater labour mobilization in different states as the working-age population varies across Indian states.

- According to the Economic Survey 2019-20, the size of the working-age population will start to decline in 11 out of 22 major states (Punjab, Maharashtra, West Bengal, etc.) during 2031-41.

Therefore, it is important to take account these variations and come up with a holistic and robust policy for mobilizing labour force participation.

### 10. [Fact-Checking The HDI Tally](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Fact-Checking The HDI Tally**” published in **The Times of India** on **18<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

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

**Relevance:** About the concerns associated with the Human Development Index, 2022.

**News:** The Human Development Index is the second most widely used indicator for measuring economic progress after national income statistics (GDP). India’s rank has not improved over the last two decades and declined by one place in 2022.

About Human Development Index-2022?

**Read more:** [India ranks 132 in UNDP’s Human Development Index, amid a global fall](#)

What are the challenges associated with the HDI-2022?

**Calculating life expectancy at birth:** The estimate used for India was cut by 3. 67 years (70. 9 years to 67. 2 years) from 2019 to 2021. The UN agency claims that this cut reflects Covid-related mortality but this has a few serious flaws. Such as,

**a)** It is a conceptual mistake to lower life expectancy at birth because of a virus that, according to evidence, only kills adults.

**b)** The UNDP did not explain its saying that Covid will be around in 20 years to impact today’s newborns with the same virulence as at its peak in 2020-21.

**c)** The UNDP adjusted India’s mortality rates for “excess deaths” from Covid as estimated by WHO. This is in addition to the adjustment routinely done on grounds that India’s data is underreported. But, India objected to WHO estimates in May 2022 by pointing out various flaws in their methodology – such as the use of media reports and the use of parameters like test positivity rate.

**Read here:** [WHO estimates 4.7 million COVID-19-linked deaths in India](#)

**d)** The UN’s reduction of 3. 67 years in India’s life expectancy is not justified even after including WHO’s flawed numbers. On the other hand, the cut in life expectancy for the US is 1. 94 years, UK 0. 98 years, Italy 0. 70 years, Brazil 2. 7 years – all substantially lower than for India.

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This shows a series of “adjustments” by UNDP has ended up skewing the Indian data and rankings.

What needs to be done?

**Government need to publish authentic data:** Indian government departments need to publish data in time for important indices. This may be a problem as India’s financial year runs three months behind the calendar year, but an advance estimate can be published and revised later (same as for GDP).

**Indian agencies should calculate relevant indicators:** Indian agencies should not just provide raw data to external agencies but take the extra step of calculating the relevant indicator. This is not difficult as standard methodologies are available.

For instance, the Registrar General of India should publish an official estimate for life expectancy every year. This will reduce the scope for manipulation by external agencies and put the burden of proof on them.

**Read more:** [The solution to India’s stunted improvement on the Human Development Index: Improving access to quality education](#)

Overall, Indian government departments need to proactively engage with international indices and surveys – both to provide timely data and to challenge inaccurate estimates where appropriate.

### 11. [Regulation of wellness vs wealth offers a contrasting picture](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Regulation of wellness vs wealth offers a contrasting picture**” published in the **Business Standard** on **18<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

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

**Relevance:** About the state regulation in the health sector.

**News:** Regulation is a form of state intervention to correct market failures. Recent reports of exports of substandard paediatric drugs and the last two years of the pandemic experience have brought attention to the state “regulation” of the health and wellness sector.

Why State regulation is essential in finance?

State intervention is necessary when the free market yields inefficient and poor outcomes. Regulation usually involves the creation of arm’s length statutory authorities that are empowered and autonomous and accountable for outcomes.

The financial sector is much better regulated than it was when the government directly regulated the sector. For example,

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** regulates banking and payment systems and conducts monetary policy, autonomously.

The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi)** regulates the securities market.

How does state regulation in the financial sector evolve?

The implementation of recommendations of expert committees and parliamentary oversight led to changes to keep up with evolving domestic developments and global best practices.

The continuing problems of consumer protection and technological developments, like fintech, call for revisiting these issues periodically.

What is the present status of state regulation in the health sector?

Like in the financial sector of the early 1990s, it is the Ministry of Health that continues to be the primary regulator. For example, the law on drugs and the law on clinical establishments empower the Ministry of Health and not any arm’s length statutory agency.

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There are nine national regulators for the “wellness” sector. This includes, recently a regulator has been created for allied healthcare professionals like physiotherapists, optometrists and over 50 other professionals who support diagnosis and treatment.

There are separate regulators for rehabilitation professionals like speech therapists, clinical psychologists, hearing aid and ear-mould technicians; special teachers for educating and training the handicapped and so on.

**Read more:** [State control in the financial sector: Azadi of the financial sector](#)

Why state regulation in the health sector is challenging?

Regulating health sector is an incredibly complex because

**a)** The Constitution of India allocates the subject of health to both the Union and the states. **b)** Focusing only on the Union, India has a statutory regulatory authority for setting and enforcing standards for food safety and one non-statutory authority for the safety of drugs and pharmaceuticals and one for regulating the prices of some of them.

**c)** The regulation of the wellness sector necessarily involves regulating health sector professionals. So, the regulation should have authority for regulating the medical, dental nursing and pharmacist professions.

How state regulation in the health sector is different from state regulation in the financial sector?

**a)** Financial sector regulators are empowered by law to write regulations to carry out the purposes of the law. On the other hand, eight of the nine regulators in the wellness sector need government approval for issuing regulations. The one exception is the National Medical Commission (NMC) created in 2019 to replace the Medical Council of India.

**b)** The governing boards of all the financial sector regulators have the power to determine the human resources required by them as well as their terms and conditions of employment. But, none of the wellness regulators have these powers and need government approval for such decisions.

**Read more:** [The complex world of regulators](#)

So, the regulation of wellness deserves much greater attention from scholars, policy-makers and the parliament.

### 12. [Global Hunger Index: Menace of malnutrition continues to haunt India](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Global Hunger Index: Menace of malnutrition continues to haunt India**” published in the **Business Standard** on **19<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

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

**Relevance:** About the Global Hunger Index, 2022 and the menace of malnutrition.

**News:** The poor ranking of India on the Global Hunger Index (GHI) and the government’s refusal have become almost an annual ritual over the past few years. But the government has to work on reducing malnutrition in India.

About the recent Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2022

**Read here:** [Global Hunger Index is out, India in ‘serious’ category at rank 107](#)

This year, India ranked lowly at 107 among 121 countries. Last year, India was ranked 101 out of 116 countries, while in 2020 it was slotted at 94<sup>th</sup> position.

Why did India discount the GHI findings?

**Read here**

- [Global Hunger Index and India’s stand – Explained, pointwise](#)
- [ExplainSpeaking: Reading Global Hunger Index and Indian govt’s response](#)

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What is the menace of malnutrition in India?

India has the world's largest food distribution system and a slew of nutrition-oriented welfare schemes for supplying highly subsidised or free food to vulnerable sections of the population. But despite that malnutrition is still rampant in the country. This is because,

**a)** Schemes such as mid-day meal scheme and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana have **banished stark hunger**, as used to be reflected in starvation deaths in the past, and reduction in the level of undernourishment. But, they did **not focus on malnutrition**.

**b)** None of the existing schemes focuses on the basic need for balanced and wholesome food, which alone can alleviate malnutrition or hidden hunger.

**c)** The prevalence of nutritional deficiencies and the resultant wasting and stunting (impaired growth) of kids are mentioned in the **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)**, whose authenticity is unquestionable.

For instance, **1)** NFHS-5 have shown that though the level of undernourishment and malnourishment has shown a downward trend over the past few years, it is still a matter of grave concern, **2)** The incidence of anaemia among under-five children has escalated from 58.6 per cent to 67 per cent since 2015-16, **3)** The proportion of overweight children has surged from 2.1 per cent to 3.4 per cent since 2015-16.

What needs to be done to reduce the menace of malnutrition in India?

The menace of malnutrition should no longer be taken lightly and needs serious corrective action aimed at improving the consumption of diverse and nutritious foods like millet, fruit, vegetables, and protein-rich vegetarian and non-vegetarian products.

### 13. [Focus On PhD Quality, Not Publications](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article "**Focus On PhD Quality, Not Publications**" published in **The Times of India** on **19<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 2 – Social Justice**

**Relevance:** **problems associated with the UGC guidelines**

**News:** University Grants Commission (UGC) came with PhD regulations in 2016. It prescribed that PhD scholars must publish at least one research paper in a refereed journal before submitting the thesis.

This mandatory publication condition was introduced by UGC because the doctoral thesis screening is not strict enough. However, this mandatory provision has led to the publishing of low quality of journals.

**What does the report say?**

According to a recent study conducted by UGC for three years (2017-19), only 19% published more than one journal paper. Whereas nearly 75% of the students were forced to publish in journals that are not Scopus-indexed.

There have been instances that humanities students have published less Scopus-indexed journals when compared to other stream. This highlights the problems faced by the students of humanities stream.

Further, the primary aim of PhD work is to make unique contributions to a chosen discipline by creating new knowledge. Publication of a research paper is a complementary effort.

Therefore, primary focus should be on maintaining the quality of the journal.

**How quality of PhD can be maintained or improved?**

**First**, there should be proper mentoring of the students by the supervisors. The supervisor should advise the student to take appropriate courses and train in research methodology, teamwork and communication skills.

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**Second**, there is a need for the members of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) to play an active role as the student gets feedback from the committee on maintaining the quality of research work.

**Third**, there is a need that the external examiners should send their feedback suggesting minor or significant corrections to the thesis.

Moreover, there are efforts also required from the universities.

### **What are efforts required by the universities in PhD field?**

**First**, universities should strengthen the monitoring process of PhD work at various levels. It will lead to high-quality publications and a well-trained researcher.

**Second**, universities should train and encourage PhD students to publish, present at conferences and apply for patents.

Moreover, publishing of journal is time consuming. Therefore, making it mandatory to publish a research paper before the submission of the thesis can put extreme pressure on students and force them to publish in low quality journals.

### [14. Clean It Up More](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Clean It Up More**” published in **The Times of India** on **19<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Governance

**Relevance:** problems associated with electoral bonds

**News:** There are lots of money spent in fighting elections. Political parties often receive funding for elections from different sources.

These sources of funds are mostly anonymous therefore an effort was needed to make the system transparent. This led to the introduction of electoral bonds.

### **What are electoral bonds?**

Electoral bonds were introduced in 2018. It set a limit of Rs 2000 for anonymous cash donations. Further, electoral bonds in denominations ranging from Rs 1,000 to Rs 1 crore can be issued by the State Bank of India to an Indian citizen.

They can further use these bonds in donating the amount to any political party of their choice. More than Rs 10,000 crore worth of bonds have been issued till 2022.

Moreover, as per Solicitor General electoral bonds are the transparent mode of political funding. Therefore, it is impossible for political parties to convert these bonds into black money.

However, the claim of the Solicitor General cannot be relied and there are problems associated with the electoral bonds.

### **What are the problems with the electoral bonds?**

**First**, these bonds do not improve transparency as the name of the donor is hidden from the public and other political parties.

**Second**, according to the Association for Democratic Reform, over 90% of the amounts issued are in the Rs 1 crore slab. This amount must have come from the very rich individuals or corporations which is also a concern.

**Third**, public cannot judge whether these donations were made out of goodwill or there were ill-intentions involved.

**Fourth**, the Election Commission had also objected to the bonds.

**Fifth**, these bonds are issued by the public sector bank. Therefore, there are chances that the incumbent government can get the details of the donors donating to the non-incumbent parties which may create problem for the donors.



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Moreover, another problem with the electoral bonds is that it provides advantages to incumbent governments/party and the money obtained from electoral bonds is considered white money as it is legal.

### **How do electoral bonds provide advantages to incumbent parties?**

**First**, those parties using unaccounted cash could come under investigation which will allow the governing party to easily label them corrupt.

**Second**, the incumbent could use its white money to influence the voters and spend in the campaigns whereas non-incumbent parties may face scrutiny under the investigation agencies for using black money for the campaigns.

**Third**, elections today are fought on the digital media (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.) using digital campaigns. These social media need white money which provides advantage to the incumbent party.

**Fourth**, the incumbent parties generally receive more donation due to their popularity or power. Therefore, the problem with electoral bonds is they make clean payments easier for the incumbent and hard for others. So, there is a need to ensure a level-playing field for non-incumbent parties.

### 15. [India@75 looking at 100: A young achiever's dream for Indian education](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**India@75 looking at 100: A young achiever's dream for Indian education**” published in **The Indian Express** on **19<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice**

**Relevance:** changes required in the higher education in India

**News:** The article discusses the change required in the education system in India.

Education system in India has undergone significant changes with the time. It is expected to further change with the New Education Policy, 2020.

However, there are certain problems present in the higher education system in India and these needs to be addressed.

### **How higher education system in India can change?**

**Accessibility:** There is a need that education especially at the higher levels should be easily accessible by all strata of the society.

**Research:** More institutions should be devoted towards research activities. This leads to enhanced learning.

**Competition:** There is also a need to ease the competition for higher education.

**Skill based:** Education needs to be skill based as there are many schools that lack experiential learning. This has also been included in the New Education Policy, 2020.

**Number of teachers:** There should be a greater number of teachers as teachers are very important for the education system.

**Self-Reliant:** On the part of students, they should understand their own responsibility and become self-reliant. This will stop spoon feeding by teachers.

**Gender equality:** There is also need to provide equal opportunities to women in all the sectors including education in higher studies.

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### 16. [US sanctions targeting China's semiconductor industry are a gamble aimed at maintaining American hegemony](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**US sanctions targeting China's semiconductor industry are a gamble aimed at maintaining American hegemony**” published in **The Indian Express** on **20<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 2 – International Relations**

**Relevance:** **US-China bilateral relations and its effect on the world order**

**News:** The US has recently come up with tough export regulations targeting China's semiconductor industry. These barriers are affecting other countries as well.

**What are the reasons behind imposing such sanctions?**

**Hegemony:** America wants to maintain its hegemony by imposing sanctions on China. This sanction may also benefit the allies of America. However, it will impact the global trading and the financial order as economy today is interdependent.

**Humiliation:** America has come up with the sanctions just before the Party Congress in China to humiliate it. It also shows neo-colonial mentality of America. However, it is expected that China will also retaliate.

**What will be the consequences of such sanction?**

**Partnership:** The current sanction will further degrade the relationship of US-China. Moreover, it can also improve the partnership of other countries with the US as countries around the world is looking forward to import technology and finance from the US. This sanction can also see China's increasing effort towards BRI, etc.

**Global supply chains:** The sanction will affect the global supply chain order and create uncertainty. It may create opportunity for countries like India but the gains from this opportunity will not be much as it will affect the world trading system.

**Strategic consequences:** China poses a threat to invade Taiwan but invading Taiwan will be determined by military the possibility of its success. So, it is not clear whether American steps can weaken China or can affect the technology development in China.

**Climate change:** It is the most pressing issue that require global attention. However, this issue has now gone into backyard.

Therefore, there are multiple angles of these sanctions and it is tough to come to a conclusion of the consequences. However, one consequence of the sanction is very clear that is the disruption in the global trade.

### 17. [Why the Election Commission's strategy to name and shame voters won't help](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Why the Election Commission's strategy to name and shame voters won't help**” published in **The Indian Express** on **20<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 2 – Governance**

**Relevance:** **issues associated with the recent MoU done by the Election Commission of India**

**News:** The Election Commission of India has signed MoUs with over 1,000 corporate companies. The undertaking is to monitor electoral participation of their workforce and publish on their websites and notice boards those who do not vote.

The Chief Electoral Officer of Gujarat has also said that the employees of state public sector units and government departments who don't vote will also be tracked.

**What are the concerns associated with MoUs?**

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**Violates Fundamental Rights:** The Supreme Court (PUCL vs Union of India, 2013) also known as NOTA judgment has held that abstention from voting and negative voting are protected under the fundamental right as freedom of expression (Article 19).

It has further said that free and fair election is a basic structure of the Constitution. Therefore, an arbitrary distinction between a voter who casts and a voter who does not cast his vote is violative of Article 14.

**Violates Representation of People Act, 1951 and IPC:** Section 79 D of the RPA, 1951 defines “electoral right” which says the right of a person to... vote or refrain from vote at an election”. The same provision exists in the Indian Penal Code under Section 171A (b).

Further, it also raises issues of voters’ rights, and secrecy of voting, etc. as protection of elector’s identity and affording secrecy is integral to free and fair elections

### **What can be the course of action?**

The objective of increasing the participation of the voters in the election can be achieved through systematic voter education. It has already applied by the ECI since 2010 and the programme is called SVEEP (Systematic Voters Education for Electoral Participation).

This program motivates the youth and has also seen the involvement of school and colleges including business enterprises to create awareness amongst voters.

Therefore, it is not wise to use compulsion in voter but persuasion and motivation by education is the best method.

### 18. Held up by the Chinese – On UNSC Sanctions Committee Proposal

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Held up by the Chinese**” published in **The Hindu** on **20<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – International Relations

**Relevance:** China’s veto power in UNSC and its effect on India

**News:** China recently placed a “hold” on a joint India-U.S. proposal to designate Lashkar-e-Taiba commander Shahid Mehmood under the United Nations Security Council’s (UNSC) 1267 list of terrorists affiliated to Al Qaeda and ISIS.

### **What is 1267 committee?**

It was set up in 1999 (updated in 2011 and 2015). It maintains the list of terrorist group affiliated to Al Qaeda and ISIS.

It allows that any UN member state can propose the name that could be added to a consolidated list of terrorist group.

However, placing a hold by a member country prevents the name to be added to the list.

### **What does “placing a hold” mean?**

The rules of 1267 committee states that names of the terrorist can only be added as per **no objection procedure**, followed by the member nations of UNSC.

If any member of UNSC places a hold on the listing of the name then that name cannot be added to the consolidated list of terror groups.

Since China is a permanent member of UNSC, it has used its veto multiple times.

Further, if any country places a hold on the proposed name, then 1267 committee is bound to resolve such issued within six months. The holding country has to decide whether to accept the listing or place a permanent objection to it.

### **What are the reasons behind placing a hold by China?**

One of the important reasons could be the close bilateral ties between Pakistan and China.

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**For example,** China kept placing a hold on the UNSC terror listing proposals for Masood Azhar in 2009, 2010, 2016-18. It claimed it had inadequate information. However, China withdrew its hold in 2019.

Further, as per Chinese ambassador, China places a hold because it needs time to study these specific cases. He further said that placing a hold does not mean that China has changed its position on counter-terrorism cooperation efforts.

Moreover, India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ruchira Khamboj had asked to end the practice of placing holds and blocks on listing requests.

### **What are other efforts are taken by India?**

India has consistently tried to build international consensus on cross-border terrorism.

Its effort was seen when Pakistan was placed on grey list under the Financial Action Task Force due to its inability to curb terror financing and money laundering from 2012-2015 and 2018-2022.

Finally, India and the U.S. have built their own separate list of most wanted terrorists with a view to eventually receiving global cooperation on banning them.

### 19. Dilip Mahalanabis: The ORS pioneer who helped save millions of lives

**Source-** The post is based on the article "**Dilip Mahalanabis: The ORS pioneer who helped save millions of lives**" published in **The Indian Express** on **20th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Development and management of health. GS1- Post independence

**Relevance-** Contribution of India towards diseases caused by polluted water and malnutrition.

**News-** The article explains the contribution of Dilip Mahalanabis for application of ORS to treat Cholera and acute diarrhoeal diseases

### **What is Oral Rehydration therapy?**

Oral Rehydration Therapy involves providing drinking water with modest amounts of sugar and salts, specifically sodium and potassium. It treats dehydration due to fluid losses from diarrhoea. Earlier fluids were administered through an intravenous route for the management of cholera. Only sips of water without food were provided. It worsened the underlying malnutrition problems.

### **How ORT proved to be beneficial for the world?**

An estimated 54 million diarrhoeal deaths were averted by ORT alone between 1978 and 2000. A Lancet editorial in 1978 termed it as potentially the most important medical advance in India. As per the *Current Science* article in 2019, "ORT remains the greatest contribution from the Indian subcontinent towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals".

**How did ORT get recognition across the world?** ORT for the management of severe diarrhoea was developed in the latter half 1960s.

There was belief among professionals that ORT should be supervised by doctors.

Seventh cholera pandemic started in Indonesia in 1961 and spread to East Pakistan (Bangladesh) by 1963 and to India in 1964.

It spread to refugee camps of Bangladeshis in India during the 1971 war. Mahalanabis' team was treating cases of the cholera epidemic in a refugee camp in West Bengal.

He decided to use ORS. He mixed salt and sugar solution (ORS) in drums and administered it to the cholera patients in the camps. It was evident after some time that therapy was working and it was possible to administer it through volunteers. ORS reduced mortality due to cholera or acute diarrhoeal diseases in these camps from 40 per cent to 5 per cent.

It was then recognised by WHO. It launched a worldwide campaign in 1978 to reduce mortality related to diarrhoea, with ORT as one of the key elements.

### **What were the other contributions of Dilip Mahalanabis?**

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He served in the Diarrhoeal Disease Control Programme at the WHO.

In 1990, he established the Society for Applied Studies (SAS) in West Bengal with a vision of “Improved Health and Quality of Life” in India and other developing countries, especially for children and women.

### 20. [Death of a worker: Qatar deaths should prod a reorienting of public policy for migrant workers](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Death of a worker: Qatar deaths should prod a reorienting of public policy for migrant workers**” published in **The Indian Express** on **21st October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Indian diaspora

**Relevance**– India relations with gulf countries

**News**- The article explains the issues faced by migrant workers in Gulf countries.

An investigation by the Indian Express has found that at least 40 people have died in Qatar since 2010 when FIFA awarded World Cup 2022 to the Gulf kingdom. These deaths are under-reported by authorities in Qatar.

#### **What are the issues faced by migrant workers in gulf countries?**

Over 8 million Indians live and work in the Gulf countries and their annual remittances constitute over \$25 billion. A majority of them are semi-skilled or unskilled. Hence they are vulnerable to exploitation by employers.

Many of them are recruited through the visa sponsorship system. It ties a foreign worker’s residency permit to an employer. This system is exploited by agents and employers to recruit labours desperate for employment.

The administrations in Gulf nations are non-transparent. It does not recognise labour rights.

The availability of cheap and footloose global labour also reduces their bargaining power.

#### **What is the way forward?**

The Responsibility of ensuring the well-being of the migrant workforce also lies with the both Union and state governments in India.

The migrants should be provided **pre-departure training**. It will help inform migrant workers about their rights and equip them to deal with crises at labour sites and camps.

**Indian embassies** need to prioritise the concerns of migrant workers. The Centre could start a conversation with governments in the Gulf on improving oversight in contract enforcement and labour welfare.

The governments at Union and state levels should learn from **best practices** followed by some states. Kerala is one such example. It has created institutional checks and systems to build a safety net for migrant workers.

The nodal agency for non-resident Keralites, **NORKA ROOTS** offers personal accident insurance cover upto Rs 4 lakh and critical care coverage of Rs 1 lakh. It also liaison with Gulf-based community organisations and the government in critical situations.

### 21. [Global Hunger Index: A lesson in how not to measure hunger](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Global Hunger Index: A lesson in how not to measure hunger**” published in **The Indian Express** on **21st October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Issues related to hunger

**Relevance**– Estimation of hunger and malnutrition

**News**- The article explains the issue with the Global Hunger Index.

In the recently released Global Hunger Index, India ranked 107 out of 123 countries.

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### **What are the issues related with methodology of Global Hunger Index?**

About a third of the index rests on the Food and Agricultural Organisation's estimates of the proportion of undernourished in the population. These estimates are based on Gallup World Poll's survey of 3,000 households in India.

The sample of the Gallup survey is small and not representative. There is a lack of transparency as data used by Gallup surveys is not available in the public domain.

FAO has not released standard errors for their estimates. It makes it difficult for us to evaluate whether data is statistically significant.

### **Does this index genuinely measure hunger?**

The index rests on four indicators: Proportion of undernourished in the population, under-five mortality rate, prevalence of stunting and wasting in children under five. The last three indicators come from the National Family Health Survey for India.

First indicator identifies the proportion experiencing hunger. But the latter three are only partially related to hunger.

Child mortality depends heavily on a country's disease climate and public health systems. Many child deaths are associated with conditions surrounding birth, congenital conditions, or delivery complications. These are not necessarily markers of hunger.

The relationship between stunting, wasting and hunger is not apparent. UNICEF says that poverty is not a clear cause of stunting as there are stunted children even among the wealthiest households.

Various factors contribute to stunting, such as infant and child care practices, hygiene, dietary diversity and cultural practices surrounding maternal diet during pregnancy. Wasting is associated both with recent illness and low food intake.

Recent year trends of three indicators show their different patterns. NFHS surveys show that the child mortality rate fell from 95 deaths per thousand in 1998 to 40 per thousand in 2019. Child stunting decline was also substantial, from 51.5% to 35.5%. Wasting has not changed. It was 19.5% in 1998 and 19.3% in 2019.

### **What are the impacts of too much focus upon this index?**

It directs governmental attention to cross-national comparisons. It leads to neglect of underlying issues.

Amartya Sen has also expressed concerns that concentrating too much on the Human Development Index or any other index would be a great mistake.

### 22. An online fight where children need to be saved

**Source:** The post is based on the article **"An online fight where children need to be saved"** published in **The Hindu** on **22st October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Social justice

**Relevance:** Efforts needed to prevent CSAM

**News:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recently conducted a pan-India operation called "Megh Chakra". This operation was against the online circulation and sharing of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) using cloud-based storage.

### **What is the law in India regarding CSAM?**

The law in India allows viewing adult pornography in private whereas browsing, downloading or exchanging child pornography is a punishable offence under the IT Act.

However, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are exempted from liability for any third-party data if they do not initiate the transmission.

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The public reporting of circulation of online CSAM is very low in India and there is no system of automatic electronic monitoring. Therefore, India's enforcement agencies are mostly dependent on foreign agencies for information.

### **How are countries around the world taking action against CSAM?**

**USA:** National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) is a non-profit organization in the US. It operates a programme called **Cyber Tipline**. This programme is meant for public and electronic service providers (ESPs) to report instances of suspected child sexual exploitation. It also notifies ISPs to block the transmission of online CSAM.

**UK:** Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) is a non-profit organisation in the UK. It is established by the United Kingdom's Internet industry to ensure a safe online environment for users with a particular focus on CSAM.

**INHOPE:** It is a global network of 46 member countries that has 50 hotlines to report CSAM. It provides a secure IT infrastructure called ICCAM which is hosted by Interpol. It facilitates the exchange of CSAM reports between hotlines and law enforcement agencies.

### **What efforts have been made by India to prevent CSAM?**

**Supreme Court Judgement:** SC in Shreya Singhal (2015) case read Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act. SC said that the ISP shall remove or disable access to illegal content if notified by the government or court.

In **Kamlesh Vaswani (2013) case**, the advisory committee (constituted under Section 88 of the IT Act) issued orders to ISPs to disable nine URLs which hosted contents in violation of the morality and decency clause of Article 19(2) of the Constitution.

**NGO:** 'Aarambh India' is a Mumbai-based non-governmental organization. It launched India's first online reporting portal in 2016 with the partnership of IWF to report images and videos of child abuse.

**Government:** The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) launched a national cybercrime reporting portal in 2018 for filing online complaints related to child pornography and gang rape.

This was developed to comply with SC directions after a PIL was filed by Prajwala, a Hyderabad-based NGO that rescues and rehabilitates sex trafficking survivors.

Further, the National Crime Records Bureau signed a MoU with the NCMEC in 2019 to receive CyberTipline reports to take action against those who upload or share CSAM in India.

**Parliamentary Committee:** The ad hoc Committee of the Rajya Sabha, headed by Jairam Ramesh raised concern about pornography on social media and recommended broadening the definition of 'child pornography'.

It also said that proper monitoring along with blocking of CSAM by ISPs should be done.

It further recommended building partnerships with the industry to develop tools using AI for dark-web investigations and tracing the identity of users engaged in cryptocurrency transactions to purchase child pornography online.

This shows that there are different steps taken by different organizations in India. However, there is more to be done.

### **What can be a further course of action?**

**First,** India needs to join INHOPE and establishes its hotline to utilise Interpol's secure IT infrastructure.

**Second,** it also needs to collaborate with ISPs and financial companies by establishing an independent facility such as the IWF or NCMEC.

**Third,** the Jairam Ramesh committee's recommendations must be followed up seriously and the Prajwala case should be brought to a logical end.

# General Studies Paper – 3



General Studies - 3

1. [About food-processing industry: Food growers can be processors too](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Food growers can be processors too**” published in the **Business Standard** on **17th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Food Processing and Related Industries in India

**Relevance:** About the present state of India’s food-processing industry(FPIs)

**News:** The food-processing industry, despite impressive growth over the past few years, has failed to effectively serve its prime objectives of bolstering farmers’ incomes and curtailing wastage of farm produce.

About the present state of India’s food-processing industry(FPIs)

Given that India is among the world’s top producers of many key farm commodities. The country ranks first in the production of milk; second in that of fruit, vegetables and fisheries; and third in eggs. It also produces a variety of health foods and therapeutically important herbs which can be processed into nutritious snacks and other kinds of high-value products for domestic and export markets.

The gross value added (GVA) of the food-processing sector has surged from Rs 1.34 trillion in 2014-15 to Rs 2.37 trillion in 2020-21.

What are the various initiatives taken by the government to improve the FPIs?

A favourable policy environment is said to have played a major role in the rapid expansion of this sector.

-The government has allowed 100% foreign direct investment under the automatic route for manufacturing and retail trading, including e-commerce, of food products made in India.

-Besides, it has extended the Production-Linked Incentive Scheme to this industry to impart further impetus to its growth.

–[Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana](#)

–[PM-Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme](#)

What are the challenges associated with the present state of India’s food-processing industry?

**a)** The gains from the value-addition of agricultural products are accruing largely to the industry rather than the farmers, **b)** The post-harvest losses of farm output continue to be rather high — up to 40% in some perishable items. In monetary terms, these losses are assessed at Rs 60,000-80,000 crore annually, **c)** Hardly 10% of the farm harvest is subjected to some kind of value-enhancing treatment or processing and **d)** The obligation of processing units to procure raw material from markets operated by agricultural produce marketing committees (regulated mandis).

What are the reasons for the present state of India’s food-processing industry?

This can be attributed to numerous reasons, such as **a)** Inept post-harvest handling, transportation, storage, and marketing the produce; **b)** A low level of on-farm processing to enhance the value and extend the shelf-life of the harvested stuff; and **c)** lack of direct linkage between growers and processors.

Why do small and micro food-processing units economically more viable than the larger ones?

This is because, **a)** The perishable and seasonal nature of farm produce and its scattered availability in small lots; **b)** Paucity of commodity-specific warehousing and transportation facilities; and **c)** The issues related to product quality, especially in terms of its suitability for processing.

What needs to be done to improve the present state of India’s food-processing industry?

**a)** Value-enhancing treatment needs to be stepped up substantially, at least to 25%, to reduce spoilage, and facilitate the year-round availability of seasonal agricultural products. It will

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generate additional income for farmers and off-farm employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for rural people, **b)** Promote small-scale and village-level agro-processing units even while continuing to support the organised sector food-processing industry, and **c)** Farmers need to be encouraged to set up mini or micro agro-processing centres, individually or collectively, through cooperatives or farmers' producer organisations.

### 2. [Empowering farmers is essential for the broad prosperity of India](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Empowering farmers is essential for the broad prosperity of India**" published in the **Livemint** on **17th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Issues related to Direct and Indirect Farm Subsidies and Minimum Support Prices

**Relevance:** About the fertilizer sector.

**News:** To realise the vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' in agriculture, structural changes in the fertilizer sector are crucial.

#### **What are the various initiatives taken in the fertilizer sector?**

**Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samridhhi Kendra (PMKSK) scheme:** It will have one-of-a-kind 'model fertilizer retail shops' that shall offer various facilities under a single roof. The farmers get fertilizers and other inputs at cheaper rates under a single roof, adopt new technologies to enhance their farm production and are able to earn higher incomes.

These Kendras will also provide an interactive platform for knowledge sharing to create awareness among farmers on the latest and best agriculture technology and practices, as well as on the balanced use of fertilizers.

**At the village level,** Kendras will aid farmers with crop literature, soil fertility maps, messages from government authorities and data on the stock position of fertilizers, subsidies, marked retail prices, etc.

**Tehsil level** Kendras will have facilities like a help desk on new-age fertilizers and government schemes, a crop advisory, tele-consultation with experts, a common service centre, soil testing facility and sample collection unit for seed and pesticide testing, etc.

**District-level Kendras** will have all facilities at a larger scale, with the entire product range showcased, enlarged seating capacity, testing facilities for soil, seeds, water and pesticides, and a common service centre.

**Training of retailers:** It will be conducted every six months. Agricultural scientists and agriculture experts will also be engaged for training retailers on various topics.

**Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Urvarak Pariyojana:** Under the slogan 'One Nation, One Fertiliser' India shall have a single brand, Bharat, for all types of major fertilizers.

**Must read:** [What are Rythu Bharosa Kendras that are being visited by an Ethiopian delegation?](#)

#### **What are the advantages of both schemes?**

**a)** The concept of 'One Nation, One Fertiliser' will help farmers overcome their confusion over brand-specific choices, as all DAP fertilizer brands must have 18% nitrogen and 46% phosphorus, **b)** Maximize farm production by ensuring easy availability of fertilizers and other agri services to farmers at affordable prices, and **c)** Promote balanced nutrient application, which is essential for sustained agricultural growth as well as the prosperity of the farmers.

### 3. [Securing India's cyberspace](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Securing India's cyberspace**” published in **The Indian Express** on **17th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Basics of cyber security

**Relevance**– Military application of quantum technology and its challenges for internal security.

**News-** The article explains the vulnerability of India cyberspace due to military applications of quantum technology. It also suggests the way forward to deal with these challenges.

#### **What are advances by India in the field of quantum technology?**

The Indian Army is developing cryptographic techniques to make its networks resistant to attacks by systems with quantum capabilities.

In 2019, the Centre declared quantum technology a “**mission of national importance**”. The Union Budget 2020-21 had proposed to spend Rs 8,000 crore on the newly launched **National Mission on Quantum Technologies and Applications**.

A joint team of the Defence Research and Development Organisation and IIT Delhi has successfully demonstrated a **QKD link** between two cities in UP, Prayagraj and Vindhyachal.

#### **Why is there a need for quantum-resistant systems for cybersecurity?**

Traditional encryption models at risk. The current encryption standards that can be broken by quantum cryptography. There are increasing military applications of quantum technology.

India will have to proactively deal with cyber risks arising from quantum computing advances by some nations in this sector. For example, the **US National Quantum Initiative Act** has already allocated \$1.2 billion for research in defence-related quantum technology. China now hosts two of the world's fastest quantum computers.

Another vulnerability is India's dependence on foreign hardware, particularly from China.

#### **What is the way forward for India?**

India must consider procuring the **United States National Security Agency's Suite B Cryptography Quantum-Resistant Suite** as its official encryption mechanism. It is resistant to quantum cyberattacks.

The Indian defence establishment can consider emulating the cryptographic standards set by the **US's National Institute of Standards and Technology**.

India must start its national initiatives to develop quantum-resistant systems. For this, the government can fund and encourage existing open-source projects related to post-quantum cryptography. It can also have active participation in the Open Quantum Safe project, a global initiative started in 2016 for prototyping and integrating quantum-resistant cryptographic algorithms.

The country should start implementing and developing capabilities in quantum-resistant communications, specifically for critical strategic sectors. Quantum key distribution can be used for connecting military outposts. This will help in establishing a nationwide communication network integrated with quantum cryptographic systems.

Diplomatic partnerships with other countries with top technology sectors, advanced economies, and a commitment to liberal democracy can help India pool resources and mitigate emerging quantum cyber threats.

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### 4. [State-owned firms must play by the same rules](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**State-owned firms must play by the same rules**” published in **Live Mint** on **17<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Economic Growth and Development

**News:** The tussle between Delhi Airport Metro Express Pvt Ltd (DAMEPL) and Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (DMRC) highlights the issue of payment delays made by government companies.

**What are the issues?**

DAMEPL is private company, a subsidiary of Anil Ambani’s Reliance Infrastructure.

DAMEPL was involved with DMRC over construction of the high-speed metro lines from the airport to the city. However, due to the track safety concerns the project was stopped within 18 months.

DAMEPL further terminated the concession agreement with DMRC which led to the issue between the two.

Moreover, DAMEPL won an arbitral award of about ₹3,000 crore plus interest under the deal’s break-up terms in 2017. This amount was to be paid by the DMRC to DAMEPL.

But DMRC has been continuously delaying paying the amount to the DAMEPL despite of multiple deadlines set by the judiciary.

**This has highlighted the dismal condition of India in the payment of arbitral award.**

There are also **other instances** where India has failed to comply. **For example**, Vodafone and Cairn issues and Antrix to Devas Multimedia’s award.

These **kind of failures by the state to pay compensation (arbitral award) to companies** hampers the image of India globally and affects its sovereign credit rating.

It also **affects the interest of the investors to invest** in the state-run projects due to the safety of their investments.

Therefore, there is a need that India must look into the issue and follow the contract guidelines with the private firms.

### 5. [The bigger picture of intermediation, financial crises](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**The bigger picture of intermediation, financial crises**” published in **The Hindu** on **17<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Economic Development

**Relevance:** findings of the Nobel Prize winner in economics

**News:** This article highlights the role played by financial sector and banks in particular, in the development of modern economies.

Nobel Prize 2022 in economics has been awarded to Ben S. Bernanke, Douglas W. Diamond and Philip H. Dybvig for research on banks and financial crises.

**What are the findings behind the Nobel prize in Economics 2022?**

There are chances that banks may even fail in a stable condition. The reason given by them were the balance that bank has to maintain even in an ideal condition. That is, a bank has to turn short-term deposits into long-term lending.

Short term deposits are the deposits made by the people whereas long-term lending is given by banks in the form of loans.

Banks lend these deposits in the form of loans but there are instances of withdrawing those deposits by the depositors. It creates an imbalance.

However, unforeseen circumstances faced by the depositors (economic or political events of the nation) can make them feel uncertain of their deposits and can lead to withdrawal of the money.

This kind of situation will make banks to run out of the cash and it will affect their business.

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Therefore, it is better to offer deposit insurance to the depositors to prevent such a crisis. This framework has been explained by Diamond and Dybvig.

They explained how financial development affects the rest of the economy and the effects of monetary policy on banks' portfolio choices.

### 6. [Recovery analysis that points out what India got wrong](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Recovery analysis that points out what India got wrong**” published in **The Hindu** on **18th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian Economy

**Relevance**– Effectiveness of government interventions to deal with pandemic

**News**- The article explains the important insights provided by a recent **World Bank report titled “Correcting Course”**. It also measures the effectiveness of the fiscal package by the Indian government for post-pandemic recovery.

**What are important observations of the report?**

**Poverty and inequality**– It captures the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global poverty. The number of people living in extreme poverty rose by seven crore million in 2020. The global poverty rate rose from 8.4% in 2019 to 9.3% in 2020. This is the first time in two decades that the poverty rate has gone up.

Global inequalities have widened. Economic recovery has been uneven across countries.

**Fiscal policy**– The report focuses on fiscal policy as an instrument for dealing with crises such as the pandemic. Poorer countries were unable to use fiscal policy as effectively.

The report suggests three priorities for fiscal policy for post-pandemic recovery: (a) Targeted subsidies that benefit the poor (b) Public investment to build resilience in the long term (c) Revenue mobilisation that should rely on progressive direct taxation rather than indirect taxes.

**How was the effectiveness of measures taken by the Indian government?**

**Impact on poverty**–The World Bank report relies on the **Consumer Pyramids Household Survey by the CMIE**, in the absence of official poverty data since 2011. It estimates that 5.6 crore people are likely to have slipped into poverty as India's GDP fell by 7.5% in 2020-21. The population below the poverty line in India stood at 10% in 2020.

**Effectiveness of fiscal measures**– The Fiscal stimulus package of 2 lakh crore was not aimed at **consumption led growth**. It was mostly focussed on **supply side measures** like credit lines and refinancing schemes to private enterprises.

Only important demand side measure was food aid through the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana. PMGKY is currently estimated to cost about ₹3.90 lakh crore. However, India ranked 107th out of 121 countries in the 2022 Global Hunger Index. It demonstrates that food aid is not a long-term solution.

Through the pandemic and beyond, India persisted with the reduced corporate tax rate that had been announced in September 2019. According to the Parliamentary Committee on Estimates, the reduction of corporate tax from 30% to 22% cost the exchequer ₹1.84 lakh crore over the last two fiscal years. The CMIE report says that corporate profits have increased.

India has repeatedly increased GST rates on cooking and transport fuels. It has put a disproportionate burden on poor people.

7. [A better global police to counter emergent challenges](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**A better global police to counter emergent challenges**” published in **The Indian Express** on **18th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Internal security

**Relevance**– Trans-national cooperation on policing

**News-** The article explains the trans-national nature of challenges for policing systems across different countries. It tells about the importance of Interpol and strategy to deal with the challenges in context of the general assembly meeting of Interpol.

**What are trans-national challenges to policing?**

There are sporadic instances of massacres, killings of young children due to the proliferation of gun culture. Exploitation and abuse of children and women is a big issue.

Human trafficking is prevalent. Financial crimes are high. Fugitives accused of terrorism and money laundering are provided safe havens.

There is a proliferation of illicit trade based on counterfeiting and smuggling.

In a democratic polity, police forces have to act with restraint. They have to act within the boundaries of legal procedures. Lawbreakers enjoy the ease of mobility and access to the internet.

**What is the importance of Interpol?**

Interpol uses 19 databases and tools for issuing alerts, sharing information about criminals and their modus operandi. It has a huge repository of fingerprints, DNA profiles, facial recognition kits, cyber-enabled financial crimes, and property crimes.

It has undertaken various operations in different countries relating to the trafficking of women and children, cyber crimes, online piracy, spurious pharmaceuticals, narcotics smuggling, illegal gun trade, missing persons, stolen and lost travel documents.

Interpol issues colour-coded notices of various hues, red, yellow, blue, black, orange, green and purple. A large number of red corner notices have been issued at the request of Indian law enforcement. It has resulted in the detention of several accused and convicted fugitives.

**What is the significance of the general assembly meeting of Interpol being held in Delhi?**

India is the fifth-largest economy in the world, and on the path to becoming the third-largest in the near future.

It has created a positive impact by bringing down terrorist-related violence. Moreover, India is now an acknowledged technology powerhouse.

This demographic dividend of a large and young technology-oriented workforce in startups can be utilised for upgrading the security architecture.

Indian skill development resources through capacity building programmes run by the CBI training academy are used periodically by the international police fraternity, particularly law enforcement agencies in Asia and Africa.

**What is the way forward?** Interpol, however, is required now to articulate an expansion beyond its databases and tools. There is a need for real-time dissemination of information obtained through usage of data analytics.

Equitable significance should be accorded to the legitimate interests of growing economies pursuing democratic charters.

Interpol is neither an investigative agency nor a front-line police force. It is mandated to share information and provide back-end technical assistance to law enforcement agencies. There is a need for commensurate actions from member states.

Interpol and law enforcement agencies of member nations must focus upon public-spirited efficient policing.

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### 8. [Today's weapon of choice, its expanding dimensions](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Today's weapon of choice, its expanding dimensions**” published in **The Hindu** on **18th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Basics of cyber security

**Relevance**– New domains of cyber security

**News**- The article explains that cyber threats are not limited to the military domain. It is the civilian sphere where it is all-pervading today.

**What are the new dimensions of cyber threats?**

**All prevalent nature**– Cyber threats are not confined to one set of conflicts like the Ukraine war. Cyber threats are prevalent across many regions and operating on different planes. There is **weaponization of everything**.

**Grey zone operations**- These are emerging as a new form of battle ground. They fall outside traditional concepts of conflicts.

Several non-states actors are engaging in hybrid warfare and interfering in day-to-day practices. The Recent arrest of a Russian national for hacking the system involved in conducting the IIT entrance examination is a reflection of grey zone operations. This examination software is deemed to be among the most secure examination software across the world.

**Emerging spheres of cyber battles**– In the case of the Russia-Ukraine war, cyberspace has become an experiment for various players to support a weaker nation against a more powerful opponent. It is done through distortion of information and communication flows, which are considered essential to the success or failure of any war strategy. It has certainly added a new cyber dimension to the ongoing conflict.

**What is the way forward?**

Prevalent of cyberthreats across many domains calls for both **versatility and imaginative thinking**.

The emerging nature of cyber security threats pose **legal, ethical and real dilemmas**. There is a need for regulating cyberspace and laying down proper rules and practices to deal with these challenges.

### 9. [The path to deterrence: Arihant SLBM launches a significant step towards strengthening India's nuclear umbrella](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**The path to deterrence: Arihant SLBM launch a significant step towards strengthening India's nuclear umbrella**” published in **The Indian Express** on **18th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Science and Technology

**Relevance:** India's underwater deterrent technology

**News:** India has joined the group of six nations after the successful launch of an SLBM (submarine-launched ballistic missile). The other six nations are Russia, the UK, France and China and North Korea.

This achievement is significant in the context of India's strategic profile.

**What is the use of underwater deterrent and what progress has been made by India?**

A capable underwater deterrent helps a country to get undetectable by the opponent which helps in a retaliatory second strike. This enhances deterrence capabilities.

India successfully tested the 3,500-km range K4 SLBM in January 2020 and it is working to arm Arihant with a 3,500 km missile and this would be deemed to be an IRBM (intermediate-range ballistic missile).

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### What more is required?

The next stage for India would be to arm itself with SSBN. These are missile, whose range is in excess of 5,000 km which would be an ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile).

An **SSBN (a nuclear-propelled submarine armed with a nuclear-tipped ballistic missile)** should have zero error probability and it can be trusted of hitting the desired target.

This stage is important and a key element of India's nuclear deterrence capability. However, acquiring the desired level of holistic SLBM proficiency is a long journey.

**China** holds a great example of its journey as it became nuclear weapon capable in 1964 and carried out its first SLBM test in 1982 but it was able to test a 9,000 km missile in 2018. Further, a fully armed Chinese SSBN would be deemed to be operational to undertake a credible deterrence patrol is scheduled for mid-2025.

India required nuclear deterrence capabilities, due to the strategic and security challenges it faces.

India is making progress but it is still way behind the required capabilities needed in maritime.

**For example**, it has an indigenously designed and built aircraft carrier (INS Vikrant) but it is handicapped by not having the appropriate fighter aircraft and an SSBN with ICBM capability.

Therefore, India needs to increase its capabilities in the maritime power as the current geopolitical scenario shows that there is an increasing threat from China.

### 10. [Strengthening dollar shrinks foreign reserves across nations](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article "**Strengthening dollar shrinks foreign reserves across nations**" published in **The Hindu** on **18<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Economic Development

**Relevance:** declining forex reserves and concerns associated with it

**News:** The Ukraine crisis and the U.S. Federal Reserve's tight monetary policy have led to the depreciation of the rupee and other currencies across the world, along with their foreign reserves.

#### **What are the uses of forex reserves?**

Forex Reserves including foreign currency assets, gold, Special Drawing Rights, and reserve tranche position are used to absorb shocks during times of crises.

They are a crucial indicator of a country's economic health and its import capacity.

#### **What has caused the decline in the forex reserves across the world?**

The US Federal Bank has increased the rate of interest on dollar which has increased the dollar index by 15% this year while other currencies have declined.

Strong currencies like pound, euro, yen have weakened against the dollar along with the rupee. However, the fall of the rupee has been relatively more moderate. **(Chart 1)**

The weakening of the currencies has led the intervention of the central bank of the respective countries across the world.

This has led the decline in forex reserves of the countries. Singapore's reserves saw the sharpest decline in percentage terms while China's fell the most in absolute terms.

#### **What is the situation of India in forex reserves?**

India has the fifth-highest reserves in the world and the rate at which they are depleting is causing concern. Forex reserves in India fell by \$97 billion in the last nine months.

This is significantly higher than the decline of reserves during the 2008 global financial crisis (\$37.3 billion) and the period of the taper tantrum in 2013 (\$16.6 billion).

India's reserves are mainly formed due to the capital flows (funds through foreign investments, borrowings) and not much from the current account (net income earned through exports of goods and services and remittances).



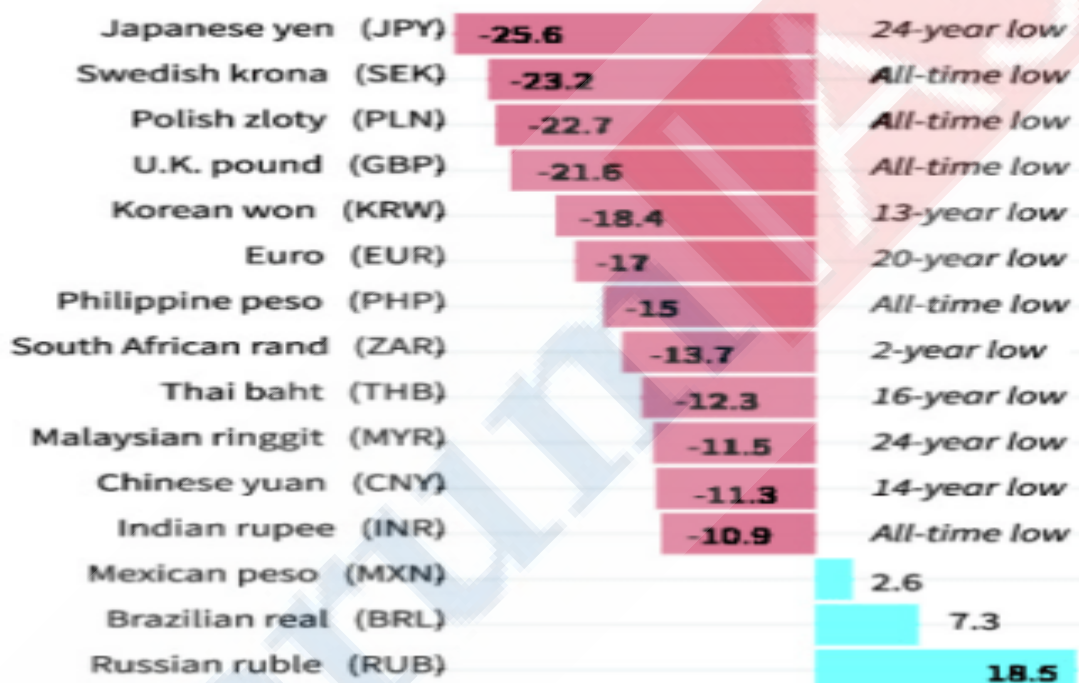
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Therefore, India's foreign reserves dropped as foreign investment decreased.

The strengthening of the dollar has also declined the value of the euro, pound and yen (also part of India's foreign reserves) which also led the reduction in India's reserves. This is called a valuation loss.

The change in India's forex reserves due to two factors – a) through balance of payments (sum of India's capital flows and current account deficit) and b) through valuation loss/gain.

**Chart 1 :** The chart shows the change in a currency's value against the dollar in 2022 (data till Oct. 7). As the dollar index soared by 15% this year, other currencies declined



### 11. [Bump, bump, bump: National highways are painfully potholed as only building them is a priority, maintenance is lax](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Bump, bump, bump: National highways are painfully potholed as only building them is a priority, maintenance is lax**” published in **The Times of India** on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

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

**Relevance:** About the condition of National Highways in India

**News:** The bountiful southwest monsoon damaged India's exhaustive road network. Further, numerous reports of national highways (NHs) underline something is broken in the overall approach to road building and maintenance.

About national highways

Roads are India's dominant mode of transport, measuring 6.3 million kilometres by March 31, 2019. The national highways comprise a mere 2% of this sprawling system, but they're the country's arterial network.

Seven years ago, the Supreme Court ruled that road concessionaires cannot collect tolls from commuters if roads are in bad shape. But this is not followed in many NHs. For instance, The

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Gurgaon-Jaipur stretch of NH-8 for example saw a hiked toll come into effect on September 1, but it remains incomplete and painfully potholed.

What are the challenges associated with NHs in India?

**Role of GOI:** Private concessionaires undertake almost 50% of NH expansion through the hybrid annuity model. But the GoI is legally responsible for the development and maintenance of NHs.

**Less allocation for maintenance:** The overall budgetary allocation for maintenance is less than 4% of the overall budget. Annual budgetary outlay for maintenance and repairs is only about 40% of the estimated need as per the recent parliamentary standing committee information. This data pertains to NHs directly under GoI's supervision.

**India's choice is not perfect:** India's preferred option is bituminous roads which are particularly prone to damage on account of water-logging. The alternative of concrete roads has a higher upfront cost but comes with fewer maintenance challenges.

NH expansion over the last few years has been impressive, the same cannot be said of drive quality and road quality.

What needs to be done?

India has unveiled an integrated logistics policy, its approach to road-building and maintenance needs an upgrade too. Such as,

**Increase the allocation for maintenance:** Niti Aayog wants the allocation for maintenance to be raised in the interim to at least 10% before aiming for the 40-50% share that developed countries have.

### 12. [Draft Telecom Bill enhances unease of doing biz amid regulatory overlaps](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Draft Telecom Bill enhances unease of doing biz amid regulatory overlaps**” published in the **Business Standard** on **19<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

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

**Relevance:** About the concerns with the draft telecom bill.

**News:** The draft telecommunication Bill was put up for comment last month.

About the salient provisions of the draft telecommunication Bill

**Read here:** [Draft Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022](#)

What are the concerns associated with the draft telecom bill?

**Forces digital companies to re-report to two ministries:** The draft law forces digital companies to re-report DoT under the telecom ministry, and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and, in some cases, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B).

**More power to the government:** The government has assumed under the Bill to intercept any “message” in the interest of the “sovereignty, security, integrity of the country”.

The Bill also vests DoT with the same powers as MeitY, that too without filters. The safeguards implicit in the IT Act are absent in the Bill.

#### **Overlapping jurisdictions**

**With IT Act:** Over-the-top (OTT) services, video and audio services under Section 2 of the draft Bill, are also covered under the IT Act as curated content.

OTT communication services are already regulated as intermediaries under the IT Act. But under the draft Bill, OTT platforms have been incorporated also as ‘telecommunications services. So, OTT platforms now have to report to both ministries — apart from following the instructions of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

There is also a duplication of penalties and powers to set standards between the two Acts.

**With Cable Act of 1995:** The Cable Act of 1995, which falls under the I&B ministry, was formulated to govern the registration and operation of cable networks. However, Direct-to-home

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services (such as cable operators) have been defined as broadcasting services under tele-com services in the Bill. Both laws have identical provisions for revoking the registration and issuing directions.

So, the duplication of regulation between the proposed telecom Bill and the Cable Act will take place.

**Undermine specialised agencies under MeitY:** IT, applications and software-related services have, so far, been under MeitY and its specialised bodies such as the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team.

But, the Bill includes aspects of software under the definition of “telecommunications equipment”, which might undermine the position of MeitY’s specialised agencies.

**Reduce the power of Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT):** The Bill adds uncertainty to TDSAT’s role by introducing an alternative redressal system. The draft empowers the government to refer any disputes to arbitration, mediation or other processes.

**Non-clear definitions:** The Bill has not clearly defined what constitutes “broadcasting services”. The definition does not distinguish between carriage and content. By not defining the terms, it is left to the discretion of officers who might want to also control content.

**Must read:** [Draft Telecommunication Bill, 2022 – Explained, pointwise](#)

### Reversal of DoT’s earlier decision

**About Machine-to-machine (M2M) communications:** M2M communications are treated as “communication services” requiring a licence under the bill. But that’s a reversal of DoT’s decision prescribing a registration framework issued through guidelines in 2022.

According to industry estimates, there will be at least 50 million M2M devices in the next five years, and 95% will operate on non-cellular technologies — all of which will be licensed. So, in time, non-cellular technologies such as radio-frequency identification, Bluetooth and near-field communication will also come under the purview of licensing.

**About various electronic products:** The government exempted various products like mobile devices, smartwatch, smart cameras and PoS machines from the mandatory testing and certification of telecom equipment under the Indian Telegraph Act.

But now, under the bill, they are included under the definition of telecom equipment. Thus open to testing.

### 13. [Organic fertiliser: A must for the next green revolution](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article “**Organic fertiliser: A must for the next green revolution**” published in the **Down to Earth** on **19th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Agriculture and Environment

**News-** The article explains the current status of the organic fertiliser industry in India and its future potential.

#### **What is the meaning of organic fertiliser?**

As per government rules, Organic fertiliser can be categorised into two segments: Bio-fertiliser and organic manure.

Bio-fertilisers are composed of living microorganisms. These are attached to solid or liquid carriers. These microorganisms help in increasing the productivity of soil.

Organic manure is partially decomposed organic matter from biogas plants, compost or vermicompost.

#### **What is the current status of the organic fertiliser industry?**

In India at present, biofertilizer production is just over 110,000 tonnes. 34 million tonnes of organic manure is also produced.

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The popularity of organic farming has grown in the domestic market in recent years. The market size for Indian organic packaged food is expected to grow at a rate of 17 per cent and cross Rs 871 million by 2021.

The penetration of organic fertilisers is low. The proportion of organic fertilisers of the overall fertiliser consumption was 0.29 per 0.34 per cent for 2019-20.

### **What is the potential of biogas plants?**

Biogas plants produce biogas as well as organic fertilisers.

As per data of **National Solid Waste Association and CPCB**, India produces more than 150000 tonnes of municipal solid waste. If we consider organic waste to be 50% of this and collection efficiency of 80%, organic waste generated per day in India is around 65000 tonnes.

Even if half of this is diverted to the biogas industry, the government can reduce import dependence on fossil fuels and fertiliser.

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### **What is the SATAT programme?**

Under the SATAT programme, more than 5,000 projects have been targeted across the country by the industry.

Bio-compressed natural gas and solid organic manure can be produced in large quantities under the SATAT programme.

It is estimated that 50 million tonnes per annum of solid organic manure / will be generated in India once these projects are installed. It will help the country save \$16 billion year-on-year.

### 14. [The illusion of being faster than light:how a star problem was solved](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**The illusion of being faster than light: how a star problem was solved**” published in **The Hindu** on **19th October 2022**.

**Syllabus**: GS3- Economy

**Relevance**– Balance of payment

**News**- The article explains the new observation by scientists related to merging of neutron stars.

### **What is the new discovery?**

In 2017, the **Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave (LIGO)** observatories recorded a signal. It indicated that two massive and dense stellar bodies had merged to form a third body, likely a black hole. From this merger, an unusual jet of matter was observed, which gave an illusion of traveling faster than light.

In a paper published in Nature, the scientists describe measuring the “apparent speed” of the jet to be **about seven times the speed of light**. They have measured the speed of the relativistic jet to be close to  $0.9997c$ , where “c” is the speed of light.

It clears the doubt around the source of the jet travelling faster than light. These clearly are massive neutron stars merging to give a black hole and throwing off relativistic jets of particles in the process.

### **What are neutron stars?**

Neutron stars are formed when a star reaches the end of its lifetime. They are formed by supernova explosions. They are extremely dense.

### **What is the phenomenon of illusion created by particles moving at seven times the speed of light?**

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This happens in cases where a source moves towards us with a velocity that is very close to light's velocity. This phenomena happens in the case of black holes. It was also known earlier. The present measurements and observations made with GAIA data amount to measuring the position of an object in the sky.

Normally, if we make these measurements from earth-based telescopes, it would require data from radio telescopes spaced apart by intercontinental distances. This technique is called **Very Long Baseline Interferometry (VLBI)** and was used in the earlier papers. But the newly measured has better precision than VLBI technique.

### **What are the impacts of study?**

We have learnt that neutron star mergers can result in relative speed very close to light. It is better than the earlier VLBI technique.

It strengthens the hypothesis that such neutron star mergers are responsible for a class of gamma-ray bursts. Gamma-ray bursts are flashes of extreme gamma ray photons that release a huge amount of energy. They come from different galaxies in the universe and are observed here quite frequently.

### 15. How Direct Benefit Transfer scheme has transformed social welfare in India

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**How Direct Benefit Transfer scheme has transformed social welfare in India**” published in **The Indian Express** on **19th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian Economy

**Relevance**– Subsidies given by government

**News**- The article explains the DBT scheme of Indian government

IMF lauded India's Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme as a “**logistical marvel**” that has reached hundreds of millions of people and specifically benefited women, the elderly and farmers.

David Malpass, President of the World Bank Group, had also urged other nations to adopt India's move of targeted cash transfer instead of broad subsidies .

### **How has the successful implementation of the DBT scheme been achieved?**

DBT alone would not have been able to address the size and scale of the programme. An **ambitious vision, holistic approach and a multi-pronged strategy** enabled the DBT ecosystem to deliver results.

In 2014, the government started its financial inclusion programme in **mission-mode**. It strived to open bank accounts for all households, expanded Aadhaar to all. It also scaled up the coverage of banking and telecom services.

The Government evolved the **Public Finance Management System**. It created the **Aadhaar Payment Bridge** to enable instant money transfers from the government to people's bank accounts. The Aadhaar-enabled Payment System and Unified Payment Interface further expanded **interoperability** and private-sector participation.

### **What has been achieved by the DBT programme?**

By 2022, more than 135 crore Aadhaars have been generated, there are 47 crore beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. 6.5 lakh Bank Mitras are delivering branchless banking services. There are more than 120 crore mobile subscribers. It now covers 318 schemes of 53 central ministries.

In rural India, DBT has allowed the government to provide financial assistance effectively to farmers with lower transaction costs. It has been possible through direct transfers for schemes like the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, PM Fasal Bima Yojana. It has boosted the agricultural economy.

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In urban India, the PM Awas Yojana and LPG Pahal scheme successfully use DBT to transfer funds to eligible beneficiaries.

Various scholarship schemes and the National Social Assistance Programme use the DBT architecture to provide social security.

DBT under rehabilitation programmes such as the Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers have improved the social mobility of all sections of society.

The efficacy and robustness of the DBT network were witnessed during the pandemic. Free rations to nearly 80 crore people under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, fund transfers to all women Jan Dhan account holders and support to small vendors under PM-SVANidhi shows its effectiveness.

### **What is the way forward?**

Improve **digital and financial literacy**.

**Robust grievance redressal** for DBT

Enhancing awareness and an empowering innovation system.

### 16. The exchange rate will soon have to play a bigger adjustment role

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“The exchange rate will soon have to play a bigger adjustment role”** published in the **mint** on **19th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy

**Relevance**– Balance of payment

**News-** The article explains the factors behind depreciation of currencies of major economies across the world. It also explains the scenario of India.

The currency of most major economies has depreciated against the dollar in the past year. Only the currencies of Russia, Brazil, Mexico and Peru have appreciated.

### **What are factors behind the depreciation of currency across major economies?**

It depends on four factors- (a) Structure of its trade (b) Its Current Account Deficit (c) Foreign exchange reserves (d) Extent of borrowing in international rather than domestic currencies.

(a) A lot depends upon whether a country is a net exporter or importer of commodities. Countries like Russia, Peru have benefited from high energy prices. While other countries who are net importers of commodities have experienced depreciation in their currencies. India falls in this group.

(b) Countries with current account surplus are not impacted by sudden withdrawal of foreign capital. India has a current account deficit right now.

(c) Countries with high foreign reserves need not be worried about balance of payment shocks due to sudden withdrawal of foreign capital. India has a higher amount of foreign reserves.

(d) Countries with public debt in local currency need not to be worried much. India has borrowed mostly from local investors.

**What is the scenario with India?** Two factors are in favour of India and two are against it.

India has responded to depreciating Rupee by purchasing foreign exchange reserves. It has preferred to allow the depreciation of Rupee rather than using too much foreign exchange reserves.

India foreign exchange reserves soared to \$640 billion in September 2021. This situation has reversed now. It has lost \$110 billion in foreign reserves.

India still has adequate foreign reserves. But fall in reserves means that the exchange rate will play a bigger role in the economy.

### **What are possible options for India?**

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Looking at imports bills in the future and BoP deficit, India will have to do a careful balancing act.

India has the option of using interest rates to defend Indian Rupee. But we have an inflation targeting regime where interest rates can be only used to manage inflation. ITargeting two policy goals is not ideal option

### 17. [Flight risks: Helicopter safety standards have to be strictly enforced, otherwise they are not of much use](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Flight risks: Helicopter safety standards have to be strictly enforced, otherwise they are not of much use**” published in **The Times of India** on **20<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

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

**Relevance:** About the helicopter fatalities in India.

**News:** The recent tragic chopper crash in Kedarnath that killed six passengers and the pilot adds to the list of growing helicopter fatalities over the years.

What are the major reasons for helicopter fatalities in India?

**a)** Checks on airworthiness and other standards such as operators flouting guidelines by flying too low or operating in poor weather are causing major helicopter fatalities in the region.

**b)** Despite the regulator repeatedly identifying serious violations of rules, unsafe practices continue. In hilly terrains or other ecologically sensitive areas, poorly regulated commercial choppers pose an even greater danger.

**c) Issues in pilot training:** Helicopters offer very little margin for error, especially single-engine choppers that have to be flown visually. Both in the Kedarnath crash and the crash in Bombay High, the pilots had recently moved to fly an aircraft type new to them. . Inadequate acclimatisation is extremely risky in challenging weather conditions.

**d) The issue of old choppers continuing to be in service:** Old choppers are continuing in service in many parts. Even the air force, is continuing saddled with obsolete Chetaks and Cheetahs of the 60s-70s vintage.

Overall, India is seeing a mix of pilot errors, poor machine maintenance and a weak regulatory framework resulting in helicopter fatalities in India.

**Read more:** [Explained: The helicopter CDS General Bipin Rawat was in](#)

What needs to be done to reduce helicopter fatalities in India?

Kaushik Committee reports of 1991 and 2005 called for more accountability on the part of operators. This has to be followed in letter and spirit.

### 18. [India’s trade policy challenges in a changed world](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**India’s trade policy challenges in a changed world**” published in **Business Standard** on **20<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Economic Development

**Relevance:** measures that Indian can adopt to improve its stand in Global value Chains.

**News:** Global merchandise trade volume is predicted to decline sharply because of slowdown in the major economies and increase in the prices of fuel and food.

However, a slowdown in global trade is not new and the trade had slowed down in the past as well due to the restructuring of global value chains (GVCs).

**What has led to the decline in the Global Value Chains (GVCs)?**

The decline in GVC in the early years of the last decade was due to the natural disasters in East Asia.

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It further declined due to the US China trade war at the end of that last decade. This trade war led to “China plus one” strategy for GVC diversification.

It further declined due to the pandemic and the current Ukraine crisis is making the condition worse.

The Ukraine war has affected the GVC as both Russia and Ukraine are major suppliers of critical elements and minerals.

### **What steps have been taken by the countries around the world to tackle the declining GVCs?**

Countries around the world have come up with various initiatives to boost trade such as the expansion of free trade agreements (FTAs) and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

European Union Countries along with other countries have entered into these agreements in order to boost the trade.

EU has emphasised the need for increasing its FTA negotiations in the wake of the Ukraine crisis as it will benefit its economic growth and geopolitical standing.

### **What can be the course of action for India for improving its position in GVCs?**

**First**, India needs to diversify its traditional markets and trade partners to achieve its target export growth.

- Further, a comprehensive policy framework that focuses on creating a good business environment and ensuring proper regulatory reforms with improvement in infrastructure and logistics is needed.
- This can contribute to making India an attractive location for export oriented Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) and help MNCs in their GVC diversification strategy.

**Second**, India needs more FTA negotiation which will make GVC participation easier.

- India has already made FTA agreements with the UAE and Australia this year. However, these two agreements may not contribute to India’s enhanced GVC participation.
- Therefore, India needs to negotiate trade agreements that focus on liberalisation of almost all trade investment along with the participation in GVC.
- India should become a member of at least one regional trade agreement such as the RCEP, Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) or Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) trade pillar.

**Third**, India needs to evolve its negotiated position and develop domestic policies aligned with the global policies.

- The domestic policies must be inclusive and sustainable as labour and environment standards have become an integral component of all international trade agreements.

**Fourth**, India needs to shift its focus from liberalisation to those services that are an integral part of manufacturing sector exports. For this, India needs to adopt an integrated approach for goods and services negotiation in its FTA.

**Fifth**, India needs to reduce the Most Favoured Nation tariff in manufacturing and for inputs in sectors of GVC. It should be in line with the objective to achieve ASEAN tariff levels.

**Sixth**, India needs institutional changes. It has already announced to set up a separate trade body that will include relevant expertise to focus on trade issues.



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### 19. [A new lease of LIFE for climate action](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**A new lease of LIFE for climate action**” published in **The Hindu** on **20th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Environmental pollution and degradation

**Relevance**– Climate change

**News-** The article explains the **Lifestyle for Environment perspective** announced by PM Modi at CoP26

#### **What is happening across the world?**

World is facing multiple crises.

COVID-19 has been a great disruptor. The Ukraine war has further led to an energy and food crisis.

Planet is facing an existential crisis in the form of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Ninth of warmest year has been recorded in the past decade. Extreme weather events like heatwaves and droughts are increasing.

The UNDP HDI report has warned that global human development measures have declined across most countries in the past two years.

Commitments by countries at Paris will not keep warming below the 1.5°C target.

#### **What is the Lifestyle for Environment perspective announced by PM Modi at CoP26?**

It relies upon small individual actions to fight climate change. Some of these actions are saving energy at home; cycling and using public transport; eating more plant-based foods and wasting less. It also leverages our position as customers and employees to demand climate-friendly choices.

Along with individual actions; we need guiding frameworks, information sharing and the scale of a global movement.

Many of its goals can be achieved by persuasion techniques that encourage positive behaviour like discouraging food wastage by offering small plates.

According to the UNEP, more than two-thirds of greenhouse gas emissions can be attributed to household consumption and lifestyles.

The LIFE mission also **recognises that accountability is relative to contribution**. Collective emissions by the poorest 50% are less than 1% of wealthiest people. **The most vulnerable and marginalised members of society will not be asked to consume less**. They will be supported to participate in the green economy.

#### **What is the case for India’s leadership on climate change?**

India has a proven track record of achieving national goals through collective actions. **Swachh Bharat Mission** mobilised individuals and communities for public health and sanitation. If we start jan andolan with participation of 1.3 billion people, it will generate enormous momentum. India is well positioned to provide leadership on climate change. It has shown its willingness through **Panchamrit targets** announced by Mr. Modi at COP26, support for the International Solar Alliance, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and South-South cooperation platforms.

It also resonates with **global climate justice** calls by India. Global climate justice puts obligations on developed countries to support climate adaptation and mitigation. The average carbon footprint of a person in a high income country is more than 80 times higher than that of a person in a least developed country. It is common sense and fair to call on the developed world to shoulder a proportionate share of this transition.

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### 20. [Durable and robust institutions are amust for long-run growth](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Durable and robust institutions are amust for long-run growth**” published in the **mint** on **20th October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian economy. GS2- Governance

**Relevance**– Importance of institutions.

**News**- The article explains the need for the right set of institutions to achieve economic growth in India.

#### **Why are institutions important for economic growth?**

Economic growth depends on the outcome of many factors. An important factor is institutions. Growth depends upon the capacity and durability of institutions. The most cited example is the role played by resilient institutions in South East Asian economies.

#### **What are the institutions?**

Institutions are rules of the game in society. These rules of games are constraints that shape human interaction. These constraints are both formal and informal. Institutions reduce transaction cost from imperfect and asymmetric information.

#### **What factors should be considered while designing institutions?**

Institutions are dynamic forces. They are continuously shaped by the environment in which they operate. Economic performance depends on efficient institutional design. States have a very important role in ensuring it.

Institutions have a high level of inertia to change and adapt to new environments. Hence, utmost care must be taken while designing and reforming institutions. Robust institutional design requires a level of reflexivity in terms of their ability to change and adaptation to shocks.

#### **What is the way forward for India?**

An important element for achieving the Vision for Indian Economy in 2047 is institutional design. The unique aspects of the Indian economy must be assimilated while designing institutions. We must incorporate federal realities to achieve synergy between centre and states.

The challenges to achieve it are two folds-

**First** is related to the **creation of new institutions** to address rapid structural changes in the Indian economy. It requires clarity of vision and objectives.

**Second** is related to **reforming existing institutions**. It requires consultations and engagements with participating agents.

### 21. [Stubble burning: Addressing north India’s burning issue sustainably](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Addressing north India’s burning issue sustainably**” published in **The Hindu** on **21st October 2022**.

**Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment**

**Relevance:** Ways to address the issue of stubble burning

**News:** Stubble burning is a major problem in North India and every year it is in the news around winter.

The government generally comes up with short-term solutions and farmers are mostly held responsible for the stubble burning causing low-quality air in North India.

However, it is not suitable to blame farmers for the action as stubble burning has a historic reason behind it.

#### **What were the reasons that caused the stubble burning?**

The green revolution was one of the main reasons behind stubble burning. It was introduced in the 1960s-70s to fulfil the food demand of the growing population. It transformed the way agriculture was practised, especially in Punjab and Haryana.

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Under the green revolution, high-yielding seeds of wheat and paddy were given to farmers with the support of a guaranteed buyer (the government) and minimum support prices. This led to two crops (wheat and paddy) dominance in the market.

However, these two crops depleted the groundwater of the region, increased the use of pesticides and fertilizers. It also led to the consolidation of small farms into larger landholdings.

Therefore, the Punjab and Haryana governments introduced laws to conserve groundwater. The government encouraged farmers to look to the monsoon rather than groundwater to irrigate their crops.

The wait for the monsoon water provided a shorter period between harvesting kharif crops and sowing rabi crops. Due to the shorter period, farmers prefer to burn the stubble and clear the fields for the rabi crops.

The effect of stubble burning is felt throughout the Indo-Gangetic Plain (IGP) including Bihar and West Bengal.

It has severe effects on the air quality of the NCR which has caused the government to criminalize the act.

Moreover, the government has also taken various other steps to tackle the issue.

### **What are the steps taken by the government?**

The Union and State governments have taken various short-term ex-situ and in-situ solutions. In-situ solutions include happy seeders and bio-decomposers while the ex-situ solutions include collecting and using stubble to produce ethanol or to simply burn in thermal power plants.

However, these solutions are not very effective in improving the situation.

### **What can be the possible solution to tackle stubble burning?**

**First**, the entire value chain of agriculture in the region needs to change in the region of Punjab and Haryana.

- This means that the amount of paddy grown should be reduced and replaced by other crops that are agro-ecologically suitable such as cotton, maize, pulses and oil seeds.

**Second**, there is a need to build trust with farmers and to ensure that they are seen as partners and they should be provided necessary solutions like financial support to shift from paddy to other crops.

**Third**, the government should come up with a policy that aims at sustainable development and include all aspects such as agriculture, nutrition, water, environment and economy as they all are interconnected.

**Read more:** [Reducing air pollution: Stubble burning needs economic solutions](#)

## 22. [Sustainability is good for business as well as the planet](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Sustainability is good for business as well as the planet**” published in **Live Mint** on **21st October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Environment

**Relevance:** Adopting technologies for decarbonization

**News:** Climate change has been an important phenomenon these days that countries are looking into as it not only affects the environment but also society and the economy.

Therefore, organizations across the world are making commitments to decarbonize by adopting different technologies and sustainable business strategies.

Moreover, the pandemic did affect the Sustainable Development Goals achievement but it also showed the way to reduce carbon emissions.

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### **How did the pandemic highlighted the technologies for decarbonization?**

The pandemic made employees to work from home using internet services. This work-from-home has become a culture even after the pandemic.

Working from home not only cuts the cost of the firms, but it also helps in reducing carbon footprint.

According to the studies, both small and large enterprises can reduce their per-user carbon footprint from 30% to 90% by just moving to cloud computing.

Further, firms can also use a 'sustainability calculator' to track greenhouse gas emissions arising from their cloud use.

Therefore, firms can adopt sustainable technologies for decarbonization. Some of the firms have already proceeded in this direction.

### **How firms are adopting technologies for decarbonization?**

**Building technologies:** The adoption of smart buildings has increased the productivity of the assets, made energy utilization more efficient and created accessible and secure spaces using technologies like the Internet-of-Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), etc. **For example**, 500-acre campus with 125 buildings can save 6-10% of energy and can address 48% of faults in less than a minute using technology.

**Intelligent manufacturing:** The adoption of technology is helping manufacturers to decarbonize their core operation, reduce emissions across their supply chain and create a product with the help of digital technologies. These technologies also increase the movement of goods in supply chains and reduce waste. **For example**, Siemens Gamesa saved 6,000 hours a year at just one facility by using cloud, IoT and Bluetooth technology for equipment searches.

**Banking:** A study showed that customers prefer banks with better sustainability records demonstrated by their ESG (environment, social, governance) initiatives. **For example**, Flowe (a digital bank) went beyond banking to integrate green living and personal health goals into its services. Thus, including sustainability in business goals can help improvement in banks.

**Agriculture:** Technology is playing an important role in helping farmers and producer companies to sow seeds at the right time, and manage soil parameters using IoT among others. Technology also helps procurers to optimize the supply chain using IoT.

Further, there are various industries (healthcare, energy, etc.) where technology is helping to achieve the objective in a sustainable way.

Therefore, it is important for industries to adopt sustainable technology to tackle climate change.

### [23. Green hydrogen and capturing atmospheric CO2: Does a bright future lie beyond the gloomy economic horizon?](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article "**Does a bright future lie beyond the gloomy economic horizon?**" published in **Live Mint** on **21st October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Environment

**Relevance:** Green hydrogen and capturing CO2 from the air

**News:** This article discusses the sustainable measures required to address the current economic situation

### **What is the current economic condition of India, and what is needed to improve it?**

The economic condition of India is not good as the growth is declining with high inflation. Unemployment and underemployment are expected to worsen unless India achieves growth of 7-8%.

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As per Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran, the repeated efforts of India to boost the economy have failed due to the prevailing economic shocks (Ukraine war, high fuel prices, dollar/rupee rate, etc.)

Therefore, according to him, India will grow by over 6% if these effects of the shock decrease and it is further expected to grow by 8% if external demands increase.

India grows exceptionally fast whenever the world is growing exceptionally fast. Therefore, achieving a growth of 8% or so will depend on the state of the global economy.

### **Why climate action is crucial for long-term global economic conditions?**

The long-term global economic condition will depend on the climate action taken by countries around the world as global warming is an emerging threat to humanity.

Countries have already started taking efforts towards global warming by developing new technologies. However, green hydrogen and CO<sub>2</sub> captured from the air hold an important position among all technologies.

### **What is green hydrogen, and what are its uses?**

Green hydrogen refers to hydrogen produced through the electrolysis of water using renewable power.

Hydrogen is already used in industrial production, but the use of green hydrogen has just started in the industries.

The cost of producing green hydrogen was a concern, but it has declined from \$6/kg in 2015 to an estimated \$3/kg by 2025 and more countries are looking to switch to green hydrogen with increasing investments in it.

It has a wide range of application in industries including steel, cement, ammonia for fertilizers, home cooking and heating, etc.

It is expected that the market for green hydrogen could grow to over \$1 trillion by 2050.

The shift to green hydrogen will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. However, it is not carbon-neutral or carbon negative which is required to combat global warming.

**Must read: [Green Hydrogen Policy – Explained, pointwise](#)**

### **What is required to capture CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere?**

Countries are developing new technology to capture CO<sub>2</sub> emitted from industries or from the air. The technology will break down and convert the CO<sub>2</sub> molecule for use in products such as fuels, plastics and other polymers, building materials, etc.

However, developing technology which synthetically reproduces the natural photosynthesis process of plants and directly consumes CO<sub>2</sub> from the air will be useful. This technology exists, but there is a need to improve it and increase its production.

Moreover, direct carbon capture is a startup industry which is expected to grow \$550 billion by 2040.

### **What are the challenges and way forward?**

The challenge is to bring huge investments into these technologies and increase its production at the required rate to reverse global warming.

Further, huge investments in these technologies could bring new investment boom and a new wave of other product and process innovations could drive a new phase of high global economic growth.

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### 24. [The Rs 40,000-crore defence challenge](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**The Rs 40,000-crore defence challenge**” published in the **Business Standard** on **21st October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Security

**Relevance**– Defence manufacturing

**News**- The article explains the steps taken by the Indian government to boost defence and aerospace exports.

Prime Minister Modi gave a call to the aerospace and defence industry to achieve an annual export target of Rs 40,000 crore.

Defence Production Policy of 2018 aims to increase defence exports more than 10-fold from the existing level of Rs 2,000-3,000 crore annually to over Rs 35,000 crore.

Defence exports have multiplied eight times in the past five years. It has reached to 13000 crore this year.

#### **What steps have been taken by the government?**

The government has created a policy framework for boosting aerospace and defence exports.

Defence attaches posted at Indian embassies abroad have been tasked with seeking opportunities for military exports to their host countries.

The government has created a liberalised trade environment for defence exports by eliminating structural obstacles to trade in arms.

India has already obtained entry into three of the four global export control regimes: The Missile Technology Control Regime, the Wassenaar Arrangement, and the Australia Group. It is making efforts for entry into NSG.

It has offered some neighbouring countries like Myanmar, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka credit lines to purchase Indian defence equipment.

Defence PSUs are now required to have 25% of their turnover in exports.

A nodal agency, the Indigenous Defence Equipment Exporters Association has been set up for processing defence export inquiries from prospective customers across the globe.

#### **What is the way forward?**

Instead of focusing on the export of low-value consumables such as ammunition, spare parts and aerospace components, India needs to concentrate on high-value, complex combat platforms.

Defence forces should take a lead in inducting indigenous weaponry like Tejas fighters, the light combat helicopters, Dhruv and Rudra helicopters, the Arjun tank, Akash air defence systems.

### 25. [Wars aren't won with peacetime economies](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Wars aren't won with peacetime economies**” published in **Business Standard** on **22nd October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Economy

**Relevance:** measures that can be taken by the US and Europe to improve their economic condition at the time of war.

**News:** Russia-Ukraine war has caused concerns towards the economies around the world as it has led to the increase in energy prices along with others.

Even though Europe and America have provided economic and military assistance to Ukraine they are facing effect of the war along with other countries.

However, it is a mistake to think that the war can be won with a peacetime economy as no country has ever prevailed in a serious war by leaving markets alone.

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So, efforts such as imposing windfall tax are required from the US and European countries to better their economic conditions to support Ukraine.

### **How does not imposing the windfall tax create impacts on the economy?**

War caused shortages, but it leads to windfall gains for some companies. Therefore, there is a need for the country to enforce windfall profit tax on the companies making windfall gains.

The EU and the US have failed to come up with a windfall tax on the companies due to the concerns of appearing antibusiness.

However, taxing windfall profits and using the proceeds to finance the necessary war spending and support for those hurt by high prices is not anti-business.

But it is responsible wartime governance which is necessary to maintain popular support for the war.

These temporary taxes neither hurt investments nor employment and there is nothing wrong to tax exceptional gains.

Moreover, the prices of electricity and food are also increasing which has affected the consumers and raised concerns for the government.

### **How marginal-cost pricing is impacting Europe?**

Europe needs more comprehensive effort as its market structure was not designed to deal with wartime conditions. It follows the principle of marginal-cost pricing.

The marginal cost pricing means the extra price required for the production to meet the demand. Therefore, with the increase in gas prices, the marginal costs have risen above average costs and this acts as a burden on the consumers of electricity in Europe.

Moreover, economists love marginal-cost pricing because it attracts incentives and its distributive consequences on consumers is small and manageable.

However, looking at the present condition of the increase in global prices there are low incentives available and distributive effects are huge on consumers.

Therefore, there is another simpler system in the discussion that would retain most of the marginal-cost pricing's incentive effects without the distributive effects.

It is a non-linear pricing framework and this can be adopted by the European countries.

### **What is a non-linear pricing framework?**

The non-linear pricing framework works on the principle where the total charges payable by customers are not proportional to the number of their consumed services.

Therefore, it is better to fix a certain amount of prices for the consumer based on non-linear pricing framework and the rest amount should be based on marginal-cost price.

Further, the non-linear pricing framework cannot be used in all the markets but it can be used in electricity and it is an important framework that can be followed by the government during the wartime.

Therefore, countries in Europe and the West require more efforts like windfall profit taxes, controlling prices of food and electricity and encouraging necessary government interventions to generate more gains to support Ukraine.

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### 26. [Solution for stubble burning](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Solution for stubble burning**” published in **Business Standard** on **22nd October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 3 – Environment**

**Relevance:** measures to tackle stubble burning

**News:** The problem of stubble burning is prevailing for many years. The farmers clear the stubble from the previous crop by putting it on fire because it is quick and cheap method.

**Read more:** [Stubble burning: Addressing north India’s burning issue sustainably](#)

**What solution has been provided by the Ministry of Power (MoP)?**

The Ministry of Power (MoP) has provided the to harvest stubble compact into pellets and to burn those pellets in thermal power plants as a coal substitute.

It has also mandated that thermal plants must substitute 5 per cent of their coal with biomass pellets for the next 25 years.

**Read here:** [Centre to help set up paddy straw pellet units to arrest stubble burning](#)

**What are the concerns associated with burning pellets?**

The cost of the energy unit generated by biomass may be higher than thermal coal.

Pellets yield lower cal per kg compared to coal and according to some studies the end-to-end carbon impact from burning biomass is higher than the impact from coal burning.

**What are the advantages of pellets or biomass burning?**

Pellets could be sourced by thermal power plants through long-term contracts with pellet suppliers.

This would create a supply chain where farmers sell stubble to pellet-makers who further sell pellets to power plants and everyone get benefits.

It will also benefit towards fulfilling the renewable obligations for power generators and distributors as pellets are easily manufactured, stored and transported.

Power plants can even source biomass and store it using torrefaction (heating in an inert atmosphere) method.

Moreover, burning pellets releases COs, SPM, etc. but it is categorised as green since plants absorb Carbon dioxide (Co2).

Therefore, pollutants are removed by the same agents that produce biomass.

India uses surplus biomass (stubble, straw) to burn in the thermal power plants and it is considered greener compared to other countries.

### 27. [Yes, it’s all about rocket science](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Yes, it’s all about rocket science**” published in **The Times of India** on **22nd October 2022**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 3 – Science and Technology**

**Relevance:** Measures that can be taken by India to improve its launch of rockets

**News:** Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle-Mark3 (GSLV-Mk3) which is India’s heaviest rocket will enter into the commercial market after attempting to put 36 satellites in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) for UK-based OneWeb on October.

ISRO has already launched 345 foreign satellites using Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). However, this time it will be GSLV that will launch the satellites.

**What is the importance of GSLV-Mk3 on the present mission?**

GSLV-Mk3 first mission was the Crew Module Atmospheric Re-entry Experiment in 2014. However, it was declared operational in the year 2019 after the launch of Chandrayaan-2.



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It was also used in demonstration missions in 2017 and 2018 by launching Gsat-19 and Gsat-29.

Therefore, from past experience, ISRO is confident in this mission as well. This mission will show India's ability to launch heavier payloads to LEO.

It will also attract commercial customers through Space PSU New Space India Limited (NSIL) and provide future opportunities for launches into higher orbits.

There are also strategic benefits of a successful Mk3 such as launching a group of remote-sensing satellites in the future.

However, the future lies in the development of rockets along with the increasing demands and India needs to address it.

### **What are the current problems with rocket development in India and how can they be solved?**

India is currently working with GSLV-Mk3 to launch third-party commercial satellites but simply relying on GSLV-Mk3 will not work.

Rocket technology is developing rapidly and India also needs to move along with the global development if it wants to compete with the world leading space agencies.

There is also a need to **increase the payload of rockets** as GSLV-Mk3 is currently the highest payload capacity in India but it is at best only a medium-lift rocket by global standards.

Moreover, India is taking efforts towards manufacturing GSLV-Mk3 to be in the line of competition as NSIL is looking to manufacture more launch rockets (GSLV-Mk3).

India is also looking to develop a second spaceport spread across 2,300 acres in Tamil Nadu's Kulasekharapatnam.

However, out of these, the cost of launching a satellite into space is a major concern.

### **What is the cost of launching a satellite and how can it be reduced?**

At present, it would cost an estimated Rs 14 lakh to put 1 kg in LEO using a PSLV and an estimated Rs 5.7 lakhs on an Mk3.

However, the cost of global space agencies are also along the same line, but there is a need to reduce the cost and that is why reusable rockets holds importance.

According to ISRO scientists, reusable rockets would reduce one-tenth of the present launch cost but India is a long way away from this technology.

Therefore, to cut the launch cost ISRO is planning to build New Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV) which is reusable.

### **What can be the further course of action?**

ISRO is planning in the right direction and it further needs to develop heavier Mk3 and reliable Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) to fulfil all types of demands.

Further, any unsuccessful mission like Gaganyaaan should not be a setback for ISRO, and it should always prioritise the development of launch vehicles as it is important for future successful missions.

## 28. Religions-20: A pioneering initiative in G-20 to build a God-centric value system

**Source-** The post is based on the article **"Religions-20: A pioneering initiative in G-20 to build a God-centric value system"** published in **The Indian Express** on **22nd October 2022**.

**Syllabus: GS3-** International Relations

**Relevance-** Efforts for global peace and prosperity

**News-** The article explains the R-20 forum's role in achieving a common value system for different faiths across the world to secure global peace and prosperity.

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### What are different perspectives about the existence of God?

**One of the earliest arguments for the existence of God was by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm in 1078 AD. He argued that “there must be that thing, the greater than which cannot be conceived.**

The conflicts over God led to the rise of **Deism and atheism**. Deism insisted on having God, but not religion.

Deists and Enlightenment thinkers wanted a universal God. Spinoza equated God with nature. Voltaire declared that If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.

### What is the R-20 forum?

The mediaeval understanding of inconceivable God has been continued. It has promoted conflicts and loss of life. There is a need for spiritual guidance to promote the idea of common humanity. Two important Muslim organisations from Asia want to take the lead in this effort by launching the R-20 forum on the sidelines of the G-20 summit. They are the **Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)** of Indonesia and the **Muslim World League (MWL)** of Saudi Arabia.

Effort by Joko Widodo, the President of Indonesia, has led to the inclusion of R-20 in the G-20 agenda as the G-20 Forum of Religions this year.

Global issues like health, economy, climate and technology and war have been considered the concern of the political leadership. That religious and cultural leaders too can play a complementary role.

### What is the objective of both NU and MWL?

They are working towards more **humanitarian version of Islam**. They reject **fundamentalism and radical interpretation of Islam**. They call for building a universal consensus on “**common principles of human values, tolerance and peace** to immunise against the dangers of extremist ideology.

### What can be the future scope of R-20?

The R-20 will be historic if it succeeds in building a **God-centric value system** in place of the current **religion-centric** one.

The R-20 will move from Muslim-majority Indonesia this year to Hindu-majority India next year and Catholic-majority Brazil in 2024. It can help the three world religions, together with Buddhism and other important religions, evolve a universal value system.

The religious leadership can be equal partners with the political, economic and technological leadership of the world in defining the destiny of mankind in the 21st century.