



9 PM

Compilation

October, 2022

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General Studies Paper – 1

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General Studies - 1

1. [Understanding the Durga Puja economy](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Understanding the Durga Puja economy**” published in **The Hindu** on **3rd October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1- Art and Culture. GS3- Economy

Relevance– Impact of cultural activities on economy

News– The article explains the impact of Durga Puja on overall economic prospects of the state. It also explains future prospects for the West Bengal Economy.

Durga Puja was recently included by UNESCO in its **Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.

What are some facts related to the economy of Durga Puja?

It is not easy to estimate the true size of the Durga Puja economy. It has a **multidimensional character**. A large quantity of sales happens through the unorganised retail market.

There are some estimates about the size of the Durga Puja economy. A **2013 ASSOCHAM study** estimated the size of the Durga Puja industry at ₹25,000 crore. It is around 3.7% of West Bengal’s GDP at that time.

A recent **study by the British Council** estimates the size at 32377 crores. It accounts for around 2.5% of West Bengal’s economy.

Durga Puja has been affected by socio-economic-political shocks. The 1943 famine in West Bengal had a negative impact on it. Recently the pandemic led to huge losses for the Durga Puja economy.

What are the future prospects for the Bengal economy?

K’-shaped post-pandemic economic recovery is envisaged by different experts.

The people who were well-off could not spend due to pandemic restrictions. They might spend generously. It will also help people from the lower strata of society.

It may boost the informal economy. The people from lower strata of society may avoid the formal sector due to GST related issues.

The higher Puja sales may not be an indicator of a strong economy. Better sales compared to previous years may be a sad reflection of poor income of average Bengali.

2. [Choose safe surrender over infant abandonment](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Choose ‘safe surrender’ over infant abandonment**” published in **The Hindu** on **3rd October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1- Social empowerment. GS2- Vulnerable sections

Relevance– Child welfare

News– The article explains the difference between abandonment and surrender of children. It also gives suggestions to reduce the incidents of abandonment of children by their parents.

Recently a two-year-old girl was found alone in a government bus in Tamil Nadu.

Data by the **National Crime Records Bureau** shows that 709 criminal cases of exposure and abandonment of children under twelve years were registered in the year 2021.

What are the legal provisions for abandonment and surrender of children?

The Juvenile Justice Act provides that no first information report shall be registered against any biological parent in the process of inquiry relating to an abandoned and surrendered child.

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The purpose of this provision is to ensure that all efforts are made to trace the parents of the child without initiating any criminal action.

What is the difference between abandonment and surrender of a child?

Abandonment– An abandoned child means a child who is deserted by parents.

Surrender– It means that parents are not willing to continue to have their children with them. It is due to physical, emotional and social factors beyond their control.

Why is surrender better than abandonment?

Abandonment endangers the child's life. Surrender ensures that the Child Welfare Committee will take care of the child until he or she is matured or adopted by someone.

A child is considered eligible for surrender only after a prescribed process of enquiry and counselling

The disclosure of the identity of surrendered children is prohibited. All reports related to the child are to be treated confidentially by the CWC.

No case is registered when a child is surrendered to the Child Welfare Committee constituted under the Juvenile Justice Act.

What is the recent Supreme Court ruling on the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act?

The Court passed an interim order to allow an unmarried woman petitioner to abort her pregnancy of 24 weeks arising out of a failed live-in relationship. It should be recommended by the medical board.

What is the way forward?

ASHAs and anganwadi workers have a strong network in villages. They know about unwanted pregnancy. There is a need to educate and sensitize them.

Juvenile Justices prescribe authorities to whom a parent may approach if he wants to surrender his child. It shall be the duty of such an authority to produce the child before the CWC within 24 hours. Wide publicity needs to be given to these provisions of the JJ Act.

3. [Mahatma Gandhi, the peacemaker](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Mahatma Gandhi, the peacemaker**” published in **The Hindu** on **3rd October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1

Relevance: **Gandhi's views on peace.**

News: Russia's invasion of Ukraine represents the biggest threat to peace in the world since the end of the Cold War. Many people believe that humanity will never attain peace.

However, Gandhi considered the problem of peace as an ethical instead of political issue.

The letter published in Harijan on December 9, 1939 explains Gandhi's psychology as a moral leader at the time of war.

What was Gandhi's strategy for peace?

The letter shows that he was a man of peace who could struggle for nonviolence and dialogue among nations even during the hard times.

Therefore, Gandhi was a consistent thinker on peace and it would be wrong to say that there were gradual changes in his opinions on war and peace.

Gandhi always had a peace strategy even when he wrote on violence over cowardice.

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Gandhi wrote: “I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence... But I believe that nonviolence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment... But... forgiveness only when there is the power to punish...”

Gandhi never dissociated nonviolence from violence and his position is understood when he said that an action may wear the appearance of violence and yet be absolutely nonviolent.

However, there are **critics about Gandhi’s non-violence strategies**. Hannah Arendt has said that if Gandhi’s non-violence has met with a different enemy (Stalin’s Russia, Hitler’s Germany) other than British, the outcome would have been worse.

Gandhi believed that **in the absence of a concrete ethical foundation**, the politics could not function democratically and non-violently. He further believed that the essential task of the politics was to bring moral progress.

He believed that the **strategy of peacemaking leads to moral rightfulness of non-violence** whereas Hitler believed in eliminating morality from politics.

That is why **Gandhi remains an original thinker in the matter of peace building** and also a successful peace builder.

He believed that **nonviolence is a truth that follows from the unity and interdependence of humanity and life**. He said that violence damages and weakens all forms of life while nonviolence uplifts all.

Gandhi believed that awareness is required for a critical self-examination and a move from egocentricity towards a ‘shared humanity’.

Therefore, in an age of increasing ‘global

4. [The evolution of the Mahatma’s thought and philosophy](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The evolution of the Mahatma’s thought and philosophy**” published in **The Hindu** on **4th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1

News: **The article discusses the change in the views of Gandhiji after returning to India from South Africa.**

Gandhi was greatly influenced by the writings of Leo Tolstoy and John Ruskin.

He adopted the idea of hatred of violence and consumerism from the writing of Leo Tolstoy. While respect for labour and concern for the poor was adopted from the writings of John Ruskin.

Gandhi included, acquired knowledge in his book Hind Swaraj, composed in 1909.

What did Gandhi write in his book Hind Swaraj?

He wrote that once India gains swaraj it will have to stay away from the evils of western societies.

According to Gandhi, evils of the western societies were –

- Electoral democracy because Parliaments were the emblems of slavery.
- Women should not go out for work as this will lead to the movement for the voting rights as it was in the West.
- Modern industry based on machinery should be rejected.

However, he thought that some faults that Indian society had was child marriage and polyandry. However, no mention was made of polygamy or untouchability in his book.

He indirectly praised caste system for lowering market competition as it assigns a fixed occupation to everyone. He also had faith on varnashram.

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He proclaimed that India was being ruined by the three evils (railways, lawyers and doctors) brought by the British.

He said that India should continue to buy from Manchester rather than build cotton mills in India.

He believed that there was no need of compulsory education and religious education was enough. Gandhi did not present any proposal in his book for the removal or alleviation of poverty even though he was concerned for the poor. He also did not provide any guidance on how India under Swaraj was to be governed.

The only modern idea adopted by Gandhi in his book was that a nation should not be identified with any one religion.

These were the views of Gandhi when he arrived India in 1915.

However, Gopal Krishna Gokhale was his teacher and he was against his views written in Hind Swaraj. He encountered Gandhi on the idea of untouchability that was ignored in Hind Swaraj.

How did Gandhi views evolve from writings in Hind Swaraj?

He did not mention anything about untouchables in his book but **after the establishment of ashram at Ahmedabad in 1915** he admitted an untouchable couple into it.

Gandhi participated in **Champaran struggle against indigo-planters**. This made him go against his views on right of property.

Gandhi went on a **hunger-strike in favour of striking textile mill workers** which was against his views on the establishment of modern industry in India.

During the Non-Cooperation movement (1920-22), the main demand was for **protection of Khilafat** which was a purely Islamic institution under the Ottoman Empire in Turkey. This was the invocation of religion as a source of political action, while Gandhi's view in his book were against using religion as a source of political action.

Moreover, **Gandhiji formulated 'Constructive Programme' in 1924**. The Programme concentrated to work in the villages to promote the use of Khadi and reject machine-made cloth and British made cloth. It also campaigned for Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability.

Gandhi also supported **Nehru's draft resolution on Fundamental Rights** in the Karachi session of the Congress on 31 March 1931. This resolution provided many principles which Gandhi opposed earlier, such as, women should not only become voters but also appointed to public offices and exercise of trade, etc.

Gandhiji went on fast against the **separate electorates created for depressed castes** by the Government's Communal Award of August 1932.

The Poona Pact proved a signal for Gandhiji from 1932 onward to initiate a nationwide campaign against untouchability and for their upliftment.

Gandhiji later avoided giving any sanction to the caste system or any philosophical defence of varnashram.

His concerns for Hindu-Muslim unity became ever more focused. He stood firm against communal violence in the year of Independence for which he paid with his life on January 30, 1948.

5. Kohinoor and other quarrels over stolen artefacts

Source: The post is based on an article “**Kohinoor and other quarrels over stolen artefacts**” published in **The Times of India** on **4th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1 – Art and Architecture

Relevance: concerns associated with repatriation artefacts in India

News: There has been a demand to return the Kohinoor diamond to India after the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Recently Australia has also returned 29 artefacts belonging to India during the visit of PM Modi.

However, returning cultural artefacts to their country of origin will be a struggle unless both national and international laws are strengthened.

What are the arguments for repatriation?

First, artworks or artefacts belong to the cultures which produced them and are part of citizens’ identities.

Second, restorative justice prescribes that stolen or looted property should be returned to the rightful owner.

Third, colonial ideologies seem to continue if artefacts are not being returned.

Fourth, people are deprived of the opportunity to view artwork created by their ancestors as travelling to Europe or the US is beyond their capacity.

However, there has been a counter argument from the West.

What are the counter arguments from the West?

First, many objects were legally acquired while some like the Kohinoor diamond were gifted. Therefore, they cannot be returned to the previous colonies.

Second, the kingdoms these artefacts were taken from are currently spread across different countries. Their exact location of origin is not clear. Hence, it’s difficult to return them to a particular country.

Third, by returning these cultural objects one cannot end the colonial history of the countries. Imperialism is part of modern world history.

Fourth, returning artefacts may endanger them since some of the countries of origin do not have the means to protect these cultural objects and face unending conflict. Therefore, they are well-protected and secure in Western museums.

Fifth, western museums showcase art and cultures from different countries. Therefore, they reflect the common heritage of mankind.

Moreover, there are international laws meant to return the artefacts to their country of origin.

What are the international laws for repatriation of the artefacts?

1954: The **1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property** was signed after the destruction of cultural property during World War II. The convention commanded its signatories to safeguard and respect cultural property.

1970: **UNESCO Convention** on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property permitted return of stolen objects to rightful owners if there was proof of ownership.

1995: **UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects** advocated the return of the illegally exported artefacts to their country of origin.

These conventions led France in 2017 and Netherland in 2019 to return the artefacts acquired during the colonization to their country of origin.

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This shows that there has been some progress in repatriations. However, most repatriations need case-to-case intervention which is time consuming.

In the case of India, Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 seeks to protect our cultural properties needs urgent amendment.

What are the provisions under Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972?

Section 3 of Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 prohibits export of antiques or art treasures. It can only be exported through the central government.

Punishment for the offence under Section 3 ranges from six months to three years of simple imprisonment whereas Egypt and China have death penalty for cultural crimes.

Hence, cultural crimes are treated as minor offences in India and Indian laws are ineffective.

What can be the course of action?

First, there is a need to include art and culture in school and college syllabi as children do not have any knowledge of Indian art and culture.

Second, art and culture should not be confined to museums and its awareness should be spread within the public.

Third, NGOs trying to bring back art treasures should be encouraged. For example, India Pride Project.

Fourth, art objects and historical monuments at the local, state and national level need to be catalogued, photographed and geotagged.

Fifth, there should be strict punishment for stealing artefacts.

6. [Say no to alcohol: The case for abstinence](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Say no to alcohol: The case for abstinence**” published in the The Indian Express on 7th October 2022.

Syllabus: GS1- Social issues. GS2- Government policies and interventions

News– The article explains the challenges associated with liquor consumption in India. It also explains the need for communitarian action to reduce liquor consumption.

What is our historical legacy against liquor consumption?

Temperance movement against liquor consumption began in the 1880s. Gandhi ji made it part of the fight against the British state.

Gandhi’s objection was to the state having a role in the production and distribution of alcohol. He did not support the complete prohibition. It will lead to corrupt practices by the state. He advocated self-regulation to avoid liquor consumption.

Rajaji argued in favour of effective state intervention. The Indian culture against liquor consumption would make this process less corrupt.

What are the negative impacts of alcohol consumption?

It leads to violence against women.

It mostly impacts the poorest sections of society.

It is linked with multimorbidity, lower life expectancy, mental impairment, and loss of productivity.

WHO, have issued stronger warnings against risk-free levels of responsible drinking and claims of beneficial health effects.

A 2019 study in Science Direct estimates that alcohol-related deaths in India. It would lead to a loss of 258 million life years between 2011 and 2050, an average annual loss of 1.45% of GDP.

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A Lancet study claims that under 40 groups of people are at greatest risk due to liquor consumption.

What are the reasons behind increasing liquor consumption?

Older cultural norms against liquor consumption have weakened.

Alcohol is being glamorised and normalised by households.

State governments policies have further compounded the problem. They earn higher revenues from the alcohol industry. It disincentives them against making difficult choices against liquor consumption.

Why is there a need for action at the community level?

A study published this year by the US National Bureau of Economic Research states that it takes a village to discourage drinking and sustain abstinence.

All drinking, whether small or large, creates negative impacts that are unpredictable.

7. [Act quickly: Hate speech gets encouragement with late action from cops and courts. Parties must get tough too](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “Act quickly: Hate speech gets encouragement with late action from cops and courts. Parties must get tough too” published in The Times of India on 12th October 2022.

Syllabus: GS1- Communalism. GS3- Security issues

News– The article explains the reasons for hate speeches. It also provides the solution to curb instances of hate speech.

Recently there were instances of elected representatives of parties and religious organizations giving hate speeches.

What are the reasons behind encouragement for hate speech?

Lack of quick and meaningful police and legal actions encourages hate speech.

There are delays by the police in registering FIR.

Courts take a very long time to decide the cases related to hate speeches.

Political parties do not act against their members giving hate speeches.

What is the way forward?

Police forces have to be vigilant and proactive in registering FIRs, making arrests, filing chargesheets and pursuing trials.

Political parties should show zero tolerance for hate speeches.

Higher courts should take a proactive stand. They should supervise a few hare speeches. If necessary, they should also pull up lower courts.

A separate law on hate speeches is unnecessary. It can be misinterpreted.

8. [About the shift in the Indian monsoon: The lingering monsoon](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The lingering monsoon**” published in the **Indian Express** on 12th October 2022.

Syllabus: GS -1 – Important Geophysical phenomena

Relevance: About the shift in the Indian monsoon

News: Incessant rain over Delhi and several other parts of North and Northwest India over the last few days provide further evidence of the shifting patterns in monsoon activity over the Indian subcontinent.

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What is the shift in the Indian monsoon?

STATION	ONSET		WITHDRAWAL		Existing dates for normal onset and withdrawal of the southwest monsoon based on 1901-40 data; new dates being used by IMD from June 1, 2020 based on 1961-2019 and 1971-2019 data for onset and withdrawal respectively.
	New	Existing	New	Existing	
Hyderabad	Jun 8	Jun 7	Oct 14	Oct 15	
Pune	Jun 10	Jun 9	Oct 11	Oct 6	
Mumbai	Jun 11	Jun 10	Oct 8	Sept 29	
Ahmedabad	Jun 21	Jun 14	Sept 30	Sept 22	
Kolkata	Jun 11	Jun 10	Oct 12	Oct 14	
Lucknow	Jun 23	Jun 20	Oct 3	Sept 30	
New Delhi	Jun 27	Jun 23	Sept 25	Sept 22	
Chandigarh	Jun 26	Jul 1	Sept 22	Sept 22	

Source: Indian Express

The monsoon season earlier confined neatly to the four-month June-September period. But it is clearly spilling over into October now. The monsoon rainfall has also become more erratic — fewer rainy days but more intense rain. Extreme rainfall events are increasing both in intensity and frequency. For instance, Delhi had its fourth-wettest October of the last 120 years.

The recent spell of rainfall over Western Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Eastern Rajasthan and Delhi were a result of the interaction of monsoon winds, moving east to west, with the western disturbance wind system. Such interactions happen several times during the monsoon season.

Due to this, three years ago, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had revised the expected dates of onset and withdrawal of the monsoon for several regions of the country. The withdrawal dates for North, Northwest and Central India were pushed back by one to two weeks to account for the trends witnessed over the last 50 years.

What is the reason for the shift in the Indian monsoon?

Climate change: The shift in the Indian monsoon is being driven primarily by **climate change**.

Global warming: One possible reason for the spillover of monsoon rainfall to October could be the fact that the oceans (**Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea**) are now warmer than earlier.

Warmer ocean currents help the formation of monsoon winds. Earlier, rainfall during the monsoon season would bring down the temperature of the ocean. But possibly because of global warming, the oceans continue to remain warm even after the traditional monsoon season is over. Similarly, a warmer atmosphere has a greater capacity to hold water. When this water is finally released, it often results in a heavier downpour.

What are the challenges associated with the shift in the Indian monsoon?

A challenge for forecasting: The IMD has over the past 10-12 years, invested heavily in setting up observational equipment, upgrading computing resources, and fine-tuning weather forecast models. But despite that, the IMD is battling public perception for its generic forecasts.

Impact on Indian economy: A significant part of Indian agriculture still depends on monsoon rainfall for irrigation. The supply of drinking water and the generation of electricity are also linked to the monsoon.

Dam management: Most reservoirs in the northern and central parts of the country seek to attain full capacity levels by the end of September because not much rain is expected after that.

What needs to be done to adapt to the shift in the Indian monsoon?

Augment IMD capacity: Capacity upgradation has to be a continuous exercise. So, India need to set up more observation stations, collect more data, and do more computing.

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Follow-up action in agriculture and economy: Not just the preferred time of sowing of crops, but the entire cropping cycle — even the choice of crops — might need to be changed.

9. [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 **19th 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 misbelief 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 to 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 management of the events from the top to bottom.

Insufficient effort: There was 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 to the defeat of India.

10. [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

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to get mainstream education. The share of Muslims who attend madrasas and makhtabs is not more than 6.3%

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.

11. 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.

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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.

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.

12. 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?

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.

13. 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.

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General

Studies

Paper – 2

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General Studies - 2

1. [On abortion, Supreme Court has listened to women](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**On abortion, Supreme Court has listened to women**” published in **The Indian Express** on **3rd October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Vulnerable sections and judiciary

Relevance– Women empowerment

News– The article explains the recent Supreme Court ruling on the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act. It also explains the issues with the current legal framework for termination of pregnancy.

What are the issues faced by single women who want to terminate their pregnancy?

They are subjected to shaming, harassment and violation of their privacy by medical practitioners before being provided abortion services.

Women face stigma in Indian society on account of being single, unmarried and divorced.

What are the challenges for women in the current legal framework?

The amended provision of the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act** in 2021 extended the time limit for termination of pregnancy from 20 to 24 weeks. Only some categories of women like survivor of rape, women in disaster are eligible for pregnancy upto 24 weeks. It is not available to single mothers

According to **the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act of 2012**, medical practitioners, who provide for abortion, should report sexual assault of a minor. This provision stops adolescent girls from having a safe abortion. They fear that their identity will be disclosed.

What are the positive aspects of Supreme Court ruling?

Unmarried women and single mothers–

According to the Supreme Court ruling, single and unmarried women would also get the benefits of abortion upto 24 weeks.

Transgender–Supreme Court ruled that abortion rights under MTP Act are also available to cis-gender women.

POCSO Act challenges– The Court held that for the limited purposes of providing medical termination of pregnancy under the MTP Act, medical practitioners need not disclose the identity and other personal details of the minor as required under the POCSO Act.

Marital rape– Supreme Court also recognized marital rape. It held that victims of marital rape are also eligible for an extended window of 24 weeks for termination of pregnancy.

The Supreme Court upheld the right of all women and girls to make reproductive choices for themselves, without undue interference from the state.

2. [Russia's prolonged confrontation with the West is putting India's strategic interests under stress](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Russia's prolonged confrontation with the West is putting India's strategic interests under stress**” published in the **Indian Express** on **3rd October 2022**.

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

Relevance: Russian war and India's stand.

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News: Recently, India once again abstained from a major United Nations resolution on Ukraine. Along with India, China, Brazil, and Gabon also abstained the resolution.

What is the present course of the Ukraine crisis?

There is a significant escalation of the conflict from Russia by ordering a general mobilisation to reverse the Russian military setbacks in Ukraine, renewing the threat to use nuclear weapons, and annexing the occupied territories.

What are the challenges faced by Russian defence production?

Read here: [Semiconductor shortage in Russia: India's Russia Problem Will Grow](#)

Why India needs to ask Russia to stop the war?

India has been signalling its growing unease with Russia's Ukraine policy in the last few weeks.

Read here: [Why telling Russia to abandon war is in India's interest](#)

Further, India's growing partnership with the US and European states is coming under stress.

What India needs to do about the Ukraine crisis?

India itself confronting territorial expansionism on its frontiers. So, India must come to terms with the essential question in Ukraine, especially about changing borders through the use of force.

3. [As India prepares to take over the G20 presidency, it can learn from Indonesia](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "**As India prepares to take over the G20 presidency, it can learn from Indonesia**" published in **The Indian Express** on **4th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance- India multilateral engagement

News- The article explains the lessons India can learn from Indonesia on economic engagement. These will be helpful for India's presidency of G-20 nations.

G-20 is a grouping of developed and developing nations. It provides a common platform to discuss the issues related to **global economic governance**.

India is going to assume its presidency for 2022.

What can India learn from Indonesia?

Case of Indonesia- Indonesia is a trading nation. It is part of trade blocs like ASEAN FTA, RCEP and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. Indonesian institutes are relatively outward.

It has strong intra-Asian relations. Indonesia has strong educational linkages with Australia. It has a long-term investment partnership with Japan.

Case of India- India has less multilateral and regional economic engagement. It has limited government and academia expertise on these issues.

Most trade agreements are shallow and have limited coverage. Even in areas where it excels globally like pharma and IT, India has reluctance to assume leadership roles

What is the way forward for India?

India can use its **exemplary diplomacy** to build goodwill and consensus. Strong economic base will help India in its engagement with the G-20.

India can shore up engagement with the **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**. It can invite **BIMSTEC** nations to G-20 summit.

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The G-20 summit should not be seen merely as a giant tourism and investment promotion opportunity. It requires **dedicated and consistent policy engagement** at every level, including the academic and business community.

India needs to assume a **leadership role in the digital sector**. India has a strong presence globally in these areas. It will be helpful for India's leadership in the developing world.

Rather than bilateral engagement, India should go for a multilateral approach for building coalitions.

4. [Every drop counts](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Every drop counts”** published in **The Hindu** on **4th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Government schemes

News– The article explains the current status of the Jal Jeevan Scheme.

Main target of Jal Jeevan Mission is to ensure that at least 55 liters per person per day of potable water is available to every rural household.

What is the status of the Jal Jeevan Mission?

The government claims that 10.2 crore households or 53% of the population now have tap water access. This is a 37% increase from 2019.

A recent audit by a private agency found that around 62% of rural households in India had fully functional tap water connections.

A report of a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Water Resources stated that 46% of households had fully functional tap water connections.

What are the main observations from the survey?

The survey shows wide disparities in achievement. Some states like Tami Nadu and Himachal have 80% of households with fully functional connections. While some states like Rajasthan and Kerala have less than half of households with such connections.

About 75% of households received water every day of the week, and only 8% just once a week.

The report mentions a problem of chlorine contamination. Most of the anganwadi centers and schools had higher than the permissible range of residual chlorine.

Only 3% of rural households were surveyed by the agency for the updated figures. There is a possibility that the margin of error may be substantial.

5. [There are precedents to help the EC decide which is the real Shiv Sena](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“There are precedents to help the EC decide which is the real Shiv Sena”** published in **The Indian Express** on **4th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Polity

Relevance– Political parties in India

News– The article explains the procedure for allotting symbols in case of conflict between two rival groups of party. It also explains the Supreme Court stand in this regard.

Recently the Supreme Court allowed the Election Commission of India to decide on Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde's petition staking claim over the real Shiv Sena and the party symbol.

What is the procedure for symbol allotment in case there is a dispute between rival factions?

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EC does not take *suo motu* cognisance. It decides the matter only when a party approaches it with its claim.

The Commission then starts proceedings under **Section 15 of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968**. The proceedings are **quasi-judicial** in nature.

It goes by the “**Rule of Majority and Numerical Strength**”. Both parties are asked to produce evidence in support of their claim.

The Commission takes into account all the available facts and circumstances of the case. Then, it decides which rival section or group is that recognised party. The decision of the Commission shall be binding.

If elections are scheduled– The name of the party and the symbol both are frozen. The two factions are given a temporary name like Party A and Party B, and symbol A and symbol B.

What is the Supreme Court ruling on this matter?

In the first judicial case related to symbols, the Supreme Court gave its observation. It observed that the symbol is not a property to be divided between co-owners. The allotment of a symbol to the candidates set up by a political party is a legal right.

In case of a split, the Commission has been authorised to determine which of the rival groups or sections is the party entitled to the symbol. The Commission does not decide as to which group represents the party. It decides which group is that party.

The court upheld the constitutionality of the “**test of majority**” in the **Congress split case (Sadiq Ali v. Election Commission of India, 1971)**.

6. [Livestreaming Supreme Court proceedings: A step closer to a stronger democracy](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Livestreaming Supreme Court proceedings: A step closer to a stronger democracy**” published in **The Indian Express** on **4th October 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Functioning of Judiciary**

Relevance: **benefits of live-streaming of SC hearing.**

News: The Supreme Court has allowed the live streaming of the hearing of cases from 27th September 2022. This decision was followed by the court’s original decision of live telecast of important proceedings four years back on 27th September 2018.

It was held that the live-streaming of court proceedings is in the public interest and it will also strengthen constitutional values, democracy, and citizenship.

What are the benefits of the live-streaming of the cases by SC?

First, it will enable common people of the country to view the proceedings of the highest court. It will bring faith in the judiciary.

- It will also provide for transparency and accessibility of the process of justice delivery which in turn will strengthen the country’s democracy.

Second, it is also a step towards creating informed citizenry as people will be informed of the judicial proceedings of the court.

Third, it will enable people to understand the importance of the rule of law. The people will be able to see the efforts of judiciary in protecting the rights of the poor, marginalized and disempowered sections of society.

Fourth, it will promote transparency in judicial decision-making. Usually, the language of the court is only understood by lawyers and judges.

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- Therefore, live proceedings will enable common people to understand the judicial proceedings.

Fifth, the decision could raise the quality and standards of the legal profession.

- It will help lawyers to prepare for the court proceedings in a proper manner and will also make them aware of irresponsible remarks.

Sixth, it will also create a level playing ground for the younger lawyers as their preparedness and intellectual skills will be visible to all.

Seventh, there has also been a concern that young lawyers are not ready to enter into the litigation field. Therefore, the live streaming could inspire law students to take up this field.

Eighth, it will motivate law faculty members and legal researchers to work on new areas of scholarship and research relating to the functioning of the judiciary and legal profession.

Therefore, SC has taken a historical decision of live-streaming the hearing of cases which bring transparency and faith in judiciary amongst the people of India.

7. [India's Ukraine destiny: A foreign policy test](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**India’s Ukraine destiny: A foreign policy test**” published in the **Business Standard** on **4th October 2022**.

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

Relevance: Russian war and India’s stand.

News: Recently, India abstained from a United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Russia’s illegal referendums in four regions of Ukraine and calling for an unconditional withdrawal of troops from that country.

What is the present course of the Ukraine crisis?

Russia organised “referendums” on Ukrainian territory late last month. Russia claimed that it unilaterally claimed victory. Following that, Russia is signing decrees to declare the four eastern Ukrainian territories — Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia—part of Russia.

How do global nations view India’s abstaining from resolution?

India has consistently maintained that the global order is based on the UN charter, international law, and respect for territorial sovereignty. However, India’s abstaining raised questions **a)** About India’s global commitment to nuclear disarmament and strengthening the non-proliferation order, **b)** India’s dependence on Russian defence supplies is limiting India from taking an independent stand.

What are the challenges faced by Russian defence production?

Read here: [Semiconductor shortage in Russia: India’s Russia Problem Will Grow](#)

Why India needs to ask Russia to stop the war?

Recently, the US has indicated its disapproval of India’s position on Ukraine by excluding it from the critical Minerals Security Partnership and signing an F16 sustainment programme with Pakistan

Read here: [Why telling Russia to abandon war is in India’s interest](#)

What Russia needs to remember before escalating the Ukraine conflict?

The threat of nuclear escalation will alter the dynamics of the war in unpredictable ways. This is likely to send a political message to the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

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What India needs to do?

It will be critical for India to craft a nuanced and consistent position on the Russia-Ukraine crisis that would establish greater credibility with its allies.

Read more: [Russia's prolonged confrontation with the West is putting India's strategic interests under stress](#)

8. [Why Modi-Zelenskyy call is an inflection point](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Why Modi-Zelenskyy call is an inflection point”** published in **The Times of India** on **6th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance– Russia -Ukraine war

News- The article explains the possibility of India's role in reducing the tension between Russia and Ukraine. It also explains the consequences of war.

What has been India's position on the Russia-Ukraine war?

Since the beginning, India has maintained a neutral position in the Ukraine war. It didn't criticize Russia for the Ukraine invasion.

Recently, PM Modi rebuked Putin at the SCO summit in Samarkand. He told Putin that it is not a time of war. There was a phone call between PM Modi and the Ukrainian President. They discussed the nuclear threat by Russia.

It shows that ties between India and Russia have reached an inflection point.

How can India contribute to peace efforts?

Western countries have invested heavily in war in favour of Russia. China enjoys no limits friendship with Russia and has supported Russia in the war. India due to its neutral position is better placed to reduce tensions.

India has openly said that it will contribute to peace efforts.

It may not be able to stop the war. But it could attempt to avoid a nuclear attack by Russia.

What are the consequences of war?

There is blatant violation of international laws, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Russian invasion has led to western sanctions. It has created a fuel, food and fertiliser crisis.

The world is facing a looming global economic recession.

Europe is facing an energy crisis.

The US led move to cap Russian oil prices has created confusion everywhere in the world. India and China will unlikely to agree with these price caps.

9. [Gubernatorial procrastination is unreasonable](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Gubernatorial procrastination is unreasonable”** published in **The Hindu** on **6th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian Polity

Relevance– Legislative processes

News- The article explains the Governor role in case of Bills passed by the state legislature.

What are the examples of the Governor withholding assent to a Bill passed by the state legislature?

In Tamil Nadu, the Governor forwarded the Bill for exemption from the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) to the President after considerable delay.

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The Kerala Governor publicly announced that he would not give assent to the Lokayukta Amendment Bill and the Kerala University Amendment Bill.

What are the constitutional provisions in this regard?

A Bill passed by the State Assembly becomes law only after the Governor gives assent.

Article 200 of the Indian constitution contains provisions related to the Governor giving assent to state bills.

He may give assent or he can send it back to the Assembly requesting it to reconsider. In this case, if the Assembly passes the Bill without making any change and sends it back to the Governor, he will have to give assent to it.

He may reserve the Bill for reconsideration by the President. Bill can be reserved for the consideration of the President only if it would endanger the position of the High Court.

He may withhold the assent. But it is not normally done by any Governor because it would be an extremely unpopular action. The legislature reflects the will of the people. It would be against the spirit of the constitution.

These provisions affirm the primacy of the legislature in the legislative exercise.

The Constitution does not fix any timeline for the Governor to give clearance to the Bill passed by the state legislature. It does not mean that the Governor can withhold assent for indefinite time. There is no such provision in Article 200. It is against the constitutional scheme.

What is international practice?

In Britain, assent by the monarch is necessary for a Bill to be passed by Parliament to become law. It has also the power to withhold the Bill. But it is a dead letter and not followed in Practice.

In the United States, the President is empowered to return a Bill to the House. But if the Houses again pass it with two third majority, the Bill becomes law.

Can Governor take action to withhold the Bill challenged before the judiciary?

Article 361 of the Constitution prohibits the court from initiating proceedings against the Governor or the President for any act done in exercise of their powers.

Governor while withholding assent, will have to disclose the reason. The Governor cannot act in an **arbitrary manner**. If the grounds for refusal have **malafide intentions**, it could be struck down as unconstitutional.

Supreme Court in **Rameshwar Prasad and Ors. vs Union Of India** held that immunity granted by Article 361 does not take away the power of the Court to examine the validity of the action including on the ground of malafides.

10. The fraying framework

Source– The post is based on the article **“The fraying framework”** published in **The Indian Express** on **6th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Polity

Relevance– Global politics

News- The article explains the founding framework for different political systems around the world and the crisis of legitimacy faced by these frameworks.

What is happening around the world?

There are extraordinary protests by women in Iran.

In China, state repressions are increasing to sustain the Communist Party Congress. Anxieties over the quality of liberal democracy are growing.

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There is a looming political crisis in South Africa.

These developments suggest that we might be in the midst of a global legitimisation crisis.

What are the foundational frameworks of political organisation across the world?

In the Western world and other countries like India, there is some version of liberal, representative constitutional democracy.

In Islamic world, it is modern Islamic constitutionalism. It reconciles the **sovereignty of God** with modern principles of politics.

In Africa, politics was shaped by the requirements of effective bulwark against the creation of the colour line and **imperialism**.

In China, Politics was shaped by the system of one-party rule.

These founding frameworks are embedded in different national traditions.

They are initial references to any political question.

What is the case with the Chinese framework?

Party would overcome the principal contradictions of society. All social mediation was to be carried out within the Party. The Party also represents a national identity as a whole.

Challenges– It will have to manage the principal economic contradictions. It will also require more control and repression to retain its grip on power.

What is the case with Islamic constitutionalism?

Theo-democracy was shaped by Maududi, one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century. It was to reconcile formal sovereignty of God, with modern democracy, and a theological role for clerics.

challenges– The insistence on patriarchy is bound to face resistance. Its inability to handle the contradictions that come from an allegiance to blasphemy can produce conflict.

What is the case with liberal democracies?

There was no single party. The parties were organised around interests. Social stability could be secured by orderly competition and rotation of power. It provided individual liberty and less state coercion.

Challenges– In most democracies, including the US, we can no longer be as confident about peaceful transitions of power. There is impatience with individual liberty. These democracies are being controlled by oligarchies.

11. The criterion for SC status

Source– The post is based on the article **“The criterion for SC status”** published in **The Hindu** on **6th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Vulnerable sections and Indian Judiciary. GS1- Social empowerment

Relevance– Caste system in India

News- The article explains the issues related to inclusion of Christian Dalits in category of Schedule Caste under **Article 341** of Indian constitution.

The Supreme Court of India has sought the most recent position of the Union government on a batch of petitions challenging the **Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order of 1950**. It allows only members of Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist religions to be recognised as SCs.

Who all are included in the Constitution Order of 1950?

In 1950, initially it included only Hindus as SCs.

The Order was amended in 1956 to include Dalits who had converted to Sikhism.

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It was amended once more in 1990 to include Dalits who had converted to Buddhism.

Both amendments were aided by the reports of the **Kaka Kalelkar Commission in 1955** and the **High Powered Panel (HPP) on Minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in 1983** respectively.

Why are Dalit Christians excluded?

First, SC status is meant for communities suffering from social disabilities arising out of the practice of untouchability. It was prevalent in Hindu and Sikh communities.

Second, Christians and Muslims of Dalit origin had lost their caste identity by way of their conversion. The practice of untouchability is not prevalent in these religions.

Third, Dalits who converted to Islam or Christianity belonged to different sets of caste groups and not just one. They cannot be categorised as a “single ethnic group”, which is required by **Article 341** for inclusion.

Fourth, Practice of untouchability was a feature of Hindu religion. Inclusion of Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians as SCs could result in being misunderstood internationally as India trying to impose its caste system upon Christians and Muslims.

What are the arguments for for inclusion of Christians and Muslims?

First Backward Classes Commission's report in 1953, the Report of the Committee on Untouchability Economic and Educational Development Of the Scheduled Castes in 1969, the HPP report on SCs, STs, and Minorities in 1983, the Mandal Commission Report, the report of the Prime Minister's High-Level Committee formed in 2006, a 2008 study conducted by the National Commission for Minorities, the Ranganath Misra Commission Report have documented the existence of caste inequalities among Christian and Muslim dalits.

The Union government refuses to accept the reports of the Commissions on the basis that these reports do not have enough empirical evidence to support their claims.

12. [Election Commission's political plunge erodes its role as a neutral watchdog](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Election Commission's political plunge erodes its role as a neutral watchdog**” published in **The Indian Express** on **6th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Electoral Reforms in India

Relevance: freebies and the problems associated with the recent proposal of the Election Commission

News: The Election Commission has recently decided to amend the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and for this it has sent proposal to the political parties.

This new amendment will require political parties to measure the cost involved in the promises made in the manifesto and explain the funding of these promises.

It will also require to assess the impact of the promises on fiscal sustainability of the state.

What does the existing guidelines under the MCC say?

The existing guidelines under the MCC require political parties and candidates to explain the logic behind the promises made and the possible ways to finance such promises.

But parties make routine declarations and do not provide enough information. Therefore, the new proposal will bring more changes in the MCC.

What is the new amendment?

It will require political parties to declare the extent of coverage of promises in terms of individuals/households along with expected expenditure.

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Parties will be expected to provide details regarding all such promises separately. They would also need to show the income source required to fulfil all electoral promises. It is a welcome step as it will make more information public. However, there are many problems associated with the proposal.

What are the problems with the amendment?

Political parties: It would raise fear amongst the political parties to which expenditure to cut, or which assets to monetise or sell, or borrow for raising resources to fulfil a promise.

Demanding such detailed information would put opposition parties in a disadvantageous position as it would be easier for the party in power to get approval for the scheme.

All political parties would need to have expertise in fiscal issues to provide information in such detail which is even lacked in the government.

Election Commission: It will bring burden on the EC by bringing such disclosures a part of the Model Code of Conduct. It will also be difficult for the EC to judge on the feasibility of the promises parties make to voters. It can lead EC to dive in the politics.

Further, it is not clear how the EC will view this level of information as it does not have such capabilities.

Therefore, intervening into freebies and being a judge can lead to a negative image of the EC and it can endanger its hard-won credibility.

Why is this proposal against the previous stand of the Election Commission on freebies?

EC has stated in an affidavit to the Supreme Court that “irrational” and “freebie” are subjective and open to interpretation. A promise of one political party may be a freebie for another and vice versa.

It also declined to be part of a committee proposed by the SC to look into the issue.

It further said that it would be difficult for it to become the arbiter of what is or isn't a reasonable poll promise because of problems of definition.

Moreover, when the freebie issue was brought into the SC, the EC tried to stay away from the issue by saying that it lacks powers over state policy making.

It has also acknowledged in one of its affidavits that “freebies can have different impacts on society, economy, equity, depending upon the situation, context and time period.”

What can be the course of action?

First, the ECI should move cautiously and make sure that the level playing field in a democracy is not disturbed.

Second, it is important to have an independent fiscal body that has the expertise to evaluate Budget provisions for the Centre and the states. Finance Commissions set up in the past have recommended setting up such an institution.

Third, the judgment on freebies should be left on the people and EC should set aside itself. Moreover, FRBM Act ensure check and balances and encourage fiscal discipline in governance.

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13. [Strengthening the CSR framework is a profitable idea](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Strengthening the CSR framework is a profitable idea**” published in **The Hindu** on **7th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

Relevance: CSR funding and problems associated with it

News: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was established under Section 135 of the Companies Act 2013.

Since its establishment CSR spending in India has risen from ₹10,065 crore in 2014-15 to ₹24,865 crore in 2020-21. However, there are other issues associated with it.

What are the present problems with the CSR funding?

Lack of data: There is no data to verify whether this increase in CSR funding is equivalent with the increase in profits of Indian and foreign companies.

Lack of adequate spending: There were 2,926 companies in 2020-21 with zero spend on CSR while companies spending less than the prescribed limit of 2% rose from 3,078 in 2015-16 to 3,290 in 2020-21.

Participation: There was also a decline in the number of companies participating in CSR from 25,103 in FY2019 to 17,007 in FY2021.

Trusts: Many private companies have registered their own trusts. They transfer the statutory CSR budgets for utilization in those trusts. However, it is not clear whether it is allowed under the Companies Act/CSR rules.

Therefore, there is a need to look at the provisions present in the Act that prevents companies from CSR spending.

What are the problems present in the provisions of Companies Act 2013 for CSR funding?

Local areas: Section 135(5) of the Act says that the company should give preference to local areas/areas around it where it operates.

However, as per the report of a committee in 2018 ‘local area’ in the Act is only directionary and a balance has to be maintained by the CSR companies.

Therefore, local area in the act has caused confusion for the companies which has led companies to use their discretion in CSR fundings.

Location of companies: A report says that that 54% of CSR companies are located in big cities such as Mumbai, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, etc. whereas, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have very little CSR companies. This leads to unequal funding of the CSR.

Environment: Item (iv) of Schedule VII of the Act deals with environmental issues to create a countervailing effect. However, an analysis of CSR spending reveals that most CSR spending is in education (37%) and health and sanitation (29%) and only 9% was spent on the environment.

Reduced spending: If a company spends an amount more than the prescribed minimum amount of 2%, then that excess amount will help companies to reduce spending in the succeeding three financial years.

This provision of the Act weakens the provision of minimum spending of 2%. Therefore, companies should be encouraged to spend more than this.

Expenditure Quality: The CSR funding companies submit their annual report to Corporate Affairs Ministry (MCA). The problem with the report is that it focuses on output rather than quality of the expenditure and its impact.

Lack of information: The Standing Committee on Finance had also observed that the information regarding CSR spending by companies is insufficient and difficult to access.

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Lack of authorization: An auditor can only investigate the details of spending and at most can question the board about its authenticity. However, the auditor is not authorized to check the accounts for non-compliance or inadequate CSR performance in the audit report.

What can be the course of action?

First, there is a need to curate a national-level platform by the MCA where all States could list their CSR-admissible projects. It will help companies to decide where their CSR funds would be most impactful across India.

Second, companies should spend at least 25% of their CSR funding for environment regeneration.

Third, all CSR projects should be selected and implemented with the active involvement of communities, district administration and public representatives.

Fourth, the committee in 2018 recommended to improve the existing monitoring and evaluation regime. This should be incorporated in the current CSR framework.

Fifth, CSR non-spend, underspend, and overspend should be qualified by the auditor in the audit report as a qualification to accounts and not just as a note to accounts.

Sixth, the MCA and the line departments should exercise greater direct monitoring and supervision over CSR spending instead of only hosting all information on the Ministry's website.

14. Amrit Mahotsav reflections and India's success against hunger

Source: The post is based on an article "**Amrit Mahotsav reflections and India's success against hunger**" published in **Live Mint** on **7th October 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Issues related to Hunger and Malnutrition**

Relevance: **benefits of food security schemes**

News: The central government has recently extended the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) upto the end of December 2022.

It is great step as it provides free food to poor households. However, there other steps taken by government to ensure food security amongst the poor.

What step has been taken by the government to ensure food security?

The government launched National Food Security Act (NFSA) in 2013. It provided subsidized food for 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population.

This Act made government to provide food guarantee in India with the help of farmers by providing price support incentive to farmers to grow major foodgrain like cereals, rice and wheat. However, the policy caused excessive 'cerealization' of the country's cropping pattern. It damaged farmlands in northern states like Punjab by promoting rice cultivation where it was not a traditional grown crop.

The NFSA also included the provision to target vulnerable groups through mid-day meals in schools and direct feeding of pre-school children and pregnant and lactating mothers through the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

However, it is not clear how well they performed in practice.

Further, the pandemic changed the scenario of food security as mid-day meals were stopped due to the closure of the schools. This led the government to launch PMGKAY in April 2020.

What is Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)?

It provided a free food supplement equal in proportion to the subsidized rations under the National Food Security Act.

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This scheme along with rations doubled the foodgrains for the households which was more than requirement.

This enabled the poor to feed household members migrating back from urban areas and feed children denied school meals.

The scheme was criticized as did not provide supplementary needs like cooking oil and salt. But these needs were fulfilled by selling the extra grains.

The scheme was even praised by Kristalina Georgieva, managing director of the International Monetary Fund.

Therefore, this scheme was beneficial for the poor households in the pandemic as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee was also not efficient in providing wages during the pandemic.

What is Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and how does it help rural areas?

MGNREGA provides work on demand for 100 days for the rural population but it was not effective during the pandemic due to health risks.

However, it is now increasing the rural households' incomes at a time when small-scale enterprises are not active and unskilled employment has not picked up.

Moreover, the problem with MGNREGA is that there are delays between work and wage receipts and the wage is not increased with the increase in inflation.

15. [Manoj Jha writes: Election Commission's proposal on freebies and election promises raises questions of institutional overreach](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Manoj Jha writes: Election Commission's proposal on freebies and election promises raises questions of institutional overreach**” published in **The Indian Express** on **7th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Electoral Reforms

Relevance: recent proposal of the Election Commission of India and freebies.

News: The Election Commission of India (ECI) has recently issued a letter proposing mandatory disclosure of the financial implications of the promises made in manifestos by political parties.

According to the ECI, it will enable healthy debate on the financial implications and fiscal sustainability of promises made by political parties and it is also necessary for conducting the free and fair elections.

What is the recent proposal of the ECI and what are its benefits?

The proposal requires political parties to disclose the financial implications of the promises they make in their manifestos.

However, the idea of communicating electors about the fiscal rationale of promises is already the part of the Model Code of Conduct from 2015. But ECI is now proposing a form for such disclosures.

If this proposal is included in the MCC, it will require parties to explain about the target of particular promise, the extent of coverage, the number of likely beneficiaries, and the cost of implementing it.

It will provide a framework under which a manifesto can be assessed by the voter from the perspective of its financial feasibility.

It may also make parties treat manifesto preparation as a responsible exercise meant to convince rather than attract the voter.

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However, it is being argued that ECI should not get involved into the implementation of manifestos as it is the political and administrative responsibility of the party that comes to power.

What are the stands of the Election Commission of India (ECI) and the Supreme Court (SC) on freebies?

Election Commission of India (ECI)

The ECI in April 2022 told the Supreme Court that it cannot de-register political parties for offering freebies to voters.

It is up to the voters to decide whether the distribution of freebies is financially feasible or such policies have an adverse effect on the economic health of the state.

But now it wants political parties to elaborate on the rationale for announcing such promises and their financing plan.

Supreme Court (SC)

SC in *S. Subramaniam Balaji vs. State of Tamil Nadu* (2013) has observed that the provisions of the Representation of the People Act (1951) place no limitation on the power of the political parties to make promises in their election manifesto.

The Court has further added that the manifesto of a political party is a statement of its policy and the question of implementing it arises only if the political party forms a government.

It upheld the right of parties to make electoral promises even if they involved distribution of consumer goods. It was held that such a promise would not lead to a corrupt practice.

Further the freebie schemes can be invalidated if they will be financed by budgetary allocations cleared by the legislature.

The court also suggested ECI to come up with guidelines to prevent useless promises and ensure a level playing field for the parties.

However, the guidelines of ECI were not successful in getting the information from the political parties as parties made only routine and ambiguous disclosures.

Moreover, the recent proposal of ECI raises many concerns.

What are the concerns with the Election Commission of India?

Article 324 of the Constitution defines role and responsibilities of the ECI. The ECI in that past has avoided in intervening any other matter other than conduction free and fair elections.

It seems that ECI is acting according to the direction given by the government which is not a good sign for the health of democracy in the country.

Further, the debate on freebies shows that there is a lack of understating on socioeconomic realities of the nation and the welfare state enshrined in the Constitution.

The ECI is considered to be the guardian of public value and democracy. However, in recent times, some of its positions have raised concerns.

The executive controls the ECI's finances and personnel appointments and it has been observed that favourable election commissioners are appointed to limit the agency's authority internally.

This damages the credibility of the institution which was supposed to ensure a level playing field for all parties.

Therefore, ECI should follow the Constitution of India and a balance between institutions should be maintained.

16. [Domestic ideologies in external settings](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Domestic ideologies in external settings**” published in **The Hindu** on **7th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance– Impact of domestic politics on foreign policy

News- The article explains articulation of the domestic agenda of the ruling party by the current Foreign Minister at the 77th UNGA session.

What are the main points of address that promote the domestic agenda of the ruling party?

Promoting the ideology of the ruling party– The Foreign Minister told UNGA that Indian society is rejuvenating itself from devastation caused by “**centuries of foreign invasion**” and “**colonialism**”. He made a distinction between centuries of foreign attacks and colonialism.

Century of foreign invasions is codeword for Muslim rule during the mediaval period. It represents the ideology of the current ruling party and their version of history.

Indian diplomatic tradition which has always presented **nationally unified positions** abroad, particularly at the UN and in multilateral forums. Domestic controversies should be avoided

Questioning earlier leadership– Mr. Jaishankar said that India’s rejuvenation is taking place in a democratic framework and is “reflected in more authentic voices and grounded leadership”. The statements question the choices made by choosing their representative since independence. It is clearly referring to the point that earlier representatives were less authentic and grounded

Damaging India record in decolonisation- Jaishankar recalled Modi’s pledge for Indian people to liberate them from **colonial mindset**. He added that externally it means **reformed multilateralism** and more **contemporary global governance**.

It damages India’s record as a pioneer and leader in the global decolonisation process in the 1950s and the 1960s. An entire generation of human rights workers in the United States and South Africa were also inspired by Gandhiji and his non-violent anti-colonial struggle.

17. [There are no poor people, only people in poor places](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**There are no poor people, only people in poor places**” published in **The Indian Express** on **8th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

Relevance: **problems with different wages across India and ways to improve it.**

News: India has differences in wages for the same amount of work. For example, an electrician moving from Kanpur to Bangalore gets three times more salary.

The country’s wage differentials reflect massive productivity differences across five areas — states, cities, sectors, firms, and skills.

How will country’s wage differences create productivity differences and what needs to be done?

States

Problems: Six states in South and West India in the next 20 years will account for almost 35 per cent of GDP growth but only 5 per cent of population growth. It is also expected that due to ageing population there will be more deaths than births. This will create wage inequalities across states.

Solution: Therefore, states that provide proper labour laws will attract more high-paying jobs.

Cities

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Problems: Hyderabad has a higher GDP than Odisha and four times that of J&K. One of the reasons for low paying cities is the incapable district magistrates. They are unelected, inexperienced, and unempowered for the complex trade-offs needed for well-paying jobs.

Solutions: Cities that can create a divergence between nominal wages (what employers care about) and real wages (what employees care about) will attract high-paying jobs.

Sectors

Problems: Software sector employs only 0.8 per cent of our labour force but generates 8 per cent of GDP while agriculture has 42 per cent of our labour force but generates only 16 per cent of GDP.

Solution: States that increase manufacturing and service sector jobs and move away their labour from agriculture will have more high-paying jobs. For example, China raised its per capita income 80 times in 40 years by moving 700 million people from farm to non-farm employment.

Firms

Problems: The pre-1991 unfair labour market advantage of multinationals no longer exists as Indian firms have also come up in the competition. But the problem is that out of 6.3 crore enterprises only 23,500 are proper companies. The largest and smallest manufacturing companies have a 24 times difference in productivity.

Solution: Therefore, states that replace rules by reducing regulatory mechanism will attract high-paying jobs.

Skills

Problems: It is impossible to predict wages as people have gained different skills at a young age. Wages are higher for using minds than muscles.

Solution: Therefore, states with high populations of residents with skills in demand will attract more high-paying jobs.

What can be done to reduce wage differences across states?

First, there is a need to empower local bodies and mayors by devolution of funds, functions, and functionaries.

Second, the enrollment in government schools should be raised by 45 percent.

Third, workers should be provided with skills in advance for the upcoming technologies. This will create supply and attract demand.

Fourth, there is also a need to bring reforms in agriculture (prices and distribution), proper and affordable power generation should be provided along with reliable public transport.

Fifth, there should be formalization by employing proper HR in civil services. This will reduce the burden on the state.

Sixth, there is a need to set a 12-month target for paperless and cashless for all citizen interfaces by leveraging India's unique stack of digital public goods.

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18. [Getting it right, in five ways: Commerce and industry minister says growth will receive a big boost from new logistics policy](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Getting it right, in five ways: Commerce and industry minister says growth will receive a big boost from new logistics policy”

published in **The Times of India** on **10th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2

Relevance: benefits of New Logistic Policy

News: The government has recently come up with the New Logistics Policy (NLP). It will benefit India in many ways and lead India towards a developed country in coming 25 years.

What are the components of NLP?

New Logistics Policy focuses on 5 ‘R’s. They are –

1. Getting the right product;
2. In the right condition;
3. At the right place;
4. At the right time;
5. To the right customer.

What are the benefits of the new logistics policy?

Costs: It will reduce logistics costs from an estimated 13-14% of GDP to single-digit. The policy will benefit small farmers and many MSMEs by lowering the transportation costs.

Farmers: This will benefit farmers as they have to sell their products at low prices due to the fear of rotting. However, the NLP will improve connectivity and benefit farmers by giving them the required price of their products.

Governance: The New Logistics Policy along with PM Gati Shakti will end the isolation in the governance of infrastructure.

- These policies will help in building high-quality rural roads and expressways, improving container turnaround time, faster and safer railways and dedicated freight corridors amongst others.

Exporters: Exporters will gain a lot from better logistics as their goods will become more competitive and can be delivered to buyers in a faster and more predictable manner.

- The Unified Logistics Interface Platform has been launched under the NLP to help exporters facing various hurdles in exports such as compiling shipping bill numbers.
- Further, a digital platform named Ease of Logistics Services (eLOGS) under the logistics policy will help resolve any issue faced by the exporters.

India has already seen improvement in its logistics before by the movement of oxygen and food during the peak of pandemic.

Further, this new policy will boost the economy by creating jobs, eliminating disparities between wealthy metropolitan areas and the countryside and creating massive savings from efficiency gains.

19. [The coalition of the world](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “The coalition of the world” published in **The Hindu** on **10th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance– Global governance

News- The article explains the challenges faced by the UN-led multilateral framework. It explains the guiding framework for future multilateral engagement.

What are challenges to the UN led multilateral framework?

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While addressing the United Nations General Assembly The Secretary General said that the world is in big trouble. We need to create mechanisms of dialogue to heal divides.

Multilateralism is under challenge by its proponent, the USA. The dispute settlement mechanism of WTO is dysfunctional due to lack of quorum. G7 countries have not fulfilled their promise of providing 100 billion dollar every year to fight climate change.

China is developing alternate institutions for multilateral cooperation. Belt and Road initiative is one such institution. It covers half of world population, one-third of GDP and has investment of \$930 billion.

There is a deep divide between the Atlantic powers and Russia-China combine.

What should be the guiding framework?

In a multipolar world, there is a need for new rules and principles that are focused upon human well-being.

There is a need for bid ideas. We should move away from multilateral focus on global rules, amount of aid and IPR inviolability.

“Vasudhaiva kutumbakam” or ‘world as one family’, can be the core of a set of universal principles for a dialogue between the states.

There is a need for redefining **‘common concerns’** in terms of felt needs of the majority rather than interests and concerns of the powerful.

We need a global consensus around equitable sustainable development.

India’s Presidency of the Group of 20, UNSC in 2022, and the SCO in 2023 presents a historic opportunity to guide the future framework.

20. Status beyond faith: The panel on giving SC status to converts has its work cut out

Source: The post is based on the article **“Status beyond faith: The panel on giving SC status to converts has its work cut out”** published in **The Hindu** on **10th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 – Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Relevance: About historical discrimination post-religious conversion.

News:

The Centre has appointed a three-member Commission to examine the sensitive issue of extending Scheduled Caste (SC) status to all those who have historically suffered discrimination and untouchability, regardless of the religion they now profess.

About the Panel to study SC status of Dalits post-conversion

Must Read: [Panel to study SC status of Dalits post conversion](#)

What are the previous instances of historical discrimination post-religious conversion?

In 1985, the Supreme Court agreed that historical discrimination may continue even after members of the SCs convert to other religions. But it did not decide in favour of converts being given SC status as it felt there was not enough material outlining their condition after conversion.

The **National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities**, headed by retired Chief Justice **Ranganath Mishra**, also examined this issue. In its 2007 report, the panel made a categorical recommendation in favour of giving SC status to Dalits belonging to all religions. It found the caste system to be “an all-pervading social phenomenon in India shared by almost all Indian communities”.

Must read: [The criterion for SC status](#)

What are the counter-views about providing SC status post-religious conversion?

1) Social discrimination and deprivation are the consequences of the caste-based Hindu social order. So, the SC status should not be extended to those who have converted to Christianity and

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Islam, **2)** If SC benefits are provided irrespective of all religions, then it may be seen as an incentive to mass conversion, **3)** The share of the reservation pie available to Dalits among Hindus may shrink if new sections are included. There is no 'creamy layer' concept for SC reservation, and expanding its scope may be to the disadvantage of the current beneficiaries.

21. [Russia's continued defiance of international law](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Russia's continued defiance of international law**" published in **The Hindu** on **11th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: Russia and Ukraine war

News: Russia has continued invading Ukraine despite widespread condemnation and sanctions. Around 141 countries in United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution demanding Russia to immediately and unconditionally withdraw from Ukraine.

International Court of Justice (ICJ) also ordered Russia to immediately suspend its military operations in Ukraine. However, Russia has continued its war against Ukraine.

What are the stands of Russia on war?

Russia has recently annexed Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions of Ukraine. Russia claims that these regions have had referendums and decided to join Russia.

However, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has pointed out that referenda in Ukraine were conducted in areas that are under Russian occupation.

Therefore, referendums in those regions may not constitute expression of the popular will of the people. Further, Russia has misused the international laws in favouring its position.

How Russia has misused the UN charter?

Russian President often invokes the UN Charter to justify his actions to the people of Russia.

He referred to Article 51 of the UN Charter just before invading Ukraine. The article provides for self-defence against an armed attack. However, it was wrong to refer the article as Russia did not have any threat from Ukraine.

He has currently referred to Article 1 of the Charter when he announced illegal annexations.

The reason behind using this article was that it provides the right of self-determination to the people and Putin wanted to say that the people of annexed regions did not have this right.

However, the right of self-determination under international law is debatable.

This right is also present in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It says that a group of people can freely determine their political status.

However, Article 1 has to be read with Article 2 of the UN Charter. Article 2 provides for the principle of non-intervention as one of the seven core principles of the UN.

Moreover, the principle of self-determination in Article 1 of the UN Charter has been understood in the context of decolonization rather than the annexation of new territories.

What does the international rule say on occupation of any territory?

Russia's recent control over the four Ukrainian regions before referendums is known as 'belligerent occupation' under the international law.

The Hague Convention of 1899 talks about the rules on belligerent occupation.

Article 43 of the Convention states that if a country has occupied the territory of another country, then the country which has occupied the territory should take all steps to re-establish and ensure public order and safety in those territories.

Moreover, the occupant country shall respect the domestic laws of the country whose territory it has occupied.

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Therefore, Russia has violated Article 43 of the Hague Convention by annexing the Ukrainian territories and imposing its laws on those territories.

Moreover, the Article also states that Russia, being the occupier, only has 'authority' and not 'sovereignty' over these regions. Further, any change in this status, i.e., from 'authority' to 'sovereignty' can only happen with Ukraine's consent.

Moreover, the Russian President has recently said that he can use nuclear weapons in the war against the Ukraine.

What are the emerging threats of a nuclear war?

Russia and Ukraine have not signatories of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear-Weapons. However, the UN Charter is helpful to understand the legality of the nuclear threats.

The Charter provides the right of individual and collective self-defence which means that if Russia launches a nuclear attack, not only Ukraine but also its allies can launch a counter-attack on Russia in collective self-defence.

Furthermore, the Charter empowers the Security Council to take action even in the case of threat of force.

Therefore, it seems that international laws have not been enough to stop Russia from invading Ukraine and there is a need to look into it.

22. [Indian prisons are stretched to their limits](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Indian prisons are stretched to their limits**" published in **The Hindu** on **11th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

Relevance: issues associated with prisons in India

News: The prisons in India are over-crowded. The National Crime Records Bureau's 'Prison Statistics India' reports have provided various data on the condition of prison in India.

What does the data say about the over-crowded prison?

The capacity of prisons has increased from some 3.32 lakh to 4.25 lakh in the last decade, which is a 27% increase while the number of prisoners has increased from 3.7 lakh to 5.54 lakh in the same period, by 48%.

This imbalance has caused the occupancy rate to surge from 112% to 130% in the last decade. The problem of over-crowding was worse in the northern States/Union Territories (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi). The occupancy rate crossed 180% in 2021 in these regions.

Moreover, the occupancy rate out of the 36 States and UTs increased in 26 states while in 18 of the states had the occupancy rate more than 100% in the year 2021.

However, the occupancy rate decreased in Chhattisgarh and Punjab by 108% points and 51% points respectively.

Among UTs the occupancy rate was highest in Delhi between the year 2011 and 2021. The occupancy rate increased from 60% to 183%, which is 122% increase.

These data provide for the Indian prisoners while the data on foreign prisoners also show the dismal condition.

What does the data say on prison officers?

Over 60% of officer positions were vacant in 2019 in Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Jharkhand and less than ₹20,000 was spent on each prison inmate in 2019-20 in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Maharashtra.

Therefore, there are high vacancies for prison officers in some states and also the money spent on each prison inmate also varies widely across States.

23. [How China reduced poverty; lessons for India](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Explaining: How China reduced poverty; lessons for India**” published in **The Indian Express** on **11th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice

Relevance: measures to alleviate poverty in India

News: The World Bank has recently released a report on global poverty.

The report stated that economic disruption brought by Covid-19 and the Ukraine war had produced “an outright reversal” in poverty reduction across the planet.

The pace of poverty reduction had been slowing down since 2015. Further, the pandemic and Ukraine war have affected so much that the “world is unlikely to meet the goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030”.

What has the World Bank stated about India’s poverty levels?

According to the WB, India has the highest number of poor people.

Further, the data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) used by WB found that the number of people living in abject poverty increased by 56 million (5.6 crore) in 2020.

What did China achieve?

According to the WB, China lifted 765 million (76.5 crore) people from extreme poverty between 1978 and 2019.

This led to almost 75 per cent of the global reduction in the number of people living in extreme poverty in China. China has also achieved improvements in other measures of well-being.

For example, the Life expectancy at birth went from 66 years in 1978 to 77 years by 2019 and the infant mortality rate dropped from 52 in 1978 to 6.8 per thousand infants in 2019.

China’s improvement in health, education, and income over the four decades has led its position to rise from 106 (out of 144 countries) in 1990 to 85 (out of 189 countries) in 2019 in the Human Development Index.

How was China successful in alleviating poverty?

First, the rapid economic growth was supported by broad-based economic transformation in China. It provided new economic opportunities for the poor and raised average incomes.

- China started reforming from the agricultural sector where poor people got benefit directly from improvements in productivity associated with the introduction of market incentives.
- Further, the development of low-skilled, labor-intensive industries provided a source of employment for workers released from agriculture.
- Public investment in infrastructure improved living conditions in rural areas and it also connected them with urban and export markets.

Second, the government policies tried to alleviate persistent poverty.

- These policies initially targeted areas disadvantaged by location and a lack of economic opportunities. Later, the policies subsequently focused on poor households irrespective of their location.
- These policies also included social protection policies for poor households like specific programs in social assistance, social insurance, social welfare, etc.

Third, the success in China was made possible from effective governance. It acted as a key to the successful implementation of the growth strategy as well as the evolving set of targeted poverty reduction policies.

Fourth, China also got benefit from the high level of human capital. It is important to benefit from new economic opportunities once market reforms set in.

Fifth, China also invested massively in education and expansion of health care in 1950s that resulted in achievement later.

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Therefore, China's poverty alleviation strategy can be characterized as development oriented with a focus on creating economic opportunities as a means to escape poverty and India can also learn from China.

24. [The message in a bottle on quality from Gambia](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**The message in a bottle on quality from Gambia**" published in **Live Mint** on **11th October 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Governance**

Relevance: **loopholes present in the regulation of pharma companies in India**

News: 66 children have lost their lives in Gambia after consuming contaminated cough syrup manufactured in India. Findings of the various reports highlight quality issues in the cough syrup.

What are the findings of WHO?

WHO found unacceptable amounts of **diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol** in the syrups. They both are toxic for humans and can lead to serious injury or death, especially in children. Diethylene glycol is cheaper, which is why it could have been used by the manufacturer. However, manufacturers are responsible for maintaining quality and following good manufacturing practices.

The health ministry's statement that the four syrups made by Maiden Pharmaceuticals were meant for sale only in Gambia and not India is also misleading.

Moreover, investigation by other agencies also highlights that there has been violation of laws by the pharma company.

What are the findings of Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)?

The investigation carried out by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and state regulators suggest that there has been violation of laws by Maiden Pharmaceuticals.

Maiden's products have failed regulatory tests in several states. It was fined in Kerala for selling low-quality drugs and was blacklisted by Bihar.

Even though the drug maker continued to manufacture low quality drugs.

What are the regulatory problems associated with drug manufacturing companies in India?

The drug regulation in India works in isolation with other states and drugs that fail quality tests in one state can keep selling in other states.

There is also a lack of coordination among states and central regulators and it is further worsened by the absence of a central drug recall mechanism.

The CDSCO estimated that around 5% sub-standard drugs are being sold by Indian manufacturers and there is no proper measure to stop it.

Indian pharma companies have also been penalized by the US in the past for selling low quality drugs.

Therefore, compromise with medicines on standards can have devastating consequences at home or elsewhere in the world.

Bad drugs can cost lives and such losses make global news which may provide a negative image for India as a 'pharmacy of the world'.

Therefore, the government must take urgent steps to correct all issues in our drug testing and regulatory system.

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25. [Too few rules: Without some codification, SC collegium will keep running into problems in selecting judges](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Too few rules: Without some codification, SC collegium will keep running into problems in selecting judges**” published in **The Times of India** on **11th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Judiciary

Relevance– Reforming the system of appointment of judges

News- The article explains the issues with the collegium system for appointment of judges.

What are the recent reforms introduced in the collegium system?

Procedure for vetting the previous judgements of the prospective candidates has been introduced for the first time.

What are the issues with the collegium system?

There is a lack of transparency in the college system. The appointments are not open to scrutiny. Very little part of the process followed by collegium has been codified after the second and third judges’ case.

The collegium system is unable to cope whenever controversy over appointments arises.

Government has not been able to finalise the Memorandum of procedure for appointment of judges. It was mandated by the Supreme Court after it struck down the NJAC.

There is a lack of criteria for ap[pointment of eminent lawyers as SC judges.

26. [Throttled at the grass roots: how to strengthen decentralised governance](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Throttled at the grass roots: how to strengthen decentralised governance** ” published in **The Hindu** on **11th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Devolution of Powers and Finances up to Local Levels and Challenges Therein

Relevance– Democratic Decentralisation

News- The article explains the constitutional provisions related to devolution of powers to local government. It also tells about the issue faced by panchayats and the way forward to resolve them.

73rd and 74th constitutional amendments mandated the establishment of panchayats and municipalities. It devolved a range of powers and responsibilities to them.

What is devolution?

It is a formal assignment of power by law. It is accompanied by adequate financial and human resources to carry out this responsibility.

The Constitution empowers states to devolve necessary functions to panchayats. Given diverse habitation patterns, political and social history, it makes sense to mandate States to assign functions to local governments.

A study for the **Fourteenth Finance Commission** by the Centre for Policy Research, shows that all States have formally devolved powers with respect to five core functions of water supply, sanitation, roads and communication, streetlight provision and the management of community assets to the gram panchayats.

What are key issues with Panchayats?

Funding– The local bodies have inadequate funds.

The money provided to them is not flexible. They are mostly tied grants with conditionalities attached to them.

They cannot raise their own taxes and other charges.

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Violation of constitutional mandate– The elections are not held regularly at intervals of five years. In Tamil Nadu, panchayat elections have not been held for over two years now, resulting in the State losing finance commission grants from the Union government.

Centralising tendencies– The current Union government has further centralised service delivery by using technology. Panchayats are nothing more than front offices for several Union government programmes.

These tendencies also exist in the case of urban governance. The Smart city programme does not devolve its funds to municipalities.

Corruption– Criminal elements and contractors win elections by bribing the voters. There operates a nexus between elected representatives and officials.

What is the way forward?

Empowering of Gram Sabhas- Gram Sabhas and ward committees need to be strengthened. Consultations with the grama sabha could be organised through smaller discussions where everybody can really participate. Even new systems of Short Message Services, or social media groups could be used for facilitating discussions between members of a grama sabha.

Organisation– Local government organisational structures have to be strengthened. Local governments must be enabled to hold State departments accountable and to provide quality, corruption free service to them, through service-level agreements.

Taxation powers– They should have taxation powers. It will introduce accountability for local governments.

27. [Pakistan-US: The Bajwa reset](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Pakistan-US: The Bajwa reset**” published in **The Indian Express** on **11th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance– Pakistan angle US-India relationship

News- The article explains the reasons behind renewed engagement between the USA and Pakistan. It also suggest India to not worry about these development

What factors might explain the renewed engagement between the US and Pakistan?

Importance of Pakistan– Pakistan has always been taken into consideration by foreign policy establishment of western world.

Pakistan gains importance due to its **geostrategic location** that sits between the Indian Subcontinent, Iran, Arabia, Central Asia, Russia and China.

Pakistan continues to enjoy leverage both positive and negative due to its support for international terrorism. Whether it is promoting jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s or in countering international terrorism during 2001-21, the Pakistan Army’s cooperation was seen as vital in Washington.

The Pakistan army controls the major decisions related to international diplomacy.

US- China relationship– The increasing tensions between the US and China has increased the importance of its neighbours.

Pakistan enjoyed productive relations with both the US and China. Pakistan has been a “major non-NATO ally” of the US. China and Pakistan define their partnership as an “all-weather relationship” that is “higher than Himalayas, deeper than the Indian Ocean, and sweeter than honey”.

China has been nudging Pakistan into the anti-American coalition led by Beijing and Moscow. Bajwa was concerned about Imran Khan going very close to China and Russia. The Pakistani army recognised the dangers of a strong Indo-US strategic partnership.

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Improvement of US image in Pakistan– Imran Khan was arousing anti-American feelings in Pakistan. Imran Khan celebrated the US defeat and departure from Afghanistan in August 2021. He has accused the US officials of conspiring with Bajwa to oust him.

The USA wants Bajwa to have internal and external policies conducive to American interests.

What is Bajwa 's vision for Pakistan's external policies?

He wants the Pakistan army to stay away from politics. He prefers geo-economics over geopolitics. He has emphasised the importance of putting Pakistan's house in order and seeking regional peace to achieve that objective.

Why should India not be worried about renewed US engagement with Pakistan?

India's economy today at nearly \$3.5 trillion is 10 times larger than Pakistan's. Pakistan's political leverages against India have steadily weakened. Pakistan might be useful for the USA. But it will not regain its past position as a leading strategic partner of the US.

28. [Blaming technology for deaths by suicide is misguided](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Blaming technology for deaths by suicide is misguided**" published in **The Hindu** on **12th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

Relevance: concerns associated with suicides in India

News: The data released by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2021 shows that suicide claimed 1,64,033 lives in that year.

What are the reasons for suicides?

One of the reasons for suicide today is the expanding role of digital technologies.

Technological factors such as cyberbullying, loss of self-esteem due to social media or heavy reliance on virtual followers are contributing to the issue of suicide.

It is true that the role of technology has increased human life and its influence will create positive as well as negative impacts on human life.

However, there is also a need to realize that technology is neither the main reason for a problem nor the perfect solution.

Although technology plays a role in mental health or in suicides, technology cannot only be blamed completely. There are other issues that need to be addressed in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

For example, according to a study in the U.S., participants who experienced cyberbullying, are more likely to commit suicide or attempt to it, compared to those who did not.

However, similar results are true even for those who are bullied in person.

Therefore, the medium of bullying is not an issue but it is the act of bullying that needs to be addressed.

Moreover, awareness campaigns, sensitisation programmes, community support, etc. can be adopted to find the solution to bullying.

What has led to higher suicide cases in Tamil Nadu and what are the solutions for it?

Reasons

Tamil Nadu has been consistently reporting highest shares of reported deaths by suicide in the country. It has reported over 11% of total cases in the previous decade and nearly 19,000 cases in 2021 alone.

The suicides in Tamil Nadu were mainly associated with playing online rummy games.

This led Tamil Nadu government to ban most online games played for money including rummy and poker.

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Analysis of the data from the NCRB on deaths by suicide in Tamil Nadu makes it evident that the policy response is not adequate to address the magnitude of the crisis in the State.

According to the NCRB, family problems, illness, marriage/love-related issues, etc. alone contribute to more than two-thirds of the deaths by suicide in India.

Solutions

Evolve a holistic policy response to minimise future cases rather than top-down policy formulations which focuses only on a few high-profile incidents.

An inclusive community-based mental health and suicide-prevention approach.

The central government is already accepting technology in improving mental health outcomes for citizens. Like the announcement of the National Tele-Mental Health Program. It provides access to free, round-the-clock mental health interventions in remote and underserved areas.

Therefore, it is wrong to blame only technology for the suicides and there is a need for effective policy to address inter-related causes.

29. [India@75 looking at 100: What India's education system needs](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**India@75 looking at 100: What India's education system needs**” published in **The Indian Express** on **12th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice

Relevance: problems with the Indian education system

News: The article discusses problems with the current education system in India and the importance of value education in the schools

What are the current problems with the Indian education system?

Ignorance: Educated class has not been sensitized enough about our country and the social issues of the nation, by our education system.

Because they have never been trained to look beyond their personal needs or comfort zones.

Therefore, there is an urgent need for a program of education for national understanding.

Value Education: Values Education is not recognized as integral to Indian schooling.

The pattern of schooling focuses on the material world and neglects the intangible aspects of our socio-culture.

Therefore, there is a need to train teachers committed to the promotion of peace and equality to hold value education classes through translated works.

What is the significance of translation of different work into mother tongue?

Translated texts silently open doors to different experiences and sensitize readers to experiences, feelings and situations completely different from their own.

Moreover, today we are struggling to move our education system towards English language but there are many people who even cannot read his or her mother tongue.

Therefore, there is a need to invest in two things: Translation into and out of Indian languages and ethics education in schools and colleges.

30. Pension system should be fair and sustainable

Source: The post is based on an article “**Pension system should be fair and sustainable**” published in **Live Mint** on **12th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

Relevance: issues associated with the old pension system.

News: There is a growing push to switch back to India’s old system of state pensions. The promises are being made to lure the voters in the upcoming elections. These types of promises make fiscal reforms difficult and acts burden on the state.

How does the NPS and old pension schemes work?

The central and state government pensions were moved to the National Pension System (NPS) on January 1, 2004.

It acts like a retirement fund that promises to pay back a monthly pension depending on the amount of money contributed by workers during their work life.

It is like a long-range investment scheme whereas the previous pension system assured a fixed amount depending upon the one’s last drawn salary and was adjusted with inflation.

The old pension system provides the workers a fixed pay out based on the last drawn salary.

What are the problems with the old pension system?

Offering a fixed pensions can turn into an excessive burden for the government. Thus, the decision to move back to the old pension system can affect the finances of the states as they are already under heavy pension obligations.

A State Bank of India research report estimated that pensions involve big proportion of amount of the total committed expenditures of states. It was 125% of their own revenue receipts for the year 2020-21.

States that are poor will find it hard to afford the pension amount as they have other uses for the public money.

Further, the government has limited resources to perform a huge set of tasks and moving to an old pension system will be difficult for the government.

What can be the course of action?

States should stay with the NPS which is fiscally sensible and put employs of the private and public sector on an equal footing.

A probable long-term solution is to ask workers to put money into a savings scheme that would pay it back later instead of putting money in the pension schemes of the government.

31. We have come a long way on abortion rights in India

Source– The post is based on the article “**We have come a long way on abortion rights in India**” published in the **Live Mint** on 12th October 2022.

Syllabus: GS2- Fundamental rights. GS1- Social empowerment

Relevance- Women and related issues

News- The article explains the decision by the Supreme Court that allows unmarried women to terminate pregnancy between 20 and 24 weeks under Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.

Earlier Delhi High Court dismissed the plea of a single woman to terminate her 23 weeks pregnancy. It observed that single women are not included under the ambit of rule 3B of MTP Act, 1971. Rule 3B allows termination of pregnancy between 20 and 24 weeks.

What are key takeaways of the judgement?

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It puts married and unmarried women on equal footing. It **includes different categories of women** like survivor of rape, women with physical disability, minor girls, women suffering from foetal abnormalities under the ambit of rule 3B of MTP Act to avail abortion services.

It recognizes the right to reproductive autonomy, right to dignified life and right to privacy of women under MTP Act. It reaffirms the SC decision in **Suchita Srivastava case vs Chandigarh Administration case** that places the right to reproductive autonomy under Article 21.

It says that **prohibition on unmarried women** to have safe abortion services between 20-24 weeks is violation of right to equality under Article 14.

It addresses the discriminatory behavior of doctors against single women. It gives suggestive directions to doctors to **refrain from imposing extra-legal conditions** like consent of the family, authorization of courts etc.

It addresses the social stigma related to sexual intercourse by single women. It precludes the law from narrow patriarchal principles.

32. The Court and the problem with its collegium

Source: The post is based on an article **“The Court and the problem with its collegium”** published in **The Hindu** on **13th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

News: The Chief Justice of India, Justice U.U. Lalit is set to vacate his office on November 8, 2022. He along with his collegium has the task to name the successor for the next CJI but it seems there have been problems with the names.

What are the problems with the collegium system, as per the author?

Following are the issues, as per the author of the source article Sriram Panchu. He is a Senior Advocate of Madras High Court.

The problem with collegium is that there is no one in the collegium to check the problems and working of the collegium.

It is an **extra-constitutional body brought in existence by the judgments** if the Supreme Court which provides power of appointment to the judges only and thus creating issues.

The **Constitution of India provided** that the President of India will appoint the judges of the after consulting the court. However, the **judgements of the SC for the collegium have reversed it** and appointment has been done by the court with the consultation with the government.

Further, there is **no seat in the collegium for any non-judge** neither from the executive, the Bar or anywhere else to raise the functioning of the collegium.

The **SC also struck down National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)**. It comprised three judges, the Law Minister and two eminent persons to handle the task of appointing judges. There were concerns that three judges in NJAC may be overruled in the appointment of judges.

However, the probable option could have been to struck down the second eminent person from the Act and secure a situation where the judges were in the majority.

This could have secured judicial primacy, with some executive involvement as well as had one person representing a larger public constituency. This would have been generated accountability in the appointment of judges.

What are other problems with the appointment of judges and what can be the course of action?

There have been no appointments from the category of distinguished jurists stated in Article 124 of the Constitution.

Further, appointments to the top court seem to be the preserve of judges from the High Courts along with a few appointments from the Bar.

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Therefore, there is a need to secure a better, broad-based and transparent method of appointing senior judges to the High Courts and the Supreme Court.

33. [Measure topography to ensure the equitable delivery of goods and services to all](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Measure topography to ensure the equitable delivery of goods and services to all**” published in **The Indian Express** on **13th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Federalism

Relevance– Central and state finances

News- The article explains the creation of the Finance Commission. It also explains the need for improvement in methodology for fund transfers to states by the Finance Commission.

What is the history behind the Finance Commission?

Government of India Act, 1935 had provision for grants in aid to provinces in need of assistance.

Niemeyer Report (1936), Krishnamachari Enquiry Committee Report (1949) and Sarkar Committee Report (1948) also suggested creation of such a body.

What is the logic behind creation of the Finance Commission?

The basic idea behind its creation is **equity between states**.

State has to provide a basket of goods and services. The states have differential sources of revenue. Cost of delivering these things also varies across states.

The cost of delivering social and physical infrastructure also varies across states.

Why topographical area rather than geographical area needs to be considered for devolution of funds to states?

Calculating the costs is not easy. The Finance Commission has more challenging tasks vertical as well as horizontal distribution of resources.

There are broadly three approaches used by the Finance Commission to measure fiscal capacity- (a) expenditure equalisation based on costs of public services; (b) revenue equalisation measured by the ability of the state to raise revenue from one or more sources; and (c) macro-indicators that estimate fiscal capacity.

The cost of expenditure incurred by states is mostly measured through geographical area and population. Larger the area, the larger the expenditure.

But geographical area alone is not sufficient to calculate the expenditure requirement. Topography also matters. The cost of infrastructure creation is not the same across plains and hilly areas.

Cost calculation should be based on topographical area. Improvement in technology has made it possible to calculate it.

34. [Donors R Us: It's absurd that police confuses online crowdfunding with begging. Stop fraud not charity](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Donors R Us: It's absurd that police confuses online crowdfunding with begging. Stop fraud not charity**” published in **The Times of India** on **13th October 2022**. **Syllabus:** GS2- Development process and development industry

News- The article explains the issue related to the new phenomena of crowdfunding for charitable purposes.

Recently a show-cause notice was served on a crowdfunding platform. The Bombay high court has asked the state to answer whether private organizations are permitted to do online crowdfunding for medical treatments.

Why should government agencies not discourage crowdfunding?

Crowdfunding has very diversified interests in the world today. It's a very competitive sector. So, using images of children for children causes to appeal to potential donors is understandable. It is not begging.

Their business helped many families pay medical bills during the pandemic.

India has gross inequalities and poor health services. Crowdfunding can help deprived families in many ways.

What measures should be taken by different stakeholders to stop the fraudulent practices?

Complaints of fraud should be seriously investigated. It should be punished through IPC provisions against criminal breach of trust and cheating.

Donors should do due diligence while making contributions.

35. The democratisation of India, the Mandal way

Source: The post is based on an article **“The democratisation of India, the Mandal way”** published in **The Hindu** on **14th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice

Relevance: history of social justice in India

News: The article discusses how the changes were made for the depressed classes in India.

‘Mandal’ was a socio-political movement that changed the demographic diversity of people’s representatives in India. It was also known as ‘India’s Silent Revolution’ by Christophe Jaffrelot.

How did the concept of social justice transformed from the colonial era?

The path to social justice in modern India was started by social revolutionaries such as Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, etc. during the colonial rule.

But the policy for depressed came only after B.R. Ambedkar brought the issue at the national level.

The “depressed classes” (Dalits) and “tribals” (Adivasis) were listed as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively by 1935.

Later, the Constitution of India recognized these depressed classes and came with the benefits of reservation in education and employment.

However, a large section of the backward classes and occupational caste groups remained socially and educationally backward and their presence in elite services remained dismal.

The post-independence years was dominated by Nehruvian socialism but the polity and governance remained in the hands of upper castes.

Moreover, caste-class division was debated in the Constituent Assembly and it was thought that backward classes would be backward communities.

But B.R. Ambedkar was against this view of the Constituent Assembly and he said: “...a backward community is a community which is backward in the opinion of the government...”

Further, the Mandal report stated that a caste can be a social class in India.

How did the Constitution of India bring social justice?

Article 340 of the Constitution led the formation of two backward class commissions namely – the Kalelkar Commission (1953-1955) and the Mandal Commission (1978-80).

The Mandal Commission submitted a report that changed the scenario of the backward class in India and it led to “Mandal movement”. It was a campaign for implementing the recommendations of the Mandal Commissions.

The announcement of the implementation of one of the recommendations (27% reservation for the OBC in the central services) of the Mandal Commissions led the “Mandal moment”.

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Further the 73rd and 74th Amendments took the idea of social justice by extending reservation benefits to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs and Horizontal reservation to all women.

In 2006, reservations were extended to OBC candidates in institutions of higher learning which was popularly known as Mandal II.

How did Mandal commission report helped in bringing social justice in other religions?

Mandal recognized socially and educationally backward castes and communities irrespective of their religion.

Pasmanda (backward in Persian) movement emerged among backward Muslims demanding democratisation and representation.

Further, the Mandal report recognised a large section of Muslims and Christians who converted from Hinduism and a majority of them were continuing with their earlier caste-based occupations.

36. Supreme Court's split verdict on hijab frames a fraught issue and offers a starting point for the larger bench

Source: The post is based on an article “**Supreme Court's split verdict on hijab frames a fraught issue and offers a starting point for the larger bench**” published in **The Indian Express** on **14th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

Relevance: SC views on the Hijab case of Karnataka

News: The issue of Hijab in the dress code occurred when Muslim students in the government-run Pre-Government College in Karnataka's Udupi district were prevented from entering classrooms on account of wearing hijab.

The state government further ordered that colleges should ensure that clothes which disturb, equality, integrity and law and order shouldn't be worn.

The Karnataka HC ratified this order on March 15 by invoking the essential practices doctrine. The order of the Karnataka court was further challenged in the SC.

What was SC judgment in the Hijab case?

The Supreme Court couldn't arrive at a unanimous decision and it has referred the case to the senior bench. However, there were different views given by the judges on the case.

Justice Hemant Gupta agreed with the Karnataka government and said that order of the government was only to “promote uniformity and encourage a secular environment” in the classroom.

However, Justice Dhulia emphasized that core issue is “a matter of choice” and a concern regarding education.

He further said that this case has also to be seen in the perspective of the challenges already faced by a girl child in reaching her school.

He invoked the verdict of SC in the **Bijoe Emmanuel (1986) case** and said that the issue is of the choice and whether we are making the life of a girl child better by denying her education only because of hijab.

Moreover, the situation of closing gates for Muslim students' girls wearing head scarf could be a setback for the education amongst the girls of the minority community.

It is the education that has empowered the young girls to fight for their rights. Therefore, it is expected from SC to come up with a balanced judgment.

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[37. Mission Karmyogi: An attempt to change the face of civil services](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Mission Karmyogi: An attempt to change the face of civil services**” published in **The Indian Express** on **14th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Governance, GS4- Probity in Governance

Relevance– Reforms in civil services

News- The article explains the Mission Karmyogi programme of the central government for training civil servants.

What is Mission Karmyogi?

It sets up a **capacity building commission**.

Its aim is to develop an effective **citizen-centric civil service**.

It is targeted at employees of both centre as well as states.

It focuses on improving the professional and investigative skills of the police force.

It is about creating a civil service with **domain and technological competencies**. Government will play an enabling and regulatory role in the future private sector led market economy. This requires a civil service that has the domain knowledge of a specific sector.

The people who deal with regulation are deputed to the private sector to facilitate cross-learning.

It will reduce friction between the public and private sector.

What are some facts related to the capacity building approach followed by the programme?

The **Capacity Building Commission** has worked closely with the Department of Economic Affairs. It also coordinated with the UK's National Infrastructure Authority, IIM Ahmedabad and Larsen and Toubro project management learning centre **to develop online learning courses**.

The **capacity-building approach** adopted by the Mission has been guided by the “**70-20-10**” **formula**. Seventy per cent adult learning comes from on job experience, 20 per cent is a result of peer-to-peer sharing and only 10 per cent comes from classroom teaching.

Capacity Building Commission is working with government-run civil servant training institutions to provide classroom and online instruction.

The CBC is also providing training for section officers and assistant section officers. The focus has shifted from educating the officers about routine administrative practices. It is providing them **operational and practical skills** such as working on government E-procurement portals.

How is Mission Karmyogi different?

Earlier training programmes were focused on mostly first-class officers. Mission Karmyogi includes all categories of employees at central and state level.

The programme is guided by the “**Whole Government**” **approach**. Training resources are being shared across departments and silos are being broken. The CBC worked closely with the Climate Change Training Institute and the Wildlife Institute of India to tackle the problem of animal accidents on railway lines.

[38. 7 ways to tango with Taiwan](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**7 ways to tango with Taiwan**” published in **The Times of India** on **14th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance– Strengthening of ties between India and Taiwan.

News- The article explains the steps needed to be taken by India to improve its relationship with Taiwan.

Recently Taiwanese semiconductor giant Foxconn partnered with Vedanta to invest 1.54 lakh crore toward semiconductor manufacturing.

Why does Taiwan want a close relationship with India?

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Economic ties are important. But we cannot ignore the **geopolitical environment**. Taiwan wants other nations especially in the Indo-Pacific to display friendship towards.

Both India and Taiwan are democracies. Both are also facing **Chinese aggression**.

What is the way forward for improving ties?[Text Wrapping Break]**Take a stand**– We need to take a stand on issues concerning Taiwan. Foreign Ministry comment on tension in Taiwan strait was well received by Taiwan.

Open more Taiwan centres– Government should permit Taiwan to set up an office of Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre in MUmbai . These types of centres will lead to more investment in India.

Legislators visit– We should send a multi-party delegation to Taiwan. Other countries like the US, Japan send these types of delegations.

Civil society engagement– There is a need for more non-state exchanges with Taiwan. India will be benefitted by Taiwan’s deep understanding of communist China.

Focus on supply chain– Taiwan is looking for India’s help in building a resilient supply chain. India should set up a single window mechanism for firms interested in investment. State government should set up sherpa for every major investment by Taiwanese firms.

India-Taiwan FTA– Both countries should conclude a free trade agreement between them. The bilateral trade was around \$7 billion in 2021. Studies show that there is great scope for FTA between two countries.

Moe scholars exchange– Both countries should increase scholarly exchange between them. There is a programme that enables academic institutions in Taiwan to send Chinese language teachers to India. It must be expanded.

[39. Does India need a population policy](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Does India need a population policy”** published in **The Hindu** on **14th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1- Human geography. GS2- Government policies

Relevance– Demography and related issues

News- The article explains the need for a new approach to population related issues. It also explains whether we need a new population policy.

United Nations data shows that India would surpass China as the world’s most populous country by 2023. According to the 2018-19 Economic Survey, India’s demographic dividend will peak around 2041.

What should be our approach to population related issues?

We need to move from a **family planning approach to a family welfare approach**. The focus should be on empowering men and women to make informed choices about their fertility, health and well-being.

Focus should be upon productivity of the population. Economic planning that ensures good jobs, agriculture productivity is the way ahead.

Is automation a solution to the negative economic effects of an ageing population?

Estimates show that 12% of India’s total population by 2025 is going to be the elderly. Every fifth Indian by 2050 will be over the age of 65.

Automation makes a big difference to the productivity of individuals. However, it doesn’t replace human nature and human touch. Automation does not provide the emotional warmth and security that family members provide to each other. We need to figure out how to address ageing in the context of changing families and the nature of state support in India.

What is need to tap into increasing young population.

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We have the capacity to tap into the potential of our youth population.

We need to invest in adolescent well-being, if we want to reap the benefits of demographic dividend. Skilling and education of our large adolescent population can ensure their well being.

We need to address the effects of pandemic on the lives of adolescents and youths.

What are the implications of declining fertility rates?

It has dropped below the replacement level of 2.1

We need to recognise the gender dimension of some of these challenges. Fertility decline has tremendous gender implications. Ageing is also a gender issue as two-thirds of the elderly are women, because women tend to live longer than men do.

We need to improve employment opportunities for young women and increase the female employment rate. Elderly women need economic and social support networks.

We need to think about its implications for the political economy. In four other States, it has not declined much as compared to others. The future of India lies in the youth living in U.P., Bihar, M.P. We need to support these States in ensuring that their young people are available to the labour market and have sufficient skills. Otherwise, it will become an economic liability.

Do we need a population policy?

India has a very good population policy designed in 2000. States also have their population policies. We just need to add ageing to our population policy focus.

There is a need for more investments in family planning and overall investment in population.

We need a policy that supports reproductive health for individuals.

Discourse around population policy should be changed. Population control still remains a part of our dialogue. We need a policy that enhances population as resources for India's development.

We need to move away from the focus on the two-child norm. The two-child norm indicates a coercive approach to primarily one community.

40. [An attempt at tilting the balance of power: How the government is trying to control Big Tech](#)

How rationale are the justifications given Source: The post is based on an article “**An attempt at tilting the balance of power: How the government is trying to control Big Tech**” published in **The Indian Express** on **15th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

Relevance: issues with the government policies in the digital sector

Context: There has been attempts by the government to regulate each and every aspect of India's digital ecosystem.

This is evident from the proposed draft telecom bill, the personal data protection bill, etc. that require to regulate the physical infrastructure that forms the backbone of Digital India.

What are the aims of the government behind the regulation in digital sector?

First, Government's efforts are pointing towards localisation and giving preferences to domestic firms. It is bringing laws that promote them and limit the influence and dominance of Big Tech.

For example, the draft telecom bill. It proposes to bring OTT communication platforms under it by providing similar rules like those governing the telecom operators.

Second, as per the government, it is trying to create a level playing field and address the concerns of national security.

However, majority of the initiatives by the government are aimed at curbing the dominance of Big Tech instead of any economic logic.

by the government?

The current policy differentiates between the domestic companies and foreign companies, only in the digital sector.

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If market concentration restricts competition, then the same argument should be extended to telecom operators. **For example**, ownership of spectrum is limited to few firms only.

The provisions of different bills seem to increase the controlling power of the government rather than create a level playing field.

This form of industrial policy which favours a few chosen domestic players while restricting foreign competition could lead inefficient and uncompetitive goods and services market.

This would also go against the government's aim of the digital economy.

If the concern is expansion of the foreign firms in India. Companies of Indian origin could be acquired by a foreign company or that receives funding from Big Tech.

41. [Judges are hardly snoozing on vacations](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Judges are hardly snoozing on vacations**” published in **The Times of India** on **15th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Structure and functioning of judiciary

Relevance– Issues related to judicial functioning

News- The article contains arguments against the general belief that the judiciary in India enjoys a large number of vacations.

What are arguments against higher vacation enjoyed by the judiciary?

Comparison with other countries– US Supreme Court (SC) hears arguments for five to six days a month. High Courts in Australia hear arguments for two weeks a month. In comparison, the SC of India conducts hearings for 190 days and High Courts for 210 days in a year. Followin are some other tasks:

The judges devote long hours before and after court time. They consume a lot of their time reading newly listed cases. The time spent only reading cases over the weekend is a minimum 15 hours. The judges spend a lot of time writing reasoned judgements. In some cases, judges require research on the question of law and its wider social ramifications.

They also have to perform administrative tasks like supervision of lower judiciary and appointment of judges.

Burden on judiciary- The Law Commission in 1987 recommended 107 judges per million. In 2002, SC also gave directions to increase the strength of to 50 judges per million in five years. But as of 2018, India has 18 judges per million.

A lot of judicial positions are vacant against the sanctioned strength.

In the 1950s, average disposal was 75 cases per judge. It increased to 3165 cases per judge.

Along with lack of judicial strength, judicial infrastructure is still in poor condition.

Malimath Committee report– It should not be read selectively. It has also suggested increasing the strength of the judiciary along with a reduction of vacations by 21 days.

For further reading- <https://blog.forumias.com/vacation-pe-vacation-no-major-country-has-their-top-court-going-on-long-holidays-neither-should-supreme-court/>

42. [A court for our times](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**A court for our times**” published in **The Indian Express** on **15th October 2022**. **Syllabus:** GS1- Social empowerment. GS2- Vulnerable

sections and fundamental rights

Relevance– Women and related issues

News- The article explains the recent Supreme Court ruling to include unmarried women in category of women who can seek abortion after 20 weeks under MTP Act, 1971.

What are the legal provisions related to termination of pregnancy?

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Section 3(2) (B) of the MTP– Pregnancy can be terminated within 20 weeks.

If pregnancy is between 20 and 24 weeks, then two registered medical practitioners must be appointed. They must form an opinion that the continuation of the pregnancy would involve a risk to the life of the pregnant woman and will be dangerous for physical and mental health.

Rule 3B of MTP– It establishes categories of women who can terminate pregnancy between 20 and 24 weeks. It includes survivors of sexual assault, those undergoing a change in status of relationship, physically or mentally challenged and women with foetal abnormalities. It does not include unmarried women.

What are important aspects of Supreme Court ruling?

The petitioner approached the Supreme Court. Her plea was rejected by Delhi HC on the basis that rule 3B does not include unmarried women.

SC overruled the Delhi HC decision.

Supreme Court observed that unmarried women faces social stigma for engaging in pre-marital sexual relations. It prevents them from enjoying reproductive rights.

We should avoid literal interpretation and look at the intention of the legislature. Changing social norms should be taken care of while interpreting the law.

SC also noted the **transformative nature of the constitution**. It observed that legislation should not avoid the changing context of relationship and family. In the **Navtej Singh Johar case**, modern forms of familial relationships like single parents, live-in relationships were recognised.

It observed that Article 14 of the constitution provides equal citizenship to single and unmarried women. Legislation has always intended for equal status for single and unmarried women. It has done this through consistent reforms of law related to adoption, succession.

[43. 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 **17th 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.

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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.

44. [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?

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?

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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.

45. 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?

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.

46. [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.

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.

47. [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 **17th 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.

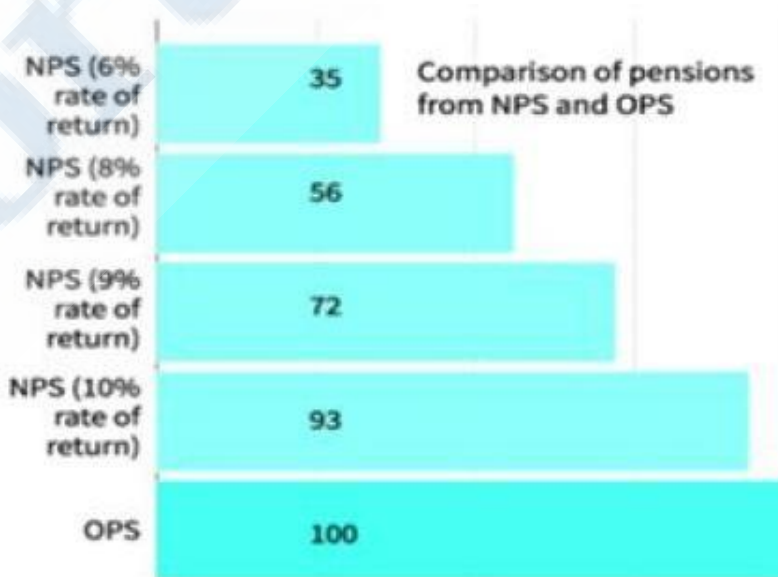
How can government focus on increasing the revenue for OPS?

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.

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

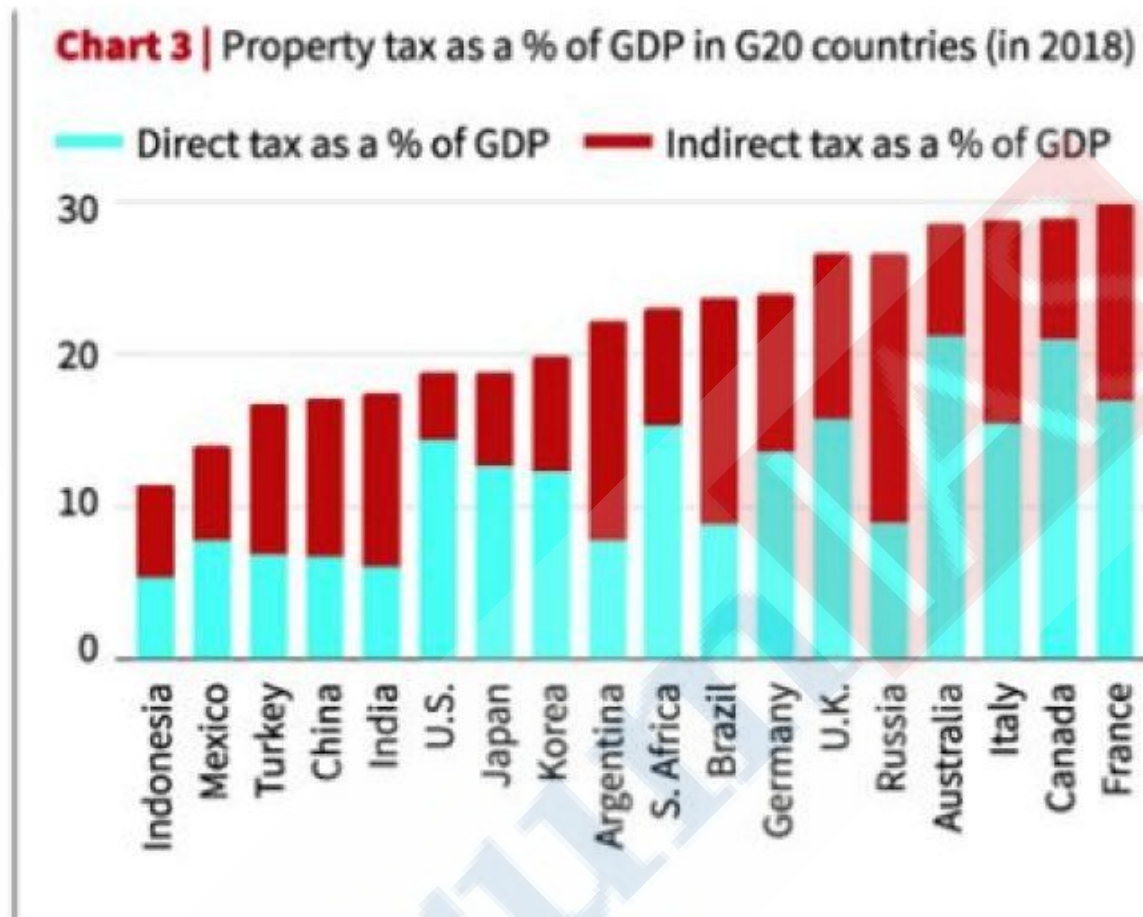


Source: The Hindu

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



Source: The Hindu



Source: The Hindu

48. [Reducing the legal burden](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Reducing the legal burden**” published in **Business Standard** on **17th 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.

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.

49. 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.

50. [Judicial comity over arithmetic](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Judicial comity over arithmetic**” published in **The Hindu** on **18th 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.

51. [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 **18th 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.

52. [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 **18th 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.

53. [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 **18th 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.

54. [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 **19th 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 94th 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.

55. [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 **19th 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.

[56. Clean It Up More](#)

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

57. [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 **19th 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.

58. [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 20th 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.

59. [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 20th 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.

60. [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 **20th 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.

61. 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.

62. [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.

63. [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.

64. 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.

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[65. What Pakistan's removal from FATF grey list signifies](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**What Pakistan's removal from FATF grey list signifies**” published in **The Indian Express** on **26th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: FATF grey list and Pakistan

News: The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has recently decided to remove Pakistan from its grey list.

What is FATF?

It checks global money laundering and prevents the misuse of international financial channels and instruments for terrorism and criminal activities.

The US has relied on FATF along with the listing of terrorist in UNSC's designated terror list in fighting against terrorism since 1998.

However, FATF has been more influential when compared to UNSC's global terror list.

How FATF has been more influential compared to UNSC?

The UNSC maintains the global terrorist list. The member countries pass the resolution to designate the name of terrorists in the global terrorist list of UNSC.

Once listed in the global list of terrorists the UNSC requires states to implement sanctions against them.

However, this mechanism is not very effective. Although it embarrasses the states that host the terror activities, it does not put pressure on it to comply with the requirements to end terrorism. Therefore, FATF has been more effective in tackling terrorism and putting Pakistan in the grey list was one such effort towards ending terrorism. Although, the FATF also does not sanction states but being placed on its grey list has other consequences for a country.

How far FATF has been successful in handling Pakistan?

Pakistan was being monitored by FATF from the last two decades as the country saw an increase in the terror activities along with terror funding.

Pakistan was put in the grey list of FATF in 2018. This led Pakistan to comply with the directions of FATF else there were chances of being blacklisted.

The FATF monitoring requirements tightened bank regulations in Pakistan which also **affected the citizen of Pakistan**.

Further, it also impacted the **government's access to international finances** including assistance from multilateral agencies and from private lenders. It has also forced Pakistan to bring down cross-border terror activities.

However, the current decision of removing Pakistan from the grey list has raised the concern for India as terrorist like Masood Azhar and others are still free. Therefore, India needs to fight terrorism diplomatically with the goal of making itself more stable and secure.

[66. A medical student writes: What the language debate misses, and why translating MBBS books to Hindi is easier said than done](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**A medical student writes: What the language debate misses, and why translating MBBS books to Hindi is easier said than done**” published in **The Indian Express** on **26th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Education

Relevance- Languages issues in education field

News- The article explains the issues related with the recent move of the central government to translate medical books into Hindi language.

What are the arguments in support of translation?

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There are countries like China, Japan, Russia and Norway where technical and non-technical languages are the medium of instruction in technical and non-technical courses.

Imparting education in a student's mother tongue is effective for learning.

What are the issues with translation?

Fifty-two medical colleges, out of the total 170 colleges on mainland China teach in both Chinese and English. Chinese healthcare is also self-sufficient when it comes to research and protocols. Germany has availability of primary resources available in their own language.

We can not compare the status of English with German or Chinese. There are few resources available in Hindi that can provide job opportunities.

English allows dialogue with the rest of the world. The field of medical science is continuously evolving. It requires constant learning from research papers, articles and books. A sound system of translation is needed for it.

There is a need to properly **understand the process of translation.** The medical terminology remains the same. Only sentences have been translated for easier reading. These books are to be used as bridge books and not as replacements for the English books. They are designed to address the initial problems faced by students.

There is a lack of necessary infrastructure for translation. Professors and teaching staff need to be trained.

There has been no clarity on whether these translations will be incorporated as reading materials. Translating these books only once would not suffice. Newer editions of books require constant updating.

67. Improving access to entertainment content

Source: The post is based on an article **"Improving access to entertainment content"** published in **The Hindu** on **27th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice

Relevance: efforts needed to make movies disabled friendly

News: The article discusses the efforts that is required to make movies disabled friendly.

Movies should be made in such a way that even disabled can watch it and enjoy it. However, the efforts taken in India have not been successful in making movies disabled friendly.

What makes movies/entertainment content disabled friendly?

There are two important tools – a) audio description and b) subtitling.

Audio description refers to description of the visual in the form of audio so that it can benefit blind whereas **subtitling** refers to displaying the textual form of the audio component of the video so that it can benefit deaf.

However, the potential of these two tools have not been used in India and there has been a need for the remedy.

How has India taken step to make entertainment videos disabled friendly?

Law: The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act provides guidance towards making entertainment content disabled friendly.

- Section 29(h) of the Act provides that the government should take measures to ensure that persons with hearing impairment can have access to television programmes with sign language interpretation or sub-titles.
- Section 42(ii) requires that the government should take measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to electronic media by providing audio description, sign language interpretation and close captioning.

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Ministry: The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B Ministry) issued a letter to the Central Board for Film Certification (CBFC) in 2019.

- It requested the Board to motivate and persuade its associated members to make audio description part of the production and distribution of a film.

App: Saksham has developed **XL Cinema app** which syncs audio-described tracks with movies. It helps the disabled person to hear the audio description of the movie at the same time when the movie is being showcased.

Some of the movies that have been audio described are – Sanju, Andhadun and Romeo Akbar Walter.

However, the steps taken by these organization are not enough and there is a further need for the improvement.

What is the way forward?

First, there is a need to put pressure on the production houses to provide audio description and subtitling. This will make the movie disabled friendly.

- Further, the film studios must realize that making disabled-friendly content is morally, legally and commercially right.

Second, user organization must come up to help production houses that lack capabilities in making content disabled friendly. They must engage in capacity-building initiatives.

Third, there is a need for the engagement of the civil society through legal process of making content disabled friendly.

- Citizens with disabilities must demand accountability from the government, filmmakers, streaming platforms and others in the entertainment ecosystem through the judicial process.

Fourth, the I&B Ministry is taking efforts to notify the Accessibility Standards for Television Programmes for Hearing Impaired for three years. A similar standard must be framed for the visually impaired and a prompt action should be taken for its implementation.

68. [Pakistan's exit from FATF Grey List and India's challenge](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Pakistan's exit from FATF Grey List and India's challenge” published in **The Indian Express** on **27th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: removing Pakistan from the grey list of FATF

News: The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has recently announced the removal of Pakistan from its “Grey List”. This announcement was unexpected and it also raises concerns for India.

[What is the Financial Action Task Force \(FATF\) and what are its objectives?](#)

How does FATF fulfil its objectives?

It draws a list of guidelines known as the “FATF Recommendations” or “FATF Standards”.

These standards include a range of regulatory and enforcement actions that states are expected to implement. More than 200 countries and jurisdictions are committed to implementing the FATF's recommendations.

The decision against a country is taken on the basis of consensus between and FATF and its associate or regional members such as the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG).

How does FATF monitors the implementation of its recommendations and what makes country to come in the grey/black list of FATF?

It monitors by periodic evaluations of the anti-money laundering (AML), combating financing of terrorism (CFT) and proliferation financing (PF) system.

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Countries that have **strategic deficiencies** in their AML/CFT/PF regimes are placed under a scheme of **increased monitoring also known as “Grey Listing.”**

Countries placed in the grey list are expected to take the required measures to address their deficiencies on the basis of “Action Plans” drawn and evaluated by FATF.

Countries that have **serious strategic deficiencies** in their AML/CFT/ PF regimes are placed under a **“Black List” also known as “High-Risk Jurisdictions** subject to a Call for Action.”

Grey list acts as a warning to countries whereas black list have serious economic consequences by increasing check on the transaction made to the designated country.

Presently, there are 23 countries on the FATF’s “Grey List” excluding Pakistan while there are three countries on the “Black List” — North Korea, Iran and Myanmar.

How did listing in the grey list help to counter terror activities in Pakistan?

Pakistan has been pushed three times in the grey list and removed from it. It was placed for the third time in June, 2018.

The members of FATF have said that the adherence of FATF standards by a country should be judged on the basis of “effectiveness” of action taken against individuals and entities of concern, rather than pro-forma based “technical compliance”.

This approach was taken by FATF against Pakistan which increased a further threat of being black listed. These efforts made Pakistan to prosecute, convict, fine and jail, the wanted terrorists.

What are geopolitical concerns that favours Pakistan?

Although there was a threat to Pakistan of moving from grey list to black list but it could have not been possible. The decision could have been opposed by FATF members China, Malaysia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia due to their good relation with the country.

Moreover, the present listing of Pakistan in the grey list was done by the US. However, it was expected that Pakistan would be removed from the list after completion of US withdrawal from Afghanistan. It has proved to be true.

Further, the US have also remained back from declaring Pakistan a “state sponsor of terrorism” under American law despite the supportive evidence.

What India should do?

Although, there has been a decline in terrorist activities across the Line of Control (LoC) in J&K. However, regular sightings of drones bearing weapon payloads and infiltration along the LAC are indications of threat that is still present for India.

Therefore, India must continue with the available opportunities to counter terrorist activities and bring global pressure on Pakistan.

Moreover, there has also been geopolitical concerns that favors Pakistan at the global level.

69. We’ve made significant progress on poverty reduction

Source: The post is based on an article “We’ve made significant progress on poverty reduction” published in **Live Mint** on **27th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice

News: Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2022 has been released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative.

What approach is followed by MPI to list a household as multidimensionally poor?

It identifies overlapping poverty indicators and captures the intensity of deprivation.

Deprivation is calculated across 10 indicators using three dimensions – health, education and standard of living.

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The weighted average score based on 10 indicators of each household is the MPI. If the deprivation score is one-third or higher, the MPI identifies the household as multidimensionally poor.

What are the findings of MPI 2022 for India?

Reduction in Poverty: India has made good progress on all 10 deprivation indicators. There has been reduction in the number of poor people (415 million people exit poverty) in India from 2005.

- This is the first time that India has shown poverty reduction performance like China. In terms of percentage, poverty fell from 55.1% of our population to 16.4% in 15 years, i.e., from 2005. Therefore, it can be said that India is no longer a poor country.

Number of Poor: India has the largest number of poor people worldwide (229 million).

Rural-Urban Gap: There is a huge gap between the people living in urban areas than those living in rural areas. Around 21.2% of rural residents are poor compared to only 5.5% of urban residents. Accord to the report, rural areas account for nearly 90% of all poor people in India.

Children-Adult Gap: More than one in five children (21.8%) are poor compared to one in seven adults (13.9%).

Deprivation indicators: The high deprivation indicators in India are access to cooking fuel, housing, nutrition and sanitation.

States: States such as Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have made improvement still they are India's most deprived states. Odisha has also joined the list of deprived states.

What can be the course of action?

The highlights of the report help India to reorient its public policy depending upon the deprivation indicators. The measures that can be taken by India are –

1. **a)** deprivations in people's access to nutrition, cooking fuel, sanitation and housing need to be addressed on priority, **b)** the public distribution system should be oriented towards distributing nutrition from distributing basic calories, **c)** the subsidized cooking fuel benefits should be expanded further in rural areas, **d)** the central and state government should increase its effort in sanitation and affordable housing.

is it correct? [\[AS1\]](#)

The article says “global MPI complements the international \$1.90 a day poverty threshold.” [\[AS2\]](#)

Yes Sir, it is correct. MPI is the global poverty index and it uses the global poverty standard. [\[at3\]](#)

70. [Protecting competition – on CCI penalty on Google](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Protecting competition” published in **Business Standard** on 27th October 2022.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

Relevance: fines imposed on Google by CCI

News: The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has imposed two fines within seven days on Google.

What were the reasons behind imposing fine?

Fines were imposed for two reasons – a) misusing its dominant position in multiple categories related to the Android ecosystem, b) misusing its dominant market position with respect to its Play Store policies.

Multiple Categories: As per CCI, Google misused its position in the multiple categories that include misuse of android operating system, android apps, monopoly market share in search, etc.

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Play Store Policies: Google made it mandatory to use Google Play Billing System (GPBS) for paid apps and in-app purchases for app developers which is termed as unfair practices by CCI. The failure to comply with using GBPS would not permit app developers to list on Play Store.

Further, as per CCI, Google discriminated in favor of YouTube by not requiring GPBS for it and it also integrated GPay to its Play Store that gave unfair advantage to its own UPI app.

Moreover, Google entered Mobile Application Distribution Agreements (MADA) with mobile manufacturers to ensure Google's apps are pre-installed.

It gave a competitive edge to Chrome browser and YouTube and helped google to secure its exclusive position in online search.

These were the reasons for imposing fine on Google and CCI has also directed google to take certain steps.

What are the directions issued by CCI to Google?

It has **stopped Google from forcing manufacturers to pre-install its applications** and it has been prohibited to offer any monetary incentive or to enter into any arrangement for search exclusivity.

CCI also **directed google to allow app developers to use third-party billing/payment processing services**. This would ensure proper level playing field amongst the payment providers. Google has been **asked to come up with transparent policy on the data collected**, use of data and also potential and actual sharing of data with other entities. It has also been directed that data collected through GPBS should not be misused.

Google is also instructed **to not discriminate against apps** providing payment through UPI apps other than GPay.

[71. The foundational education we impart makes a huge difference](#)

Source- The post is based on the article **"The foundational education we impart makes a huge difference"** published in the **mint** on **27th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Education

News- Recently, the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) was released by India's ministry of education. It is one of the most important dimensions in the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

What is the schooling system suggested by NEP, 2020?

It has created a four stage **"5+3+3+4"** curricular structure.

The first stage is the foundational stage. The second is the preparatory stage. The third and fourth stages are the middle and secondary stages.

What is the importance of the foundational stage?

It is the most critical stage for overall development of an individual- **physical, cognitive and socio-emotional**.

Neuroscience research tells that 85% of brain development occurs by the age of 6.

The Foundation addresses early childhood care and education for 3-8 ages. It includes pre-schools, kindergarten, anganwadis and nursery.

What is the curriculum?

It is the entire organised experience of students in institutional settings to achieve educational aims. It includes learning and developmental goals, syllabus, **pedagogical practices and assessment, learning environment, teaching-learning material**.

What are the main highlights of the National Curriculum Framework for the Foundational Stage?

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It addresses all domains of development called **physical, ethical, cognitive, literacy, socio-emotional and cultural aspects**.

Pedagogical approach in the new curriculum framework is **play-based**. It includes stories, music, crafts, conversation and field trips.

Teaching and learning is to be situated in the context of a child that includes local language and traditions. It caters to different needs and levels of children including children with special needs. Assessment is seen as an enabler for learning and development. It is imagined as part of everyday classroom process and largely based on systematic and careful observation of children.

It focuses upon building an **enabling ecosystem**. It includes empowering teachers and enabling a supportive academic and administrative support system.

It speaks directly to teachers. It focuses upon classroom practices with real-life illustrations.

72. [The dismal case of slashing schemes and cutting funds](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The dismal case of slashing schemes and cutting funds**” published in **The Hindu** on **28th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Government Policies

Relevance: concerns associated with the decline in the number of schemes

News: Around 50% of central government sponsored scheme have been discontinued, subsumed, revamped or rationalised into other schemes in the past three years.

This has impacted different sectors as funds are needed for the welfare of the people.

How schemes have changed in different ministries?

Union Ministry of Women and Child Development – There are just 3 schemes now (Mission Shakti, Mission Vatsalya, Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0.) out of 19 schemes.

Ministry of Animal Husbandry and Dairy – There are just 2 schemes remaining out of 12. The Ministry has also ended three schemes which include Dairying through Cooperatives, National Dairy Plan-II, etc.

Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare – There are three schemes now (Krishonnati Yojana, Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Cooperatives and the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana) out of 20 earlier.

However, the challenges such as funding cuts, disbursement and utilization of funds still remain despite reduction in the scheme.

As per data, around ₹1.2 lakh crore of funds meant for central government-sponsored schemes are with banks and they have not been utilized.

What is the status of active schemes?

Schemes that are active, are also facing challenges such as funding cuts, disbursement and utilization of funds.

Nirbhaya Scheme: ₹1,000 crore was allocated to the Nirbhaya fund annually between 2013-16 and out of these funds a large amount of have been unutilized.

- Further, around ₹6,214 crore was allocated to the Nirbhaya fund since its launch in 2013 but only ₹4,138 crore was disbursed till the FY21-22.
- This shows the dismal condition of the women-oriented schemes. States are also ending the schemes while women still continue to face risks in public spaces.

Agriculture: Farmers are facing problems with the cut in the subsidies of fertilizers by the government. **For example**, government spending on fertilizers in FY20-21 was ₹1,27,921 crore and it reached ₹79,529 crore in the FY21-22. There were also reductions in the allocation of NPK fertilizers.

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- These budgetary cuts have led to shortage in fertilizers and the price of fertilizers have also risen up due to the ongoing Ukraine war.

Employment: The allocation for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) went down by 25% in the FY22-23 budget compared to the FY21-22.

- This reduction has come at the time when the demand for jobs is higher than pre pandemic level as highlighted by the Economic Survey 2022-23.
- Further, there has been delay in the disbursement of the fund.
- There has also been reduction in the actual allocation of budget for the **Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan**. This scheme subsumed 15 other schemes instead of expanding and providing jobs to the rural poor.

Health: There has been delays in the salary of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers. They also struggle in regularization of their jobs and their wages are also very low.

Environment: Funding for wildlife habitat development under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has declined to almost half this year. There has also been decline in the allocation for Project Tiger. This raises doubt on meeting the climate change obligations.

73. [Bailouts and balances: Tough choices ahead for Sri Lanka](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Bailouts and balances: Tough choices ahead for Sri Lanka**” published in **Business Standard** on **28th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: measures to improve Sri Lanka’s economic crisis

News: Sri Lanka has been witnessing food and energy shortages and political instability for a long period of time.

This has made the country to run out of the cash to survive its economy. Therefore, IMF has assisted Sri Lanka in improving its position.

How has IMF helped Sri Lanka and what are its suggestions?

Sri Lanka has finalized a staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and four-year rescue plan worth \$2.9 billion has been provided by the IMF.

The IMF agreement has laid down the following conditions for the Sri Lankan government: a) a cut in spending, b) increase in taxes, c) policies against corruption, d) autonomy for the central bank, and e) reduction in debt-to-gross domestic product ratio.

It also wants that Sri Lanka should talk to its top bilateral fund creditors (China, Japan, and India) to restructure its loans, seek debt relief and financial assurances.

How has the three countries help Sri Lanka at the time of crisis?

China: China is the largest lender of Sri Lanka. It is the only lender contributing to 10 per cent of Sri Lanka’s overall borrowings and accounting for 20 per cent of its overall debts.

- China has helped Sri Lanka in many ways such as by providing financial assistance worth \$2.5 billion in 2020 and by providing a \$1.5-billion currency swap in 2021.
- It has also offered humanitarian assistance of \$75 million and additional financial assistance worth \$4 billion.

India: India’s approach to the Sri Lankan crisis is **people-centric as well as interest-driven**. India has assisted Sri Lanka with \$3.8 billion in 2022 and Sri Lanka owes 2% of its debt to India.

- India has also provided credit lines, currency swaps, modernization, investments, and emergency humanitarian supplies to prevent the collapsing of Sri Lanka’s economy.
- Further, India has offered a free-floating dock facility, a Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre, and a Dornier reconnaissance aircraft to make Indian Ocean free of threats.

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- India's interest toward Sri Lanka has made Sri Lanka to align with India and move away from China. **For example**, Sri Lanka has cancelled the Chinese energy projects in the Jaffna peninsula and offered India the project to modernize the strategic Trincomalee oil tank farm.

Japan: Japan is the second largest bilateral lender to Sri Lanka but it has been very cautious to respond to crisis. Sri Lanka owes 9 per cent of its debt to Japan.

- However, Japan has committed to cooperate with India to help Sri Lanka in the humanitarian crisis by providing total humanitarian assistance of \$6.5 million.
- Moreover, Japan has also shown interest in defense cooperation, Sri Lankan ports and infrastructure development in Sri Lanka due to the increase in the importance of the Indo-Pacific region.
- Japan has adopted shuttle-diplomacy approach where it could coordinate or host meetings and conferences between India and China to help Sri Lanka restructure its debts.

These all show how the three countries have assisted Sri Lanka during the crisis and therefore, Sri Lanka might face challenges in debt-negotiation with these countries.

What are the challenges that Sri Lanka can face?

Sri Lanka can face challenge from China as China has **expansionist interest**. Thus, it will continue to pressurize Sri Lanka to abide by its interests especially trying to put Sri Lanka away from India.

Further, Sri Lanka might also face challenge to convince India if it increases its bilateral relation with China.

Japan and its shuttle-diplomacy attempt would also not serve its purpose if China refuses to restructure its loans.

Japan and India have security concerns while China has expansionist interest in Sri Lanka. Therefore, Sri Lanka would have to create a balanced approach towards negotiating its debt and maintaining bilateral relations.

74. [Why we need to focus on nutrition, not hunger](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Why we need to focus on nutrition, not hunger**" published in **The Indian Express** on **28th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice

Relevance: concerns associated with GHI 2002 ranking of India

News: The Global Hunger Index of 2022 has lowered India's ranking to 107 out of 121 from 101 out of 116 countries in 2021.

This has placed India below all South Asian countries except Afghanistan and also below several poor African countries such as Rwanda, Nigeria, Ethiopia and the Republic of Congo.

What is Global Hunger Index?

What are the problems with hunger calculation of GHI?

The Global Hunger Index can be viewed **at the level of theory, at the level of methodology, and at the level of Indian peculiarities.**

Theory: GHI sees hunger as a food production challenge whereas according to FAO, India is the **world's largest producer and consumer** of grain and the largest producer of milk with the increase in the per capita intake.

- India has improved so much in its food production that it offered recently to supply food to the world if permitted by WTO.

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- Further, **Amartya Sen** has said that the reasons behind poverty and hunger is not the food availability issues but it is the **improper food distribution**. He further said that India is unable to use its resources properly to fight poverty and hunger.

Therefore, putting India at 107th position in GHI 2022 and clubbing it with countries facing serious food shortages is unacceptable.

Methodology: There is also concern in the methodology of calculating GHI as the methods used by GHI calculations are about 20 years old.

- GHI uses **caloric consumption** in calculating GHI but measures of hunger and poverty are moving away from caloric consumption to nutrition.
- Further, its methodology to calculate hunger is not accurate as it focuses disproportionately on children less than five-year-old.

Indian peculiarities: Indians are mostly vegetarians whereas countries around the world are mostly non-vegetarians.

- Therefore, **child wasting and stunting** in India can possibly because of imbalanced vegetarian diets and animal protein deficiencies rather than energy deficits.
- This shows that comparing India with other countries in the world is not proper.

However, it is a well-established fact that nutrition, especially child nutrition is a problem in India and the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) provides a better picture of health and nutrition in India.

What is the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)?

What are the causes of malnutrition amongst children in India?

Breastfeeding: It is one of the biggest challenges in India as children are not properly breastfed. Breastfeeding helps the child in **acquiring antibodies** against infections, allergies and protection against several chronic conditions.

- The **WHO and UNICEF** recommend that breastfeeding should be initiated within the first hour of birth and infants should be breastfed for the **first six months**.
- According to **NFHS 5**, there has been significant **improvement** in the breastfeeding of the children. The percentage of children breastfed rose from 55 per cent in NFHS 4 to 64 per cent in NFHS 5.
- NFHS also highlights that only 42 per cent of infants are breastfed within one hour of birth.
- States such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh have seen above 70 per cent breastfeeding whereas Bihar, Punjab, Kerala are **below 50 per cent**.

Post-Breastfeeding: There are concerns that children being breastfed for the first six months after the birth continue to be breastfed even after six months without access to nutritional foods.

- **NFHS 5** shows that the improvement has been marginal over the last two reports and states like Maharashtra and Gujarat are way behind.

Unhygienic practices and Lack of awareness: According to an NGO, unhygienic practices followed at the homes are also one of the reasons behind chronic infections and malnutrition.

- Children eat unhygienic and less nutritious foods and there is also lack of awareness amongst the mothers.

Outcome of Poor nutrition: Poor nutrition in children leads to various diseases and problems such as stunting, wasting, anaemia and low weight.

75. [The death penalty and humanising criminal justice](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The death penalty and humanising criminal justice**” published in **The Hindu** on **29th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

News: The three-judge bench that included the Chief Justice of India (CJI), Justice U.U. Lalit has taken constructive steps to correct issues related to the death penalty law.

The findings of the **Death Penalty India Report (2016)** and the **Deathworthy** (Project 39A of the National Law University Delhi) report helped the CJI in providing a structure for death penalty law.

What is the step taken by the three-judge bench of SC?

A three-judge bench that included CJI has focused on restructuring ‘Framing Guidelines Regarding Potential Mitigating Circumstances to be Considered While Imposing Death Sentences’.

It has also referred the matter to the larger Bench of the SC to come up with **procedural norms** for imposing the death sentence. The direction of a larger bench will ensure **uniformity** in the death penalty decision.

The reference to larger bench will be a step towards **justice reforms** in the death penalty sentencing. It is because there are various limitations imposed by law (Section 354(3) in the Code of Criminal Procedure) and judiciary (deciding the ‘rarest of rare’ case).

How the decision of the three-judge bench is a positive step towards reform in the capital punishment?

In the ‘**Bachan Singh case**’ the SC highlighted Section 235(2) of Code of Criminal Procedure.

Section 235(2) grants a right to pre-sentence hearing after conviction but the decision of trial court and the appellate court conflict with the decision given in the ‘Bachan Singh case’.

This issue of difference in opinion is highlighted by Justice Ravindra Bhat. He has further highlighted the limitation in deciding the ‘**rarest of rare**’ case and has also asked the sentencing court to balance **aggravating and mitigating factors**.

SC in its past observation has said that the accused in a death sentence has less choice of defending itself and placing mitigating circumstances after the conviction as aggravating circumstances would always be on record.

However, the decision of the three-judge Bench has overruled the past judgment. It has said it is necessary to have clarity in the matter to ensure a uniform approach with providing **real and meaningful** opportunity to the accused.

However, the problem lies with transforming real and meaningful opportunity into reality and in its application.

Further, the three-judge bench decision has also highlighted judgment of ‘Manoj and Ors. vs State of M.P.’.

SC in ‘**Manoj and Ors. vs State of M.P**’ said that the trial court must consider the factors such as social environment, educational level, mental state, etc. of the accused when dealing with death penalty.

What is the way ahead?

The decision and initiative taken by three-judge bench will have a positive outcome but the future shape to humanise criminal justice will ultimately depend upon two things.

First, the composition of larger Bench on the death penalty matter and the inclination of the judiciary to bring reforms in the death penalty laws.

Second, the acceptance of meaningful hearing and its broader application even at the earlier guilt determination stage will depend on the society.

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Therefore, the two components (**culpability/guilt and sanction/punishment**) must be taken into account in giving a death penalty.

76. Central Asia: The new battleground for US and China

Source– The post is based on the article “**Central Asia: The new battleground for US and China**” published in **The Indian Express** on **29th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance– Geopolitics across the Central Asia

News- The article explains the geopolitical game between major powers across Central Asia and its strategic implications.

What is the importance of Central Asia?

The Samarkand declaration describes Central Asia as the **core of the SCO**. This includes stabilizing Afghanistan.

The US strategy too recognizes that a “**secure and stable**” **Central Asia** would contribute directly to the US’s counterterrorism efforts.

What is happening in Afghanistan?

In Afghanistan, the Taliban is battling multiple challenges to security and stability. The killing of Ayman al Zawahiri in a US drone strike in Kabul has created fresh doubts about the Taliban’s intentions as well as capacity to go after terror networks.

A **UN Security Council report** documented the presence of 8,000 to 10,000 foreign fighters in Afghanistan. The report said such groups included hundreds of fighters of the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and Central Asian groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Islamic Jihad Union.

What is the current situation in Pakistan?

Pakistan’s forces are facing direct attacks in tribal areas in Peshawar and the Swat Valley from Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan and Baloch groups.

Chinese interest in Pakistan has been targeted by bad Taliban and Baloch groups. These groups have upped the ante since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

What is the Chinese strategy in the region?

China does not seem ready to provide a **security umbrella** to Central Asia or Afghanistan. It is closely coordinating moves with Pakistan across central Asia and beyond. China has ambitions of becoming the **pre-eminent Asiatic power** in this region. It wants to use it to weaken competition from the US across the Indian Ocean region.

After the departure of US troops from Afghanistan, China started engaging deeply with the Taliban. However, China’s direct influence in Afghanistan remains limited. It wants to limit competition from the US across the Indian Ocean region by strong presence in this region.

It is cooperating with Pakistan in this region. In alliance with Pakistan, it is trying to reverse the influence of other states in the region through proxy violence and border engagements. Aggression at Indian borders within two months of the signing of the US-Taliban agreement in February 2020 is an example.

The **joint China-Pakistan moves** include consistent hardening of the LAC with India and putting a technical hold on UN designations of Pakistan-backed terror operatives. The recent docking of Chinese-built Pakistani frigate PNS Taimur at the Colombo port and China’s ship Yuan Wang 5 at Hambantota port appears to be aimed at spreading their footprints in the Indian Ocean region.

What are security challenges in the region?

US-China competition in the region has a **nuclear dimension** because of the presence of three nuclear weapon states. China started helping Pakistan develop its military and nuclear muscle

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mainly to offset threats arising from strong Indo-Soviet cooperation. It has built Pakistan as an **“all-weather” nuclear state**.

There is rising levels of proxy violence across Af-Pak. The aggressive propaganda of new age proxies commanded by the **Pakistan deep state**, like the al Qaeda and Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), are serious threats.



General

Studies

Paper – 3

General Studies - 3

1. [Where communities plant trees](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Where communities plant trees” published in **The Business Standard** on 3rd October 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3- Forest Rights

Relevance: Community Forest right and benefits of forests

News: Women in Kodalpali, a village in Nayagarh district (tribal district) of Odisha have been protecting their forests for the past three decades.

They take the responsibility to walk and to ensure that nobody falls trees there. They fight with intruders and they also seize their axes and bicycles.

What are the reasons for protecting forests by the tribal community in Kodalpali?

According to villagers, forests provide all needs from firewood to building material to tubers and medicinal plants.

Even during the period of Covid-19 nobody in the village fell ill. Forest is the source of life and so they protect it.

However, the tribal community has set some rules to access the forest. For example, fuelwood is to be collected only on Sundays, green trees are not to be felled, no grazing during the monsoon, etc.

Their efforts have helped them in getting community forest rights.

What are community forest rights?

Community forest rights is a provision of the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

This gives villages the right to patches of government forests that they have been traditionally using for exclusive use of resources and protection.

According to the data of the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs, community rights have been granted over some 4.5 million ha of forestland. It is approximately 8 per cent of land under forest cover under government control.

The ministry counts in this all-community rights including rights granted to the use of waterbodies or minor forest produce and not only forestland rights.

The villages of Odisha mainly Kodalpali and Sinduria now have the right to collect, process, use and sell minor forest produce.

This also includes the right to value addition, storage and transportation of products within and outside village boundaries.

What can be further course of action for those villages in Odisha?

Villages now need a plan for the management of this tree-diverse area.

It can help them to earn profit not just from timber but also from all the other richness that forest wealth provides.

Trees in forests survive only when village communities are given control in forest management. They can also help in moving India towards a wood-based economy.

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2. [The link between inflation and climate change](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The link between inflation and climate change**” published in **The Indian Express** on **3rd October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy

News– The article explains the inflation scenario for the Indian economy.

What are the risks for higher inflation?

Rupee is depreciating.

Grain stocks are fast depleting.

Adverse weather conditions due to climate change.

What are the prospects for the Indian Rupee?

Increase in interest rate by the US Federal Reserve will depreciate Indian Rupee.

The depreciation will lead to imported inflation through crude oil, gas and fertilizer.

If RBI tries to keep Rupee artificially high, it will adversely affect Indian exports. It will widen the CAD. Widening of CAD will further put a pressure on Indian Rupee.

Rupee falling is going to continue for at least one year. Inflation in the USA is at a higher level. The US Federal Reserve will continue to increase interest rates for two to three years.

What is the scenario for grain stocks?

The Cabinet’s decision to extend the PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana by another three months will put pressure on grain stocks. It will lead to a higher fiscal deficit. Gujarat elections may further compel the government to extend it upto December.

Doubling the free ration under PM Garib Kalyan Yojana depleted the grain stocks. Wheat procurement has decreased. The Government will have to raise MSP to replenish the wheat stocks.

Rice stocks are ample. But an uneven Monsoon this year may lead to less than estimated rice crop.

What is the case with climate change?

Climate change is an increasing cause of concern. It will lead to extreme events like drought and heatwaves. It will create inflationary pressures.

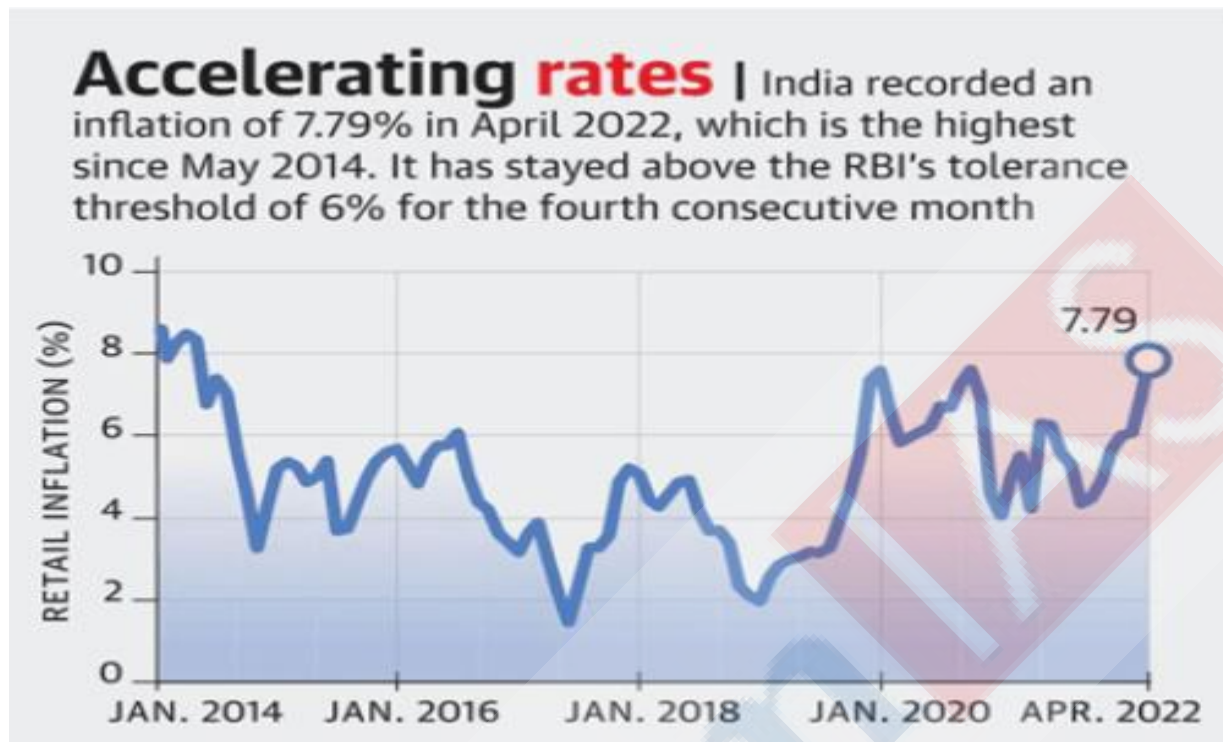
Government policy of free water, electricity and subsidised urea are further damaging the natural environment.

What is the way forward?

We will have to invest more in climate-smart agriculture, in precision farming, with high productivity and less damage to natural resources.

Right policy ecosystem needs to be created for scaling technology.

We need to fix the issue prices of PDS supplies at half the MSP. There is a need to limit the PDS coverage to 30 percent of the bottom population.



Source- <https://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/retail-inflation-quickens-to-an-almost-eight-year-high-less-impact-on-low-income-households-says-finance-ministry/article6540>

3. [Natural gas: The bridge on India's path to energy atmanirbharta](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Natural gas: The bridge on India's path to energy atmanirbharta**” published in **The Indian Express** on 3rd October 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Infrastructure – Energy

News: The ministry of petroleum had constituted a committee recently to review the domestic natural gas pricing regime.

However, there are concerns associated with the formation of committee.

What are the concerns associated with the committee?

First, the committee was given an impossible task between “market-oriented pricing” and “administered” pricing. For that, the committee was directed:

to develop a market-oriented, transparent and reliable pricing regime.

to examine the issues related to ensuring a fair price to the end consumer.

Therefore, it is not clear how the committee will bring relations between the two.

Second, there have been several committees in the past and the recommendations made by one committee have not replaced the older ones. Therefore, it is doubtful that how will this new committee will benefit.

Third, the composition of the committee suggests the government has plans to further tighten controls over natural gas pricing as four of the six members in the committee are from the public sector.

Therefore, there might be a negative impact of the government's objective to move forward “towards a gas-based economy”.

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What are the problems associated with the India for moving towards a gas-based economy?

Harsh topography: India has natural gas reserves. IHS CERA has estimated that India has approximately 64 TCF undiscovered gas resources.

The problem is with the location of these reserves as they are located in harsh topography and complex geology.

Cost: Gas reserves are difficult to locate and even if they are located it is difficult to bring to market on economically feasible terms. This is because the cost of creating the development and production infrastructure is huge.

Administered pricing: The administered pricing is another obstacle that might end investor's interest in exploration of gas. Petroleum companies have also reduced their exploration budgets under pressure to shift away from fossil fuels

There are geologic, technical, and economic obstacles also in achieving commercial success for gas exploration.

What are the issues associated with gas pricing in India?

Initially, licenses were issued to PSUs on a nomination basis. The price of the gas produced was set by the Ministry of Petroleum on a cost-plus basis. At that time the government had the exclusive right to set prices.

However, in later years private sectors got involved and prices were linked to replace substitute fuels.

Later in 2014, a committee recommended that domestic prices of gas to be tied to the weighted average price of gas in the UK, US, Canada and Russia.

However, the problem with the recommendation was that those countries were exporters of gas whereas India had a gas deficit and was an importer.

In 2016, another committee suggested that the gas produced from deep waters to be capped to the minimum of the weighted average import price of fuel oil, naphtha and coal.

However, this suggestion did not take into account the seasonality of LNG demand /supply and LNG prices in India.

Therefore, there is a great difference between the domestic price of gas from deep waters and the price present in the Asia Pacific region.

What can be the course of action for India?

First, it should clear up the existing complexity and permit all producers of gas except producers from nomination blocks to determine prices through direct and transparent negotiations with different consumer segments.

Second, Subsidies should be given directly by the government through the exchequer and the gas producers must not be asked to bear that brunt.

Third, gas producers should be granted marketing and pricing freedom. Only then gas might provide a solid bridge.

4. [The race to provide exhaustive satellite broadband services in India](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**The race to provide exhaustive satellite broadband services in India**" published in **The Hindu** on **3rd October 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Indigenization of Technological Developments**

Relevance: **concerns associated with** satellite broadband connectivity

News: There has been a growing demand for providing satellite broadband connectivity in India. Companies like Jio, Onweb, Hughes are preparing to provide these services.

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Further, the development in satellite communication has made satellite broadband connectivity accessible even in the remote areas.

What are the developments made in global satellite communication?

There are two biggest developments in the global satellite communication space.

They are the emergence of LEO (low-earth orbit constellations) that provide global coverage and lower latency service and HTS (High Throughput Satellites Service) which offers unmatched capacity and flexibility.

Therefore, by using these developments different private companies are planning to provide satellite broadband services in India.

How satellite broadband services will change the Internet platform in India?

Satellite broadband services can connect the most remote parts of the country which are difficult to connect through fibers.

For example, Hughes India along with its partners is planning to provide high-speed satellite connectivity to 5,000 remote gram panchayats that lack terrestrial connectivity for fiber as part of BharatNet project.

Bharatnet project aims to make e-governance applications like telemedicine, access to land records, treasury, police stations, Internet access, and many other services easier in rural India.

Further, **Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) service** providers will provide internet connectivity In Flight and Maritime Connectivity (IFMC).

However, there are certain challenges associated with satellite broadband services.

What are the challenges with satellite broadband services?

Slow internet: Satellite data transfer provides very slow Internet speeds and limited satellite bandwidth because of the distances the signals have to travel.

Connectivity: Connection time can also be impacted by the surroundings, the length of message, and the status and availability of the satellite network.

Users might not be able to connect to a satellite at all if they are located under heavy greeneries like trees.

The Emergency SOS via satellite might not also work in places above 62° latitude like northern parts of Canada and Alaska.

Latency: Satellite Internet latency can also be a problem. Minor changes in weather can have a massive impact on both the speed and latency of satellite data.

5. [Free grain scheme needs to be backed by imports to cushion wheat prices](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“Free grain scheme needs to be backed by imports to cushion wheat prices”** published in the **Indian Express** on **3rd October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3: Indian economy.

Relevance: About extending PMGKAY.

News: Recently, the government has extended the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY-Phase VII) for a further period of 3 months i.e. October to December 2022.

What is Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)?

Read here: [Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package\(PMGKP\)](#)

What are the advantages of extending PMGKAY?

Higher all-India average retail price: the all-India average retail price of wheat is now about Rs 31/kg, compared to Rs 27 last year at this time. Prices of atta and rice have, likewise, risen from

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Rs 30 to Rs 36 and from Rs 35 to Rs 38 per kg, respectively. This is due to a failed wheat crop and uncertainty over the Kharif rice about to be harvested.

What are the concerns associated with extending PMGKAY?

Low rice and wheat stocks: Public rice and wheat stocks, at just over 60 million tonnes on September 1. This is a five-year-low and two-thirds of their level a year ago. This is as against the annual average of 62.5 mt during 2013-14 to 2019-20.

Godowns are no longer overflowing: The PDS turned out to be the only effective social safety net during the pandemic, which also provided an opportunity for disposing of the excess grain lying in government warehouses. But now that situation is changed.

Read here: [A costly decision – Extension of PMGKAY should have been avoided](#)

What can be done?

Since the government has extended the scheme, the government must seriously consider importing wheat. Wheat from Russia can be imported at a low cost to supply for the scheme.

India's own wheat crop will not be ready before March end. Having 2-3 mt of imported wheat in reserve will help to keep market prices under control till then.

6. [India's cyber infrastructure needs more than patches](#)

Source: This post is created based on the **article "India's cyber infrastructure needs more than patches"**, published in **The Hindu** on 3rd September, 2022.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 – Cyber Security

Context: Cybercrime is increasing with the increased use of information and communication technology (ICT). However, the capacity of the enforcement agencies to investigate cybercrime remains limited.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), from 12,317 cases of cybercrime in 2016, there were 50,035 cases registered in 2020.

In Arjun Pandit Rao Khotkar vs Kailash Kushanrao Gorantyal case, SC settled the rules on admissibility of electronic evidence.

The Court held that a certificate under Section 65B(4) of the Indian Evidence (IE) Act was a mandatory pre-requisite for the admissibility of (secondary) electronic record if the original record could not be produced.

States are responsible for creating the infrastructure for the cybersecurity, whereas center is responsible for providing the uniformity in the legislations.

What are the challenges in dealing with cyber or computer-related offences?

No separate procedural code: There is **no separate procedural code** for the investigation of cyber or computer-related offences. The nature of electronic evidence is entirely different compared to traditional crime.

A five-judge committee suggested **Draft Rules for the Reception, Retrieval, Authentication and Preservation of Electronic Records**. However, it is yet to be given a statutory force.

Recruitment of technical staff for the investigation of cybercrime is not happening at the required pace. Any person with academic background in the arts, commerce, literature, or management cannot identify digital evidence.

Authority to investigate: As per Information technology Act, an offences registered under the act, cannot be investigated, by an officer, below the rank of an inspector. However, there are not enough inspectors in a district for that purpose.

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Examiner of Electronic Evidence: While most State cyber labs are sufficiently equipped to analyse hard disks and mobile phones, many are yet to be notified as 'Examiner of Electronic Evidence' (by the central government) to enable them to provide expert opinion on electronic records.

Trans-national cybercrimes: It is very difficult to investigate the Trans-national cybercrimes. In these cases, blocking of an objectionable website or suspect's account is the only option available with the authorities.

What should be the future course of action?

First, the broad 'guidelines for the identification, collection, acquisition and preservation of digital evidence' are given in the Indian Standard IS/ISO/IEC 27037: 2012. Which are issued by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). The guidelines are sufficient to ensure that electronic evidence is neither tampered with nor subject to spoliation during investigation.

Second, a sufficient capacity build up is required to handle cybercrimes. It could be done either by setting up a separate cyber police station in each district or range, or having technically qualified staff in every police station.

Third, Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 should be amended and make the officers of the rank of sub-inspector, eligible to investigate the cybercrimes.

Fourth, the central government has proposed launching a digital rupee using block chain technology soon. State enforcement agencies need to be ready for these technologies. Cyber forensic laboratories of States should be upgraded by providing modernisation funds by the centre.

Fifth, Data localisation must be implemented to deal with the transnational crimes happening in India.

Sixth, the Indian police receives a CyberTipline reports on online Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) from the U.S.'s non-profit agency, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). India should develop its in-house capacity and/or makes intermediaries accountable to identify and remove online CSAM for immediate action by the police.

7. [FABS: The East Asian lesson for India](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**FABS: The East Asian lesson for India**” published in the **mint** on **4th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance– Semiconductor manufacturing

News– The article explains the experience of East Asian countries in promoting semiconductor manufacturing.

Recently the central government has announced some changes in the production-linked incentive linked scheme for semiconductors.

It is now offering fiscal support of 50% of total project cost to companies setting up semiconductor plants irrespective of chip type.

The government wants to promote the chip making industry amid the global move to de-risk semiconductor manufacturing. There is a global effort to diversify their production after the pandemic.

What are the challenges in chip manufacturing?

High investments are needed both from cost and technological perspective.

Lower labour cost counts little in chip manufacturing.

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Market is dominated by the biggest players that are both highly profitable and **technologically sophisticated**. It is not easy for new players to be competitive.

The chip manufacturing industry is highly **dispersed geographically**. The US leads in designing and Taiwan in manufacturing chips. They are highly interdependent. It creates a competitive advantage for them. Local players do not have the capability to match their scale.

What is the backstory of Taiwan in chip manufacturing?

In the 1980s, Japan assumed a major share in chip manufacturing at the expense of American products.

To lower Japan's share, America outsourced low-tech processes in the chip value chain such as packaging to countries like South Korea and Taiwan.

Later developments in Taiwan were different from other Asian countries. Foreign investment was not very helpful in shifting up to high-tech processes of the supply chain.

It was government intervention in the form of promoting research that proved beneficial. The government supported the setting up of a research institute called Industrial Technology Research Institute. It transferred technology to the private sector.

Another important component of Taiwan's strategy was the **foundry model**. Manufacturers did not design their own chips. They manufactured chips for American companies who had design experience.

What was the South Korean experience?

Initial developments were the same for almost all Asian countries. South Korea also benefited in the initial stage from low tech processes outsourcing by America.

But in later stages, Japan and the USA were reluctant to share licensing technology.

South Korea's large industrial conglomerates hired engineers from Silicon Valley.

They approached Silicon startups for design experience. These startups were provided capital by industrial houses.

How have the governments of these countries helped in semiconductor manufacturing?

Financial support by the government was important but it was not a deciding factor for growth of semiconductor manufacturing in East Asian economies.

Investment in semiconductor fabrication was financed almost entirely by companies themselves.

Government support was crucial in the form of providing facilities for research. Government coordination and encouragement of investment in early stages was beneficial for these companies.

8. [Lessons unlearned: The deadly football tragedy in Indonesia raises serious questions](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "Lessons unlearned: The deadly football tragedy in Indonesia raises serious questions" published in **The Indian Express** on **4th October 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Disaster Management**

Relevance: Indonesia's football stampede and concerns associated with it

News: The crowd at Indonesia's Kanjuruhan stadium ran onto the pitch after their team lost. This led to a stampede and around 125 people lost their lives.

Police used tear gas to control the crowd which led to low visibility leading to chaos. It will be counted as one of the darkest days in football.

What is the reason for such accidents?

One of the reasons for such an accident is the emotions of spectators with the team.

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The spectators are often attached to the team they support and at times this attachment leads to accidents. There are also commercial and political interests involved in it.

However, using tear gas cannot control the spectators' feelings.

When tear gases are used and why should it not be used in the stadiums?

Tear gases are used to bring order when violence goes beyond control and descends into riots and there is little thought for public safety.

FIFA prohibits the use 'firearms' or 'crowd control gas' to maintain order at a game.

Stadiums are regulated and closed spaces and using firearms or tear gas for crowd control would only result in chaos and threats to public safety.

Therefore, the authorities who have justified the use of tear gas must be held accountable in Indonesia.

Moreover, the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights is planning to investigate the matter.

What has caused past sport accidents?

This accident is reminder of other crowd-related tragedies such as the deaths of eight people during the Africa Cup of Nations in Cameroon in 2022, death of 97 Liverpool supporters at Hillsborough in Yorkshire, England in 1989, etc.

The deaths in these games were the result of police incompetence and crowd control failure.

What are the lessons learnt from this stampede?

First, the stadium had only one entry/exit point. Therefore, the stadium must be provided with multiple entry/exit points.

Second, there is a need to barricade players at the end of the match to prevent anyone entering the field.

Third, fans will need to be calmed and police will need to be trained to handle any eventuality with sensitivity and care.

9. [The Agnipath challenge for India's new Chief of Defence Staff](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“The Agnipath challenge for India's new Chief of Defence Staff”** published in **The Indian Express** on **6th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security challenges

Relevance– Reformation of defence services

News- The article explains the challenges related to military affairs before new CDS.

Recently General Anil Chauhan was appointed as second CDS of India

What concerns are raised about his appointment?

He has been chosen over and above the chiefs

He has been appointed as a CDS after a 10-month delay and not as the obvious first choice. There are concerns about the appointment of a retired officer as military chief.

What are the tasks ahead for new CDS?

First major task of national concern is to manage the Agnipath scheme.

Second challenge is related to **capacity development**. Supply Of arms and ammunition from Russia may get impacted. Defense capacity development under Atma Nirbhar Bharat has not been much successful.

Third challenge is to bring focus on **jointness and formation of theatre commands**.

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Fourth challenge is to develop military credentials needed for the rise of India in global affairs. This task till now is mainly driven by the External Affairs Ministry and PMO.

10. [Calamity-prone — urban India's worrying storyline](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Calamity-prone — urban India's worrying storyline**” published in **The Hindu** on **6th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Disaster Management

Relevance: climate action plans and problems associated with it.

News: There has been an increase in unfavorable weather phenomenon these days. Mostly urban cities suffer due to the lack of proper mitigation mechanism.

These weather calamities have impacted Delhi (2013, 2021), Mumbai (2005, 2017), Chennai (2015, 2021) in the past and the most recent one is Bengaluru.

Karnataka government announced a ₹900 crore project in November 2021 after flooding and this year they have announced an anti-encroachment drive.

However, these measures are not helpful and there is a need for proper climate consciousness in the planning process.

What are the impacts of extreme weather phenomenon?

It causes extensive losses to property and life.

For example, Mumbai reportedly lost ₹14,000 crore between 2005 and 2015 while the figure for Chennai was an estimated ₹15,000 crore in 2015 alone.

There are also social and human costs involved which is mostly borne by the poor section of the society.

What are the problems with climate action planning in urban cities?

Master plan: Urban cities in India lack master planning. For example, Bengaluru has not had a master plan to control its development since 2015.

65% of urban settlements in India do not have a master plan. The cities that have master plan usually do not address issues of environmental protection or mitigating climate change.

Local governments: The powers to prepare a master plan lie with the state government and the local governments are only reduced to stakeholders without much authority.

Old plans: The plans present in cities are old and some of them vary with the present mapping.

For example,

1. the Drainage Master Plan for Delhi was drafted in 1976 and a new plan is only just being implemented.
2. the drainage lines in Bengaluru as per the 2015 Master Plan vary significantly from the drains mapped by the municipality.

Moreover, there are problems associated with the new climate action plans also.

What are the issues with the present climate action plan being drafted?

City administrations of Mumbai, Ahmedabad, and Nagpur among others have begun adopting climate action plans.

The Mumbai plan covers all aspects of the city's environment from flooding to air pollution and aligns itself with the national goal of net-zero emissions.

However, the plan lacks statutory backing. It does not prescribe any regulatory controls and there are a series of recommended measures that can be adopted by the authorities/citizens.

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These plans are made with the consultation of experts but there is hardly any public participation involved. This reduces the plan's credibility.

What can be the course of action?

First, there is a need to create a comprehensive climate action plan for all major Indian cities.

Second, the plans should be given statutory backing by bringing them within the ambit of the city's master plan.

Third, there is also need to involve public consultation in plan preparation process. This would be effective in highlighting issues of underserved neighborhoods which are often overlooked by decision-making bodies.

Fourth, there is also a need for an environmental protection agency to proactively tackle issues related to climate change.

11. Towards integrated commands: It's too late to turn around

Source– The post is based on the article **“Towards integrated commands: It's too late to turn around”** published in the **Business Standard** on **7th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security Challenges

Relevance– Military reforms

News- The article explains the concerns of the air force about the creation of **integrated theatre command**. It also tells about the basic framework of integrated theatre commands.

What is an integrated theatre command?

The Elements of all three service the army, navy and air force work in an **integrated manner** to maximise the military's combat power.

This would involve restructuring India's single service commands. It merges 17 army, navy and air force commands into five or six tri-service commands.

The Andaman & Nicobar Command and the Strategic Forces Command are India's only tri-service commands.

What are the concerns of the Air Force related to integrated theatre commands?

It has reservations about setting up joint command structures without having thought through the process and its consequences adequately.

The idea of dividing their 30-35 fighter squadrons among five-six integrated theatre commands, leaves all of them with a little strength.

The Air Force wants that planning should be centralised and execution decentralised. Centralised planning is essential for multiple tasking required by the Air Force. Aircraft are viewed as flexible assets that can be switched around among theatres.

What is the way forward?

New structures needed to be future ready. They need to be prepared for new forms of warfare such as cyber and space warfare.

With multiple tasking in mind, the decision-making levels must be reduced.

It is essential to address the concerns of the air force.

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12. [Chinese chequers on the China border](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Chinese chequers on the China border**” published in the **Business Standard** on **7th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security Challenges. GS2- International Relations

Relevance– Challenges on China border

News- The article explains the concerns of Local Ladakhi people about China’s territorial claim on Indian territory in Ladakh. It also explains the Chinese strategy for their expansion.

What are the concerns related to the Indo-China border?

The nomadic yak graziers of Ladakh who live along the borders have disclosed the real situation of LAC.

They are saying that Chinese troops and border guards are denying them access to their traditional borderland pastures. The Indian government is not supporting them.

A local elected official from Ladakh has publicly refuted government claims that India and China have negotiated a mutual and equal troop disengagement and have created buffer zones on either side of the LAC.

Territorial claims by both armies are depriving them from their local identities . Traditional name of local Ladakhi places is replaced by military nomenclature. This is diluting their longstanding claim on the territory.

Territorial claims along the LAC rest on village records of grazing grounds. It must be reasserted each year by the physical presence of nomads with their herds.

What is Chinese strategy?

A study by **Human Rights Watch (HRW)** of the Tibetan areas bordering Arunachal Pradesh, revealed that an initiative has been directed personally by President Xi Jinping since 2017. It involves setting up villages in disputed border areas. In a major investigative article in May 2021 in **Foreign Policy magazine** described its working.

Tibetan nomads are being used by the Chinese army. They have assigned duty to be physically present in border areas throughout winters.

They are being trained to assert China’s claim in these areas. Their methods include driving yak herds over land grazed by local herders, demanding tax payments from these herders, planting Chinese flags on peaks and painting the word ‘China’ on rocks throughout the area.

In July 2021, China’s President Xi Jinping visited Tibet for three days. His focus is on the Tibetan town of Nyingtri . This town is of strategic interest to India as Beijing regards Arunachal Pradesh as a southward extension of Nyingtri Prefecture.

Over the years an estimated 250,000 Tibetans have been resettled thus in vulnerable pockets along the border.

13. [Rice insecurity](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Rice insecurity**” published in **The Indian Express** on **7th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Agriculture

Relevance– Agriculture marketing and pricing

News- The article explains the issues with the current government move to ban the export of rice. It also tells about the challenges for long-term sustainability of rice cultivation.

Government wants to regulate domestic prices and safeguard food security through this move.

What will be the impact of export ban on rice?

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India exports rice to more than 130 countries. It constitutes 40% of global rice trade. Further 90 per cent of rice production across the world is consumed domestically. As a result, any small change in exports and imports has an enormous impact on prices.

The export uncertainties will affect the credibility of Indian exporters and create a disincentive for future exports. It will enable buyers to shift towards other major rice-exporting countries.

The export restriction may lead to fall in prices. It will impact Indian farmers.

India's export restrictions will adversely affect several low-income and low-middle-income countries like Bangladesh, Senegal, Nepal. These are among the largest importers of Indian rice.

What are the challenges for long-term sustainability of rice cultivation?

Around 49 per cent of rice cultivation depends on groundwater. It is depleting rapidly. As per the **FAO data**, agricultural water withdrawal as a percentage of total available renewable water resources has increased from 26.7% in 1993 to 36% in 2022. The total per capita renewable water resources have also declined from 1909 cubic metres to 1412 cubic metres during this period.

Rice exports are leading to an indirect export of water to other countries. It is known as the virtual **water trade**.

The **MSP regime** is not sustainable. It is mainly available for wheat and rice. Further there is a skewed distribution towards selected states like Punjab and Haryana. The cost of cultivation in India is also increasing, and hence there will be a need for a higher MSP to make production remunerative

India's rice yield is also lower than the world average.

14. [Is it time for the gig economy?](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Is it time for the gig economy?”** published in **The Hindu** on **7th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Employment

Relevance– Changing employment scenario

News- The article explains the concept of moonlighting. It also tells about the laws dealing with moonlighting in India.

What is moonlighting?

Moonlighting is employees working for remuneration with entities other than their employers.

Kotak Securities said in a study that at least 60% of 400 employees surveyed said they themselves had or knew someone who had engaged in moonlighting.

How are companies reacting to moonlighting?

Some companies are supporting it while some are opposing it.

Wipro sacked 300 employees for moonlighting. On other hand, Swiggy has announced a 'moonlighting policy'

What does the law say?

Moonlighting is not defined in any of the statutes in India. No Constitutional Court has rendered a decision on the subject.

Section 60 of the Factories Act deals with restriction on double employment. It says that no adult worker shall be allowed to work in any factory on any day on which he has already been working in any other factory. However this enactment is applicable only to employees working in factories.

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There are State laws which deal with employment of persons working in offices, banks, shops, etc. However, there is no provision in these laws dealing with dual employment.

The Supreme Court's observation in *Glaxo Laboratories (I) Limited vs Labour Court, Meerut and others* held that The employer has hardly any extra territorial jurisdiction. If he has power to regulate the behaviour of workmen outside duty hours or other places, it is equivalent to slavery. The Supreme Court ruling means that the sphere of employment cannot be extended by the employer beyond working hours and outside his place of employment.

Court will not give severe punishment unless the employer has not worked against the interest of the company. Courts generally lean towards labour rights.

What is the way forward?

The ministries are of view that employers should not suppress employees who want to monetise, develop and demonstrate. It also urged employees not to violate their agreements with employers.

In today's world, every company ought to have a gig economy strategy.

15. [Oil slick ahead?: Opec's cut in crude output shows the futility of Western sanctions. India must brace for tougher times](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Oil slick ahead?: Opec's cut in crude output shows the futility of Western sanctions. India must brace for tougher times**" published in **The Times of India** on **7th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Relevance: About oil price rise and low trade volume growth

News: Oil prices are likely to remain elevated as the OPEC plus, which includes Saudi Arabia and Russia, decided to trim production in a bid to keep the price high. On the other hand, WTO forecast growth in merchandise trade volume is now projected to grow at 1%, lower than the 3.4% forecast a few months ago.

About OPEC Plus's recent decision on oil production

The grouping produces a little more than 50% of the world's crude. They planned to reduce output by 2 million barrels/day beginning November by using August's production as a benchmark. It's about 2% of production.

Read more: [Opec+ should expect plenty of turbulence in the years ahead](#)

About the recent Trade volume growth

Trade volume growth is being dragged down by the economic slowdown in three major economic engines, the US, Europe and China. Such as, **1)** The US monetary tightening will soon create major impacts, **2)** Europe is facing energy shock in the form of a 350% year-on-year increase in gas prices. This will lead to reduced consumer spending, **3)** In China, its zero-Covid strategy has taken a toll on its growth.

How Trade volume growth and OPEC Plus decision are interlinked?

The energy shock in Europe is partly due to the economic sanctions imposed by the US and Europe on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. This is because of Europe's dependence on Russian gas.

The rest of the world felt the impact through both an oil price surge and upward pressure on the prices of key food items.

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Further, ongoing US-led sanctions on other oil producers such as Iran and Venezuela are hugely counterproductive and have restricted the free flow of oil.

How oil price rise and low trade volume growth will impact India?

Supply pressure on key commodities can keep domestic inflation elevated, and a global slowdown will drag down the growth of the Indian Economy.

This is visible in September's purchasing managers' survey for services as it showed the lowest reading in six months.

So, India's policymakers have to tussle with the dual challenge from the external sector. Monetary and fiscal policies need to be flexible to adapt to a highly uncertain scenario.

Read more: [How OPEC+ deal to withdraw output cut impacts India](#)

16. [Achieving green steel: How India can bridge the gaps to decarbonise the sector](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Achieving green steel: How India can bridge the gaps to decarbonise the sector**" published in the **Down To Earth** on **30th September 2022**.

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

Relevance: About Green Steel

News: At present, the iron and steel sectors are highly energy intensive and big on emissions. So, the iron and steel, cement and chemical industries have started to focus their attention on greening the sector.

What is Green Steel?

It is steel which is manufactured without the use of fossil fuels. This can be done by using low-carbon energy sources such as hydrogen, coal gasification, or electricity.

What are the transitions in the Indian steel sector?

More than 80% of the country's reserves are in the states of Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and the northern regions of Andhra Pradesh. Western states Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka have made good use of the available non-conventional sources of energy in the region.

Read more: [How to decarbonize the steel industry](#)

How to decarbonise the Iron and Steel sector?

In order to decarbonise the iron and steel sector, the primary emphasis through technological interventions would be on substituting the primary production processes with cleaner alternatives. Such as, **1)** Carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS), **2)** Replacing conventional sources of energy with low-carbon hydrogen, and **3)** Direct electrification through electrolysis of iron ore.

What steps can be taken to make Green Steel economical?

a) Increasing energy efficiency through the adoption of technologies that are cost-effective, **b)** Refurbishing old steel plants, **c)** Funding for energy efficiency measures for electricity-based manufacturing, **d)** Constructing a suitable infrastructure for recycling steel and utilising steel scrap, **e)** Generating green standards and similar types of labels for the market growth of green steel, and **f)** Amending the Perform Achieve Trade scheme to estimate and check the carbon emissions instead of energy consumed.

Read more: [Year-End- Review-2021 Ministry of Steel](#)

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17. [Scarred terra pharma: Gambia tragedy needs sharp regulatory response](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Scarred terra pharma: Gambia tragedy needs sharp regulatory response**” published in **The Times of India** on **8th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3: Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Relevance: About India’s pharma sector.

News: Followed the death of 66 children, the WHO issued an alert on four cough syrups manufactured and exported by Haryana-based Maiden Pharmaceuticals to Gambia.

What is the issue?

Must Read: [Cough syrups exported only to the Gambia, finds CDSCO probe](#)

What are the implications of the Gambia issue on the Indian pharma sector?

Earlier, Ranbaxy falsified drug data and systemically violated good manufacturing practices and laboratory practices. Indian pharma’s global reputation is once again, after Ranbaxy, at risk.

What are the issues associated with the Indian pharma sector?

State drug controllers tasked with licensing and monitoring manufacturing units and quality control are not functioning effectively. If a drug fails a quality test in one state, the obvious thing to do is suspend the manufacturing licence in the state where it is located till a clean-up.

The Haryana drugs controller certified Maiden as compliant with WHO-Good Manufacturing Practices, making it eligible for exporting drugs. But central regulator CDSCO is now answerable to WHO for the failures.

Read more: [Drug Regulations in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

What should be done to regulate the Indian pharma sector?

Penalties without deterrent effect will not nudge offenders to reform. So, the Centre’s new drugs and cosmetics bill to replace the colonial-era law must be reconfigured with learnings from this tragedy and embarrassment.

A rigorous regulatory regime is needed to ensure India remains the pharmacy of the world and provides affordable medicines to the poorest sections of society also.

18. [Make machines in India: Why economists arguing against policy emphasis on manufacturing are completely wrong](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Make machines in India: Why economists arguing against policy emphasis on manufacturing are completely wrong**” published in **The Times of India** on **8th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Industries and industrial policies

Relevance: manufacturing sector and need to look into it

News: Some experts today argue that India should encourage service sectors and the policies for manufacturing sectors are criticized.

One of the reasons for this argument is that the service sector is big and it contributes about 55% of our GDP.

However, size alone is not important as Simon Kuznets (the father of GDP) said that GDP is a measure of wealth not of welfare.

What is the current situation of service sector in India?

Service sectors in India include low-to-unskilled labour force and none of them are skilled enough to be exported to other countries.

80% of jobs in this category are in construction, transport, retail and beauty.

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Even Indian doctors are not good at providing required medical services in India as they lack proper training and modern technologies.

How can our service sector become world class and ready for export?

International experience tells us that when the manufacturing sector grows and reaches a certain saturation level then the qualities and skills begin to move towards the service sector.

This has happened in the West, in Europe and the US, and also in the East, in South Korea and Japan.

Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the manufacturing sector because product innovations and differentiation first take place in this sector.

What is the current situation of manufacturing sector in India?

Currently India spends 0.6% of its GDP on R&D in the manufacturing sector which is one of the lowest in the world.

Further, only about 7% of the 2.5 million engineers in India can perform core engineering tasks. Land acquisition is one of the problems for setting up manufacturing plants in India. However, the data shows that only 8% of stalled projects are because of land acquisitions problems.

How can the manufacturing sector help in the growth of the service sector?

India's IT sector only employs 3 million people while in the US there are about 12 million people working in the IT sector. South Korea's IT sector has moved ahead because manufacturing and R&D.

Therefore, the growth in the manufacturing sector will create an advanced service sector.

Moreover, a mature service sector is hugely dependent on the manufacturing sector and not independent of it. The service sector grows only with a strong manufacturing sector.

Studies in the US show that the largest consumer of services is the manufacturing sector and high-end manufacturing requires the service sector to be attached with it for the best results.

Therefore, India should focus on manufacturing sector to achieve best results from the service sector.

19. OPEC+ production cut ahead of winter puts India on a slippery slope

Source: The post is based on an article “OPEC+ production cut ahead of winter puts India on a slippery slope” published in **The Business Standard** on **8th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3

Relevance: rising oil prices and its impact on the Indian economy

News: OPEC Plus countries which includes the world's biggest oil exporters Saudi Arabia and Russia have decided to cut production from November by 2 million barrels a day.

It will have impact all around the world including India.

What will be the impact on India?

The change in the oil price matters more to India's economy than any other country's economy because India imports around 87 per cent of its oil.

Further, the imports this year have increased from last year. For example, petroleum imports accounted for 28 per cent of India's total import this year while it was 23 percent a year earlier.

India also imported close to \$32 billion worth of coal last fiscal which was around one per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

This may widen India's current account deficit from 1.4 percent in FY22 to 3.5 percent of GDP in FY23.

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World bank has also cut economic growth forecast for India from 7 percent to 6.5 per cent this fiscal year due to the high inflation, rising borrowing costs and high commodity prices.

Further, India consumes around 4 million barrels a day and the cut in production will raise oil prices in the upcoming months. This will put more pressure on the rupee and will further weaken the economy.

Natural gas prices have already increased around Rs 2.5 trillion this fiscal year and there may be a further increase in the prices.

OPEC have also agreed to extend its production co-operation agreement with non-OPEC members like Russia until the end of 2023. This means that India should be ready to face the upcoming impact on its economy.

However, the demand in India continues to be strong even with petrol and diesel retailing at close to Rs 100 a litre and the lower oil production will only impact prices, supplies are not an issue.

20. [A synthetic click](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**A synthetic click**” published in **The Hindu** on **8th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3

Relevance: benefits of click chemistry

News: The Nobel Prize for Chemistry has been awarded to Carolyn Bertozzi, Morten Meldal and Barry Sharpless. The three chemists have been awarded for ‘click chemistry’.

What is click chemistry?

Click chemistry helps getting molecules bonded together in an efficient and uncomplicated manner that wouldn't normally bond together.

It can create molecular building blocks like Lego blocks that could hold together quickly and efficiently.

There have been many efforts in the pasts to join molecule together but those efforts were complicated and the result was expensive to be used.

Therefore, the discovery of click chemistry has made it efficient and possible to join two molecules.

What has led the discovery of click chemistry?

The discovery of the copper catalysed azide-alkyne cycloaddition by Meldal and Sharpless was a breakthrough moment in the click chemistry.

There were previous attempts to join azides and alkynes but they were complicated. However, copper proves to be beneficial in joining the two chemicals.

The discovery has helped chemists to link two different molecules. They just have to introduce an azide in one molecule and an alkyne in the other and they can be joined with the help of copper ions.

Bertozzi took click chemistry to a new dimension and showed that it could be used in living organisms also.

Copper is toxic to living cells but she figured out a way to produce a copper-free click reaction called the strain-promoted azide-alkyne cycloaddition. It could be used to treat tumours.

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21. [Accounting for subsidies: Let's build on the 'revdi' debate](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "Accounting for subsidies: Let's build on the 'revdi' debate" published in the The Indian Express on 8th October 2022.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy

Relevance- Government budgeting

News- The article explains the freebies culture prevalent in India.

The debate on freebies has begun with an RBI 2022 report on state finances followed by Prime Minister comment.

What are freebies?

Freebies could be defined as non-merit subsidies.

Subsidies are money transfers by the government in an attempt to drive prices artificially below market prices. Money transfer may be implicit or explicit.

Why are subsidies difficult to classify into merit and non-merit?

Freebies empower the state to deliver welfare by providing subsidised merit goods like health and education.

It helps households to combat poverty by providing subsidised public goods like food, electricity. It appeals to the electorate through populist policies.

It becomes difficult to classify freebies as merit and non-merit subsidy when the boundaries between the above mentioned objectives are blurred.

What are the impacts of freebies?

It leads to an increase in fiscal deficit and puts a debt burden on the state.

Debt burden could have an adverse effect on the state finances if it is not properly accounted for through transparent budgeting procedures. It threatens fiscal sustainability.

Why is the fiscal council being proposed?

It has been recommended by the FRBM Review Committee (2017) and recently constituted Finance Commissions too including the 15th Finance Commission.

The council will provide independent forecasts on key macro variables like real and nominal GDP growth, tax buoyancy, commodity prices. It will also act as a monitoring institution to advise on triggering the escape clause and also specify a path of return.

Monitoring of finances and fiscal rules could also help ensure that states comply with a medium-term fiscal policy framework.

22. [Grid cells in our mind map the whole world- focus your attention to use the brain test](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "Grid cells in our mind map the whole world- focus your attention to use the brain test" published in the The Times of India on 8th October 2022.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Technology

News- The article explains how the brain understands places and memories.

How Brain help in understanding locations?

The part of Brain called the hippocampus plays an important role in understanding locations . Hippocampal cells help in encoding locations in the environment of our Brain.

In people suffering from epileptic seizure, the hippocampus has to be removed. After removing it, people were intellectual and socially fine. But they cannot remember new faces and places.

What is the role of the Entorhinal cortex?

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It provides information to the hippocampus. The cells found in this area are called grid cells. They resemble hexagonal tiling on the floor. The working of different grid cells leads to generating information about locations.

These grid cells function constantly. These keep moving around abstract doughnut shapes. This stays the same every time.

23. [Where the stars must not twinkle](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Where the stars must not twinkle**” published in **The Hindu** on **8th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Space

Relevance– India achievement in space sector

News- The article explains the logic behind establishing an astronomical observatory by the Indian government at Hanle, Ladakh. It also explains the major components of observatory and role of other stakeholders

Why has Ladakh been chosen as the location for the observatory?

Earlier the observatory was located in Bengaluru. It is known as **Vainu Bapu observatory**. The southwest and northeast monsoon forced the observatory for months. The rainclouds absorb starlight and radiation from cosmic objects. It prevents telescopes from capturing these objects. To capture a **cosmic phenomena like supernovae**, we need radiation that lies outside the range of visible light. Therefore a dry, high-altitude place is an ideal location to capture these phenomena.

Artificial lights create light pollution. It creates obstacles for natural light. It is a contaminant for astronomy by impeding cosmic radiation. There is a relative absence of artificial lights in Hanle.

What are the major components of this observatory?

The multicoloured dish is the Major Atmospheric Cherenkov Experiment Telescope (MACE)– It is the second largest of its kind in the world and only one at such an elevation. Its goal is to detect **Cherenkov radiation** from space. This is a special kind of light from gamma rays, or the most energetic sources of radiation. It can result from dying stars or several galaxies.

High Altitude Gamma Ray (HAGAR)– It also looks at Cherenkov radiation, although at a lower range of energies.

Himalayan Chandra Telescope (HCT)– It is designed to detect light from the visible range of the electromagnetic spectrum as well as from the **infra-red spectrum**. The second capsule, situated slightly lower than the

GROWTH-India telescope– It is equipped to track cosmic events that unfurl over time, such as afterglows of a gamma ray burst or tracking the path of asteroids

What is the negative side of the location?

The extreme weather and climate is an issue for people working there. Low atmospheric oxygen may lead to altitude sickness.

But it is widely controlled via satelink link from IIA’s Centre for Research and Education in Science and Technology, Bengaluru.

What is unique about Hanle?

Starlight is relatively unimpeded here.

Twinkling stars means starlight is being bounced back by atmospheric gases, clouds. This is relatively absent in Ladakh.

How are other stakeholders involved in this process?

Ladakh's government is eager to expand economic opportunities via tourism and the Indian Army expanding its infrastructure development, bolster defence at the India-China border. It will create light pollution.

To strike a balance, the Ladakh government along with the IIA and India's Scientific Ministries is laying the groundwork to declare Hanleas an **International Dark Sky Reserve by the International Dark-Sky Association**.

Government is also trying to involve the local community. Eight telescopes will be set up in village clusters. Homestay owners will be trained in elementary astronomy to guide astro tourists. It will promote tourism and encourage the local people to avoid light pollution. This will be a win-win situation for all sides.

24. [Why India Inc. is not taking a Hanuman leap](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **"Why India Inc. is not taking a Hanuman leap"** published in **The Hindu** on **10th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Industries and industrial policies

News: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has recently raised concern about slow corporate investment despite business-friendly measures taken by the government.

The corporate tax was cut in 2019 for existing companies to 22% from 30% and for new manufacturing companies to 15% from 25%. However, there has been rarely any improvement in the investments.

Private investment accounts for close to 75% of total capital formation in the economy. Therefore, its revival is essential for sustained growth of the economy.

What is the significance of public investment in the expansion of private investment?

The private capital formation last peaked in 2011–12 but it has been on decline at present.

The present government tried to **shift away from a state-driven model of economic development** and it announced the slogan of 'minimum government' to encourage private investments.

However, still the government maintained the level of public investment, but Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act kept it from expanding it any further.

Later, export growth declined due to the global financial crisis and the slowing of the world economy which led private investors to stop investing.

Even the 'minimum government' failed to expand aggregate demand when it was needed. Further steps like demonetization and GST also did not boost demand, which raised a sense of insecurity amongst private investors.

However, the government brought change after the pandemic by increasing the allocation of capital spending in Budget 2022 but it will take time to enhance the growth in India.

Therefore, the expansion in public investment should have been taken earlier by the government. The International Monetary Fund has also suggested that public investment can play the role of an engine of growth for the developing economies.

What can be the course of action?

First, if private investments are declining then the government can come up with public investments. It has also been proven from the history of India that public investments have led the growth in India.

- **For example**, the growth accelerations of the 1950s, the late 1970s, etc. Therefore, crowding in rather than crowding out characterizes the relationship between public and private capital formation in India.

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Second, it is important to choose the right projects and the investment must be focused on productivity-enhancing infrastructure.

Third, the government should focus on overall growth of agricultural produce other than the superior cereals to control the inflation.

- This could also act as an opportunity to end India's import dependence on edible oils and the persisting shortfall in the supply of vegetables.

25. [The cause of science](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **"The cause of science"** published in **The Business Standard** on **10th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3

Relevance: Nobel Prize 2022 in science

News: Recently, Nobel Prize has been given in many fields which also include Chemistry, Physics and Medicine. The developments made in these fields are important for the development in science.

Who has been awarded the Nobel Prize in chemistry and for what achievement?

The Nobel prize of 2022 in chemistry prize went to Carolyn Bertozzi, Morten Meldal, and Barry Sharpless (who also won a chemistry Nobel in 2001) for "the development of click chemistry and bioorthogonal chemistry".

Click chemistry helps in quick chemical reactions without unwanted by-products.

Bioorthogonal chemistry is a method of doing click chemistry within living cells without disrupting the normal functions of the cell.

These processes enable scientists to quickly and cheaply build new molecules which can be studied intensively.

It has many benefits as it can help in pharmaceutical research by making new drugs and also studying the impact of those drugs.

For example, bioorthogonal approach can help in studying the impact of cancer drugs in cells.

Who has been awarded Nobel Prize in physics and for what achievement?

The Nobel Prize in physics is shared among three individuals – Alain Aspect, John F. Clauser and Anton Zeilinger. They have separately investigated the rules for the working of entangled particles.

Entanglement between two paired particles means that a change in the state of one particle leads to a simultaneous change in the state of the other particle even if the pairs are separated by a distance.

This appears to violate the principle of relativity which says that not even information can travel faster than light. Albert Einstein described it as "spooky action".

Anton Zeilinger demonstrated quantum teleportation using entanglement.

Quantum effects are important in cryptography and in computing.

Who has been awarded Nobel Prize in medicine and for what achievement?

The Nobel Prize 2022 in medicine has been awarded to Svante Pääbo.

He developed the field of paleogenealogy by using modern DNA technology to examine the genomes of extinct branches of the human race.

He is also led the discovery of the Homo Denisovan sub-species and with sequencing the Neanderthal genome.

This discovery gives us many clues about Palaeolithic migration and socialisation patterns. Further, this method can be used to extract and analyse ancient DNA from many other species.

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Moreover, genes from extinct sub-species may have peculiar and useful effects in terms of affording immunity.

26. India's drug problem: Why WHO's alert over Indian medicines in Gambia should not be ignored

Source: The post is based on an article “**India's drug problem: Why WHO's alert over Indian medicines in Gambia should not be ignored**” published in **The Indian Express** on **10th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3

Relevance: low quality cough syrups in India and issues associated with it

News: Cough syrups manufactured by Maiden Pharmaceuticals has caused the deaths of 66 children in Gambia.

This has led Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and state authorities to investigate into cough syrups.

What are the findings of the WHO?

WHO said that its laboratory analysis of samples of these syrups have revealed the presence of unacceptable amounts of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol.

These chemicals are toxic to humans, and can result in abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, inability to pass urine, headache, and altered mental state. It can also lead to acute kidney injury that can prove fatal in children.

India stopped the use of cough syrups that contained these toxins after 17 children died in Jammu and Kashmir.

However, the initial inquiries have revealed that Maiden Pharmaceuticals manufactured the cough syrups only for export to Gambia.

What led to the manufacture of the cough syrups even though they were stopped by the government?

The Drugs and Cosmetic Act, 1940 says that the state authorities are responsible for monitoring the manufacture and sale of drugs. While CDSCO is responsible for laying down standards and providing expert advice to regulators in the states.

However, after the tragedy of Jammu and Kashmir there is very little information shared between the state and the centre.

Moreover, drugs that fail quality tests in one state continue to be sold in others due to the lack of binding mechanism to recall of such medicines.

What are the concerns associated with the low quality of drugs?

According to a CDSCO survey in 2014-2016, about five per cent of Indian drugs mostly manufactured by large pharma companies failed the quality test.

There has also been quality concern raised by national and international observers over the pharmaceutical products of India and many have been rejected for the quality.

Therefore, there is a need for the pharma industry to set up mechanisms for cooperation on quality control amongst firms.

Moreover, the situation like that of Gambia can harm India's hard-earned reputation of being the pharmacy of the Third World.

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27. [The fate of chips will decide the fate of nations](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The fate of chips will decide the fate of nations**” published in **The Hindu** on **10th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance– Chips and semiconductor manufacturing

News- The article explains the reason behind increasing dependence on chips. It also tells about the factors that need to be considered by India in case of chip manufacturing.

Why has chip manufacturing gained the attention of the world?

They are very small in size. Apple’s new A16 chip has 16 billion transistors on it. Apple chips are mostly outsourced. Even a large company like Apple is not able to manufacture chips on its own. Besides, it is manufactured by very few countries like the USA, Taiwan.

Russia was not able to dominate Ukraine through war. Ukraine used precision-guided missiles powered by chips. Russia had a lack of these missiles due to unavailability of chips.

Toyota has to temporarily shut down its plants in Japan due to a shortage of chips.

Critical sectors such as defence, telecom and mobility are impacted by chip shortages. It would not end by 2023. Natural disasters in South Korea and Taiwan could worsen the crisis.

Further the \$200 billion investment put up by countries in chip making will not give instant results.

If China attacks Taiwan, it could disrupt the entire supply chain.

What factors need to be considered by India while putting investment in chip manufacturing?

India should be cautious. Previous attempts by Vietnam, Brazil and the USA have not yielded desired results.

Chip manufacturing requires a steady supply of electricity and billions of gallons of clean water. A chip manufacturing plant costs around 15 to 20 billion dollars. It takes time to make it profitable. Further the supply chain disruption by COVID-19 and the Ukraine war has complicated chip manufacturing.

28. [What an e-rupee really is must be crystal clear](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**What an e-rupee really is must be crystal clear**” published in the **mint** on **10th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3-

Relevance– Digital currency

News- The article explains the recent RBI concept note on Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).

Which issues are clearly addressed in the RBI note?

The RBI note has clearly addressed the issue of monetary stability. Money supply due to e-rupee may lead to inflation.

It has clarity on danger of disintermediation. It rejects interest-paying CBDC as it might get enough funds to leave lenders out of the loop.

Which issues are not clearly addressed?

On Product-The two versions of CBDC will create misconfusion.

On placement- Banks and wallets will work as intermediaries. It will not create disruption. But we should have flexible technology to ensure its gradual shift to direct or hybrid models of finance. It will ensure that RBI can use deposit rates directly as tools and keep e-rupee saving free from bank failure.

On promotion– For promotion, UPI may be used as a base for retail CBDC. But we need cash like appeals for CBDC which has components like no need for ban and anonymity of transaction.

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First component can be addressed by use of the internet. For the second component, we need privacy laws and anonymity of transactions. At this juncture, RBI can only ensure anonymity for small value transactions.

29. [Is IAF ready for future wars?](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Is IAF ready for future wars**” published in **The Times of India** on **10th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- security

Relevance– Challenges for security forces

News- The article shows the strengths and weaknesses of IAF. It shows the requirement of IAF in the context of hybrid wars.

What message does the recent use of the Air Force against China and Pakistan, convey?

It shows the determination of IAF to take action. It also conveys the willingness of political executives to take calculated risks.

It also brought into focus several faultlines in IAF working in changing scenarios of war.

One of the lessons learnt was in dealing with the after-effects of a strike. Lack of numbers, capability gap in long-range air to air missiles and other structural deficiencies in IAF defence networks and sensors resulted in suboptimal response.

What is needed to strengthen the Air Force in the context of hybrid war?

There should be accelerated induction of mid-range indigenous platforms with sensors and weapons.

There should be need-based and transparent import of **high-end offensive capabilities**. It must be linked with technology transfer for the next generation aerial system.

Space domain should be treated at par with the land and maritime domain. The Air Force should get adequate representation at apex structures of national security.

The Air Force should move away from its rigid position. It should contribute to **jointness, synergy and integration**.

What are lessons from the use of air power in recent conflicts?

In recent conflicts the use of air power was a determining factor to decide the outcomes.

Limited use of air power by India during Balakot strikes proved beneficial.

Sustained use of airpower against ISIS ensured its defeat.

Russian use of air power against Ukraine shows its limitations. It was not well coordinated, and without proper strategy. Poor training and lack of precision-guided weapons impacted its effectiveness.

30. [Building resilient mineral supply chain](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Building resilient mineral supply chain**” published in **The Hindu** on **11th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance– Mines and minerals sector

News- The article explains the challenges for securing access to key minerals. It also provides suggestions to secure the mineral supply.

In his Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the need to have *aatmanirbharta* in energy by focusing on clean energy technologies.

The Indian government established Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) in 2019 with the mandate to secure mineral supply for the domestic market.

Why is there a renewed focus on the need for self-reliance in the energy sector?

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The Ukraine crisis led to concerns over pricing and availability of oil and gas.

India imports 85% of oil and half of gas. Imported inflationary pressures pose risks to macroeconomic growth and stability.

Why is securing access to key minerals a challenging task?

First, reserves are often concentrated in regions that are geopolitically sensitive. These regions do not perform well from an ease of doing business perspective.

Second, a portion of existing production is controlled by geostrategic competitors. For example, China has considerable influence in cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Third, future mine production is often tied up in advance offtake agreements by buyers from other countries.

What are suggestions for policymakers to secure mineral supply for them?

First, figure out the mineral requirements of the domestic industry. An inter-ministerial task force should be set up. A five-year road map with clear targets for deployment and indigenous manufacturing across clean energy applications need to be created.

Second, Government should coordinate with the domestic industry to determine where strategic interventions by the government would be necessary for the purpose. KABIL could collaborate with industry to bolster its market intelligence capabilities for tracking global supply-side developments.

Third, if there are no conducive investment opportunities, KABIL should sign offtake agreements with global mineral suppliers to secure future production.

Fourth, Government should jointly invest in mining assets with geostrategic partners. KABIL should make investments in countries where private sector investment is risky.

The government supports technologies that utilise domestically available materials.

We need to develop policies aimed at recycling minerals.

31. [Do we really need the e-rupee?](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Do we really need the e-rupee?**” published in **The Business Standard** on **11th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth.

Relevance: About concerns and benefits of e-rupee

News: Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released a concept note on an Indian central bank digital currency or CBDC.

About the concept paper on e-rupee

Must read: [RBI unveils features of digital rupee, plans to launch pilot soon](#)

What is the state of present monetary and financial systems?

The Indian monetary and financial systems are mainly bank-based, with money taking the form of cash and bank deposits. In this system, digital payments were based on virtual money created by commercial banks.

After the [Unified Payments Interface\(UPI\)](#), India became the pioneer in developing digital payment systems. Using the UPI platform, apps like Google Pay, Paytm and PhonePe have popularised digital payments tremendously.

Recent data indicates that demand for cash may have even gone up once the pandemic started retreating. This seems to indicate that even if a CBDC is introduced as a form of legal tender. It may play a secondary role to cash.

Must read: [UPI and Digital Payments in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

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What is the need for e-rupee?

Along with other reasons, there is a massive push from China to establish the digital yuan, not only as a domestic currency, but also to be used for cross-border payments with their trade and investment partner countries.

Once the digital yuan gains acceptability as a global currency, it will only be a matter of time before it starts flowing into the Indian economy. This leads not only to the possibility of a dollarisation-type problem in the conventional sense but also grave data security risks. So, it is in India's interest to limit this possibility by introducing the e-rupee.

Read more: [What are the advantages of having own digital currency for the Indian economy?](#)

What are the benefits of e-rupee?

The e-rupee can make the monetary system more efficient and the financial markets more stable in a number of ways. For instance,

Monetary system benefits of e-rupee: e-rupee will **a)** Reduce the cost of physical cash management, **b)** Push the monetary system towards more digitisation, **c)** Cash is used significantly in small-value transactions. These transactions may be redirected towards the e-rupee if reasonable anonymity is assured.

Benefits of e-rupee in financial markets: **a)** As the e-rupee will provide an alternative to crypto assets, it will provide financial stability in the economy, **b)** Provide the public with a risk-free virtual currency.

Benefits of e-rupee on payments infrastructure: As e-rupee **1)** Provide the domestic payments system with an additional channel, **2)** Increases resilience by providing payment services even outside of the commercial banking system, **3)** Diversify the range of payment options, particularly for e-commerce, **4)** Helps the international payments infrastructure by making cross-border transactions faster and far less costly, and **5)** Ease frictions in cross-border payments that is critical for international trade.

Increase the welfare for poorer sections through financial inclusion: This is because the e-rupee can **a)** Make financial services more accessible even to the unbanked and underbanked population, **b)** Offline functionality as an option will allow the e-rupee to be transacted without the internet. This will enable access in regions with poor or no internet connectivity.

Read more: [Digital Rupee: Advantages and Challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

What needs to be done to increase the benefits of e-rupee?

India needs to **a)** Establish global protocols on the development of cross-border use of CBDCs, **b)** Create a credible and working CBDC.

Read more: [RBI shouldn't rush the launch of India's official digital rupee](#)

32. [Ineffective implementation: Ban on single-use plastic is not working](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“Ineffective implementation: Ban on single-use plastic is not working”** published in **Business Standard** on **12th October 2022**. **Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment**

Relevance: issues associated with plastic bags

News: The ban on single-use plastic came into effect on 1st July 2022.

However, items like plastic straws and cutlery are being marketed and used routinely in most places and the ban seems to have remained largely on paper.

The concept of extended producer responsibility to ensure sound management of plastic products has failed to produce the desired results.

What are the problems with single-use plastic bags?

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The discarded plastic products are thrown randomly which litter roads and block drainage and cause waterlogging.

These plastic products are disposed of in an environment-unfriendly manner of open burning and emitting highly toxic fumes.

These wastes also affect aquatic life and biodiversity when dissolved in water.

Plastic carry bags of less than 75-micron thickness were banned long ago but they are still being used especially by street vendors and small shopkeepers.

The deadline for phasing out bags of slightly thicker material of up to 120 microns is December 31, 2022. However, with the current situation even this target seems unlikely to be met.

What can be the course of action?

India adopted the resolution on addressing the single-use plastic pollution issue in the United Nations Environment Assembly in 2019.

Whereas, some countries like Kenya and Bangladesh had stopped the use of some plastic bags before the resolution. Kenya had barred the use of plastic carry bags in 2017 while Bangladesh did in 2002.

Many other countries have put in place systems to return the used plastic products back to the producers for appropriate recycling or safe disposal.

Therefore, India needs to follow these countries in ensuring plastic-product manufacturers' stringent compliance with the extended producer responsibility.

33. [Why NPAs are not just about bank governance](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “Why NPAs are not just about bank governance” published in The Indian Express on 12th October 2022.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance– Banking sector

News– The article explains the cause behind higher NPAs between 2011-18.

By the late 2000s, NPAs, as a percentage of gross advances had decreased to less than 3.5 per cent. It began to rise in 2011 and peaked at 11.18 per cent in 2018.

Governance issues that stem from government ownership are cited as reasons for higher NPAs.

Why are governance issues not solely responsible for stressed balance sheets?

The government ownership doesn't explain the improvement on performance of banks during the 2000s.

Most of these NPAs arose due to defaults by private sector non-financial firms.

The difference in the business models of public and private sector banks has not been considered. At the beginning of the 2010s, public sector banks had significantly higher exposure to commodity-sensitive sectors such as iron and steel and textiles compared to private sector banks.

How the fall in commodity prices is responsible for the stressed balance sheet of banks?

The rise in NPAs coincides with fall in international commodity prices. Earlier fall in commodity prices during the late 90s also led to a rise in NPAs. But it was not as severe as between 2011-16.

During the pandemic, the balance sheet was not stressed despite the economic crisis. It can be attributed to the rise in commodity prices during the pandemic.

Decline in commodity prices leads to a decline in raw material cost. But it also causes a more proportionate decline in sales revenue. It impacts the profitability of firms.

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The banks which experienced a higher decline in prices also experienced higher NPAs. Public sector banks generally had higher exposure to commodity-sensitive sectors. They experienced a relatively higher decline in prices and a bigger rise in non-performing assets between 2011-16.

What can be done?

We can create a nominal price index using data on banks' sectoral exposure and commodity prices. For each bank, we multiply the exposure with the sectoral price in that year and the sum of all sectors provide the nominal price index. It will capture the bank-wise variation in their exposure to commodity prices.

34. [Solutions by the people, solutions for the people](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Solutions by the people, solutions for the people”** published in **The Hindu** on **12th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy and Environment. GS2- Global Politics

News- The article explains the different economic models across the world and suggests a model for the future. It also explains the challenges faced by the presently dominant economic model.

What are different economic models across the world?

There have been two predominant economic models followed since the 20th century- **Welfarist model and free market economy model**.

The welfarists were in favor of government intervention in the economy. On the other hand, supporters of a free-market economy want a free hand for markets and minimum government intervention in the economy.

The alternate model was suggested by **Club of Rome** in 1972. It advocated for including environmental cost while estimating profits and growth.

The neoliberal economic model has prevailed in recent times.

What are the challenges faced by the current model of economic governance?

The 2008 financial crisis shows the limitation of this model. To check the slowdown, countries bailed out large financial institutions. There was no compensation for common citizens. Austerity measures were imposed on some countries like Greece.

The low inflation and balanced budget provisions has led to waves of protest. Citizens complain that the system favors wealthiest people. There is a demand to include the needs of people in economic policy.

Social tensions are too high within many countries. Their governments are unable to find fair solutions through conventional democratic processes.

Disillusionment with democratic institutions is increasing even in U.S. and Europe. Authoritarian governments are coming to power in many countries with support of citizens.

What is the new economic model suggested by Earth for All: A Survival Guide for Humanity?

It is based on the **“3P” slogan- People, Planet and Profit**.

It proposes **collaboration between economists, ecologists and social scientists**.

It proposes five systematic solutions: ending poverty; addressing gross inequality; empowering women; making food systems healthy for people and ecosystems; and transitioning to clean energy.

It compares the outcomes between present patterns and proposed alternative approaches.

The present path is called **“Too Little Too Late”** and the other is called **“Big Leap”**.

The present path will lead to environmental and social collapse. It will preserve the present inequitable distribution of wealth and power.

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Big Leap”, on the other hand, can prevent catastrophe. It will lead to a more equitable distribution of economic wealth and social power. It will avoid disruptive political revolutions. It allows us to estimate whether policies related to income redistribution might cause social tensions.

What is the way forward?

Policymaking must become more inclusive and less dominated by the powerful and the wealthy. Solutions should not be imposed by experts from the top. There is a need for deliberations among diverse disciplines and dialogue among experts and citizens.

35. [FDI and the ordinary Indian](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**FDI and the ordinary Indian**” published in **Business Standard** on **13th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Economic Development

News: There have been views that India is one of the world’s fastest-growing economies. However, India has not been able to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as it should have been.

Does the improvement of rank in EoDB increases FDI?

India has improved in the rankings of Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) from 142 in 2014 to 63 in 2020 but there has been a high unemployment rate.

The improvement in EoDB rankings has also not resulted in more the Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) inflows.

The FDI in India has seen a dip in 2021 and the dismal condition of SMEs have also been unable to attract FDIs.

Whereas, China ranked second in terms of FDI despite an EoDB ranking of 31 in 2019 whereas India ranked 63 in EoDB but it ranked seventh in FDI.

What is the importance of SMEs and what are the issues they are facing?

Majority of the parameters of the EoDB represents the views of larger corporations. However, investor might look for the ease of business most of the Small and Medium Businesses (SMEs) having in a country. However, SMEs are not getting the similar environment, as big corporations are getting.

SMEs face many issues such as getting permits, licenses, and the high cost of electricity. The owners of SMEs have to rely on local contacts to sort issues related to permits and licenses.

The license-permit regimes are relatively less oppressive in the IT sector compared to SMEs.

The ranking of India in EoDB was improved with the improvements in resolving insolvency rankings with the introduction of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code. However, it is meaningless for SMEs because they lack the ability to access the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code processes.

Moreover, the current government has come up with Production-Linked Incentive scheme (PLI) to improve the Indian business environment and attract foreign investment.

However, there is a doubt on the efficiency of the scheme as it is new.

What are the problems with the present policies to attract FDI?

The backward-area investment incentive does not work. It proves that the business environment cannot be improved by compensatory policies. Companies start to leave as soon as the sunset clauses come to an end.

Import substitution which is also present in the PLI schemes has proved to be a failure in the seventies and eighties.

Incentives are needed for a long term as India will have to constantly compete with rivals (Vietnam and Indonesia) in the global investment race.

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Therefore, government should work with its ordinary people like the small-scale entrepreneur in order to attract FDI.

36. [Oil & Gas: A discouraging history](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Oil & Gas: A discouraging history**” published in **Business Standard** on **13th October 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Industrial Policies**

Relevance: **problems with exploration of oil and gases in India**

News: The government is set to put the exploration licences for 42 hydrocarbon blocks for auction in the next round of its licensing process.

The government hopes that there will be reasonable private sector participation in this auction. However, the target of exploration of 1 million square kilometres seems difficult to be met.

What are the problems associated with the exploration of hydrocarbon blocks?

The new Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) was announced to provide a licensing mechanism and pricing formulae. The first round of 55 blocks was auctioned in January 2018.

The government announced that companies could select blocks of their choice and they have freedom over marketing and pricing. However, this liberalization process did not attract foreign Oil Companies and among the Indian private sector Vedanta was only interested.

This shows that implementation of the HELP system was not successful as it was an attempt to attract global investment into the sector.

Further, the HELP system has not performed up to the expectations as there were only 26-billion-dollar oil and gas deals between 2011 and 2021.

Why private sectors are not interested in exploration of hydrocarbons in India?

The past disagreements on tax demands on Cairn, the dispute over KG-D6 production have raised concerns over private participation from foreign countries.

The private sector’s lack of interest in the downstream sector also shows that they have a lack of trust of making enough profits in India.

Therefore, there is a need for the government to come up with laws and policies that attract foreign investment in this sector.

37. [Disintermediation: An overblown bank scare](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Disintermediation: An overblown bank scare**” published in **Live Mint** on **13th October 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Economic Development**

News: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently outlined a plan for the proposal of e-rupee which is a digital currency.

The proposal sets aside intermediaries like banks from the involvement in e-rupee. However, the Nobel Prize winner in economics this year, highlights the vital role of financial intermediation played by banks in an economy.

What will be the advantages of e-rupee?

First, an e-rupee can easily attract savings as it will bear an RBI promise.

Second, money held in cash-like e-token form would be a very safe asset when compared to an account at a bank that requires transfers via UPI which looks ‘digital’ but is not risk-free. Further, offering interest on e-rupee can increase the deposits.

Third, lenders could borrow funds from RBI to on-lend and to sharpen their skills of pricing credit risk.

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Therefore, retail deposits play an important role in credit expansion.

38. [The war against illegal goods as India's fight](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The war against illegal goods as India's fight**” published in **The Hindu** on **13th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy and Internal security

Relevance– Parallel economy

News- The article explains the impacts of high inflation on the illegal goods market. It also provides suggestions to stop these practices.

Inflation has remained in double digits since April 2021. It was recorded at 12.41% in August.

What are the impacts of high inflation?

Parallel economy– The high inflation leads to a search for cheaper alternatives. It gives rise to a parallel economy. Cheaper goods from China flood the Indian market.

Illegal goods market– Search for cheaper alternatives give rise to the illegal goods market. It leads to loss of taxation revenues for the government.

According to the **FICCI's CASCADE report** the illicit market is thriving in five key Indian industries. This includes mobile phones, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) -household and personal goods, packaged foods, tobacco products, and alcoholic beverages.

The size of the illicit market in these industries was valued at ₹2,60,094 crore in 2019-20. The estimated tax loss to the Government due to illicit goods in these industries has been estimated to be ₹58,521 crore.

According to a report by the **Economist Intelligence Unit**, in 2018 India ranked low in the Global Illicit Trade Environment Index. It needs quantifiable actions to bring down the risks of illicit trade on the economy.

What should be the course of action?

Improve the taxation structure– Government should rationalize the taxation structure. It should incentivize local manufacturers to make world-class goods.

Global brands should be encouraged to manufacture in India provided they can offer India-specific pricing. They should not be allowed to remit royalties and profits out of the country earned from goods being consumed by Indians. This type of model is followed by China.

Law enforcement– Strict enforcement can stop the inflow of low-quality smuggled goods. Enforcement can be improved by using cutting-edge technology such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and location technology.

Awareness generation– The Government must also increase consumer awareness so that people boycott smuggled, counterfeit and poor-quality goods.

39. [We need a forest-led COP27](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**We need a forest-led COP27**” published in **The Hindu** on **13th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

News- The article explains the need of moving away from technological solutions and having a forest-led approach to tackle climate change.

There are calls for developing technology to fight climate change across the world.

COP26 at Glasgow also emphasised on technological solutions.

Why technology alone is not sufficient to fight climate change?

Every technological solution discussed at COP26 depends on just three resources: non-emitting electricity, carbon capture and storage (CCS) or biomass.

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The total demand for those resources required by the plans discussed at COP26 cannot be met by 2050. We currently have 4kWh/day of non-emitting electricity per person. But the COP26 plans require 32. We currently have 6kg of Carbon capture and storage per person per year, but the COP26 plans require 3600.

In 2003, **Carnegie Institution** found that the world would need a nuclear plant every day between 2000 and 2050 to avoid catastrophic climate change.

In 2018, **MIT Technology Review** reported that at the given rate, the world will take nearly 400 years to transform the energy system.

What forest led approach is needed to tackle climate change?

Our climate crisis is linked with other complex issues. We need **multi-pronged, interconnected climate solutions**. There is an intersection of the climate change crisis and the biodiversity crisis. Forests are home to 80% of terrestrial wildlife. Therefore they need protection.

Forests absorb a net 7.6 billion metric tonnes of CO₂ a year. A new study has found that they have a tendency to cool the earth by an additional 0.5%.

The conservation of forests along with other nature-based solutions are needed. It can provide up to 37% of the emissions reductions needed to tackle climate change.

Why is there a need for conserving natural sinks?

The IPCC Land Report estimates that land serves as a large CO₂ sink.

Emission reduction can be achieved by conserving natural sinks, improving biodiversity protection, and restoring ecosystems.

40. [Falling reserves and the bogey of the RBI's role](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Falling reserves and the bogey of the RBI's role**" published in **The Hindu** on **14th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Economic Development

Relevance: concerns associated with the declining forex reserves and the role of the RBI

News: There is a widespread misconception that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been depleting India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves to defend the rupee.

As per reports, India's forex reserves have reduced from \$642 billion to \$537 billion from September 8, 2021 to September 30, 2022 due to selling of dollars in India's inter-bank forex market. However, this could be a misconception.

How RBI Controls the forex market?

It is well established that that the RBI has a role in determining dollar/rupee rate.

The players in the forex market are the banks licensed by the RBI and the RBI itself.

Individuals and corporates cannot enter the forex market. They can deal only with their respective banks. So, the RBI dominates the forex market as the regulator, a player and the jury.

Further, the forex market is regulated by the RBI with the exchange control regulations and all the banks are required to hold a fix forex reserves at the close of business hours each day.

Why RBI's intervention cannot deplete forex reserves?

RBI's Interventions are not sufficient to deplete forex reserves due to few reasons:

First, even if RBI sells a certain amount of dollars in the market. It is not going to deplete automatically. The amount will be reduced if the sold dollars are purchased by some bank and bank then remit these dollars to a licensed importer.

Second, if a purchasing bank start to speculate, then also forex reserve may deplete. But it is not permitted by the RBI.

Third, selling these dollars in the overseas cross currency market are also prohibited by the central bank.

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Therefore, until and unless there is a demand of dollars from an authorized bank customer, reserves cannot go out.

41. [Govt's ethanol blending programme faces supply and pricing problem](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Govt's ethanol blending programme faces supply and pricing problem” published in **Business Standard** on 14th October 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment

Relevance: concerns associated with the ethanol blending processes

News: India has achieved ethanol blending of over 10 per cent till September 2022 and it has set a target to achieve 20 per cent ethanol blending by 2025.

There are two sources required for ethanol blending. They are – a) sugarcane-based and b) grain-based.

The present condition shows that the second source needs to be focused by the government.

What is the present situation of ethanol blending process?

In order to achieve the target of 20 per cent ethanol blending by 2025, India requires a production capacity of around 14.5 billion liters.

Around 3.33 billion liters of ethanol have been supplied in the current ethanol supply year (December 2021-November 2022).

Out of these, the sugar industry has contributed 2.87 billion liters (almost 86 per cent) and the rest has been contributed by grain-based distilleries.

Therefore, there is a need to increase ethanol production from grain to meet targets.

What are the challenges being faced by the grain-based ethanol production?

Sourcing rice husk to run their boilers has been a challenge because of the rising demands is putting pressure on rice husk prices. The price of rice husk has increased from around Rs 3.5 to almost Rs 10.5 a kg.

It is also expected that prices will further go up with the increased competition in the market because grain-based mills do not have any dedicated areas to source husk like sugarcanes.

Further, the **price of broken rice** has also shot up over the past year from Rs 15,000 to almost Rs 22,000 per tonne. Even the ban on the export of broken rice has not been very effective in controlling the price.

The price of maize has also jumped from Rs 15,000 to around Rs 22,000 a tonne. Broken rice and maize are the important components for ethanol production.

Moreover, an average grain-based distillery does not have option to get fix prices of raw material as the sugarcane industry has.

Further, there are **moral issues** also involved in diverting too much rice and maize for ethanol production as affordable food remains an issue in India.

What are the problems faced by the production of ethanol form biomass?

Ethanol produced from biomass is called 2G ethanol. It is called 2G ethanol because ethanol is produced from second-generation sources such as paddy stubble.

The government announced to set up 12 integrated 2G ethanol plants in 2018. However, even after four years only one plant has been constructed.

The high cost of the technology and convincing farmers are major challenges faced by State-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) that wish to produce 2G ethanol.

An investment of Rs 1,969.5 crore had been set aside for OMCs by the government under Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN (Jai Indhan-Vatavaran Anukool Fasal Awashesh Nivaran Yojana). Even this scheme is being re-evaluated.

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Moreover, PM Modi has launched the first 2G ethanol plant built by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) at an estimated cost of Rs 900 crore in Haryana's Panipat. The cost of setting up plant has risen due to the **high cost of the technology**. Further, the absence of suitable supply chains for bio-ethanol will increase challenges for its transportation to the plant.

There also challenges for **storing the raw biomass at 2G ethanol plants** without degradation. Therefore, there is a need that government should come up with proper solutions as ethanol production is important to reduce import bills from oils.

42. [Lessons from Maiden: Gambia deaths raise several questions](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Lessons from Maiden: Gambia deaths raise several questions**" published in **The Business Standard** on **14th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Industrial Policy

Relevance: issues associated with the pharma companies in India.

News: 66 children have died in the Gambia after drinking cough syrup manufactured by Maiden Pharmaceuticals.

The centre has decided to set up a four-member committee to investigate allegations against Maiden Pharmaceuticals.

It has raised questions about the regulatory systems that govern India's pharmaceutical industry.

What are the findings of the probe made by different organization?

Maiden Pharmaceuticals company had not been following the **Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)** prescribed under the Drugs and Cosmetic Rules.

According to the WHO, **two toxic contaminants, diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol** were found in cough syrups manufactured by the company. They may have caused acute kidney failure in the Gambian children.

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) probe found that the date of manufacture printed on the drug product predated the batch of manufacturing date.

What are other concerns?

The drugs manufactured by other big companies have also failed multiple US Food and Drug Administration inspections in the past. This raises threat not only for the overseas buyers but it is also threat for the domestic markets.

A study shows that **fake drugs are a booming business** in India accounting for a 25 per cent of the domestic medicine market. The study also says the Delhi-National Capital Region is the epicentre of this fake business.

Further, India is the world's fourth-largest producer of pharma products and one of the biggest exporters of generic drugs. These kinds of issues may damage the image of India worldwide.

Therefore, there is a need that proper inspection and regulatory mechanism should be carried out by the government in the pharma companies in India.

43. [Overtaxing online gaming will favour grey operators](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "**Overtaxing online gaming will favour grey operators**" published in the **mint** on **14th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy. GS2- Government policies

Relevance- Online entertainment platforms

News- **The article explains the repercussions of the proposed move to increase GST in the online gaming sector to 28% of the entire prize pool.**

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Online gaming industry is generating \$20 billion revenue and entertaining 200 million people. It is expected to reach \$25 billion by 2030.

What is the taxation structure for the online gaming industry?

Online gaming industry currently pays 18% GST on its revenues or platform fee intake for providing their platform. The platform fee intake is about 15% of the overall prize pool in the contest.

What will be the impacts of 28% GST on the entire prize pool?

It will make it impossible to achieve PM Modi's vision of India becoming a superpower.

It will lead to an increase in the effective tax burden. The tax will be almost twice of operator revenue.

It will give rise to grey market operators who will evade taxes. It is not possible for tax compliant operators to compete with them.

The industry may not find these things sustainable. Closure of industry will lead to job losses and tax revenues losses for the government.

Why is higher taxation being proposed?

It flows from the argument that games of skill are required to pay GST on the entire pool instead of tax revenue.

But the law states that the entire pool is taxable in the case of betting and gambling. Higher court judgments have established that games of skill do not constitute gambling.

Some people in the government and civil society organisations take it as a social evil.

What is the way forward?

Shutting down local industry is not the solution.

India can learn from western countries who are experienced in this field.

An industry-friendly, progressive policy is needed which focuses on consumer protection.

44. Indian Deep Tech and a case for a strategic fund

Source: The post is based on an article “Indian Deep Tech and a case for a strategic fund” published in **The Hindu** on **15th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Science and Technology

Relevance: concerns with the strategic technology and ways to tackle it

News: Government is making efforts for self-reliance in military technology, semiconductors and science-based businesses.

However, there are market concerns due to which private venture capital are not ready to invest and government spending will not be enough for the survival.

How funding has helped in other countries?

Government is the largest source of funds for Deep Tech in countries like the United States and Israel.

There are different agencies in these countries such as **Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)**, etc. through which huge funds flow into the small businesses.

But in India this bridge has not built yet due to the lack of funding.

What is the concern associated with the venture capitals to invest in the Deep Tech?

There are two problems that make investors cautious – a) **lack of understanding** of Deep Tech and b) **the profits from Deep Tech takes time** as it does not fit to standard 10-year fund return cycle.

Further, Deep Technology has dual use. For example, GPS is needed for Google Maps and it is also needed for fighter jet navigation and missile systems.

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Therefore, it is not wise to burden the commercial industry alone for the strategic technology. Government should also come up with proper solutions.

What steps can government take to increase investments in the strategic technologies?

The government of India is trying to pool funds from various missions such as Semiconductor Mission, iDEX and TDF schemes. However, this would not be the apt solution for sustenance of Deep Tech.

Therefore, innovations in the corporate social responsibility (CSR) budgets and high net worth (HNI) tax breaks will induce capital flowing into strategic tech.

CSR: According to some estimates the annual CSR budget is rupees 15000 crore and some of the amount of this budget is unutilized. These unutilized CSR can be diverted from the social sector to the development of strategic technology.

Therefore, effort is required from the government and large corporations to invest in certain strategic tech startups.

HNIs: HNIs can also be offered tax incentives to make equity investment in the critical technology startups. This will provide a solution for high risk involved in the funding and replace the fear of lower short-term returns.

However, there are concerns with the misuse of funds.

How can government prevent the misuse of funds?

6. a) Investment should be limited only to Government of India-recognized startups, b) Startups should have funding or 'acceptance of necessity' granted from the Indian military/Ministry of Defense.

Therefore, if proper steps are taken by the government, then CSR funds and the right tax incentives to HNIs can create self-reliance in the Indian Deep Tech ecosystem.

45. Through a 40-year prism: India's record creditable, but not outstanding

Source: The post is based on an article "**Through a 40-year prism: India's record creditable, but not outstanding**" published in **Business Standard** on **15th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Economic Development

News: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has come up with World Economic Outlook (WEO) report 2022.

What does the World Economic Outlook (WEO) report say?

Performance of India in the Previous Decades

The comparative economic growth of the report shows that four countries are the best performers for 2011-21 decade. Four countries are – **Bangladesh, China, Vietnam and India** from top to bottom.

China and Vietnam were also featured as the top performers for the previous decade.

Further, **India recorded best ever decadal growth performance in 2001-11**. But its growth was slower than all emerging markets and developing countries in that decade.

In the previous two decades, 1991-2001 and 1981-91 India performed better than the average emerging markets (EMs).

In terms of dollars, the Indian economy grew to 3.7 times its size in the 2001-11 decade but only to 1.7 times in the latest decade.

Further, the IMF report for four decades (1981-2021) highlights that only three countries (China, South Korea and Vietnam) did significantly better than India.

It also highlights that India has significantly increased its GDP – 1.1% (1981-91), 2.5% (2011), 3.3% (2021) and it is further expected to grow in the future.

Growth projections by the report

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The Indian economy is set to grow 6.8 per cent whereas all EMs are expected to grow only 3.7 per cent in 2022-23.

The growth for the advanced economies is expected to slow from 2.4 per cent to 1.1 per cent in the next year.

4 Asian Countries including India, are the candidates for international businesses looking to diversify their production bases away from China by following “China+1” strategy.

Therefore, these data by the IMF reflects India’s better position in the world even if the growth remain less than the expected for the year 2022-23.

46. [Smash hit – On DART mission](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Smash hit” published in **The Hindu** on **15th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Science and Technology

Relevance: benefits of DART mission

News: The article discusses about the success of the DART mission conducted by NASA and its uses.

What is the news?

NASA scientists for the first time have succeeded in altering the path of the asteroid by hitting the spacecraft into it.

The spacecraft DART (Double Asteroid Redirection Test) was aimed at asteroid Dimorphos which was orbiting a larger asteroid Didymos.

These two asteroids did not pose any threat for the planet earth and DART was a test mission to see the effectiveness of the technique (kinetic impactor) in altering the path of the asteroid by a desired amount.

After the collision of the spacecraft with the asteroid, NASA confirmed that it was able to change the path of the asteroid by a small amount.

Since all asteroids are not similar therefore there is a need for more tests to perfect this technique.

Further, the US is not alone in the mission and even China has also planned to deflect a 40 m wide asteroid by 2026.

Why is it necessary to develops this technique?

There is a need to develop this technique as even a small asteroid hitting the earth can have serious consequences to life on earth and climate change. An asteroid even about 100 m wide can destroy a city like Chennai.

However, it is not clear whether the kinetic impactor technique can be used to extract minerals from the asteroids by deflecting its path.

47. [Metaverse in India: The challenge of buying land and painting houses](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Metaverse in India: The challenge of buying land and painting houses**” published in the **Business Standard** on **15th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Technology

News- The article explains the challenges faced by metaverse in India.

Metaverse– It is a hypothetical iteration of the Internet as a single, universal and immersive virtual world that is facilitated by the use of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) headsets.

What are the applications of metaverse in India?

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Some companies are providing services to property developers and architects. It helps them to provide their prospective customers an experience of property even before it is ready.

Some are customising jewellerys, clothing and accessories on the metaverse for various brands. It helps these brands to customise products for customers.

The customers can not only own the physical copy of these personalised products but also convert and own these as non-fungible tokens. They can be traded also and redeemed for offline services.

What about technology involved in the metaverse?

Virtual Reality headsets are gradually becoming accessible for common people.

The hyperreality simulations can be accessed through web browser, mobile applications.

Besides the hardware cost, There is also acquisition cost of VR land in metaverse. The Cheapest parcels of land in public metaverses, like Ethereum Worlds range between \$2,500 and \$3,000.

There is additional cost of event setup and content development on the bought land.

Hosting an event in any of the public metaverses requires organisers to buy or rent land and then create the event experience. ExpoSim provides a single platform to rent space and host events across the multiple metaverses it owns without any tech development.

What are data requirements?

Data requirements for experiencing the events on metaverse is high. A low to standard resolution experience requires at least 25 Mbps for streaming. For resolutions comparable to HD TV, the requirement jumps to 80 to 100 Mbps. For 360-degree video experience as much as 600 Mbps speed is required.

Besides, data computing requirements for conducting events are high.

48. Do not ignore the role of woman livestock farmer

Source– The post is based on the article “**Do not ignore the role of woman livestock farmer**” published in **The Hindu** on **15th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Agriculture

Relevance– Feminisation of agriculture

News- The article explains the challenges faced by women in livestock farming.

Livestock sector accounts for 5% of national income and 28% of agricultural GDP in 2018-19. In the last six years, the livestock sector grew at 7.9% while crop farming grew by 2%.

There were five million women members in dairy co-operatives in 2015-16 and it increased further to 5.4 million in 2020-21. Women accounted for 31% of all members of dairy producer cooperatives in 2020-21. Women’s dairy cooperative societies rose from 18,954 in 2012 to 32,092 in 2015-16.

What are issues related to women livestock farmers?

Issues with data collection– Conventional labour force surveys fail to accurately estimate women work in the livestock sector. Their work is sporadic in nature and they often undertake work for short spells.

Underestimation of women livestock farmers– According to estimates of **employment and unemployment survey of 2011-12**, 12 million women were engaged in livestock farming. But, women actually engaged in the livestock economy were four times the official estimate.

India’s first **national Time Use Survey in 2019** corroborates this finding. By recording all activities done in the past 24 hours, 48 million women in rural areas were engaged in animal rearing. The **National Livestock Policy of 2013** rightly states that around 70% of the labour for the livestock sector comes from women.

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Other core issues– The reach of extension services to women livestock farmers remains low. According to official reports, 80,000 livestock farmers were trained across the country in 2021. But we have no idea how many were women farmers.

Women farmers found it difficult to avail loans without collateral to purchase livestock. Around 15 lakh new Kisan Credit Cards were provided to livestock farmers under the KCC scheme during 2020-22. There is no information on how many of them were women farmers.

women livestock farmers lacked technical knowledge on choice of animals and veterinary care. Women were not aware of the composition and functions of dairy boards. Men were decision-makers even in women-only dairy cooperatives.

49. [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

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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 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.

50. 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.

51. [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.

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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.

52. [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 **17th 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.

53. [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 **17th 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.

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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.

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.

54. [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.

55. [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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56. [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.

57. [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).

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.

58. [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 **18th 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).

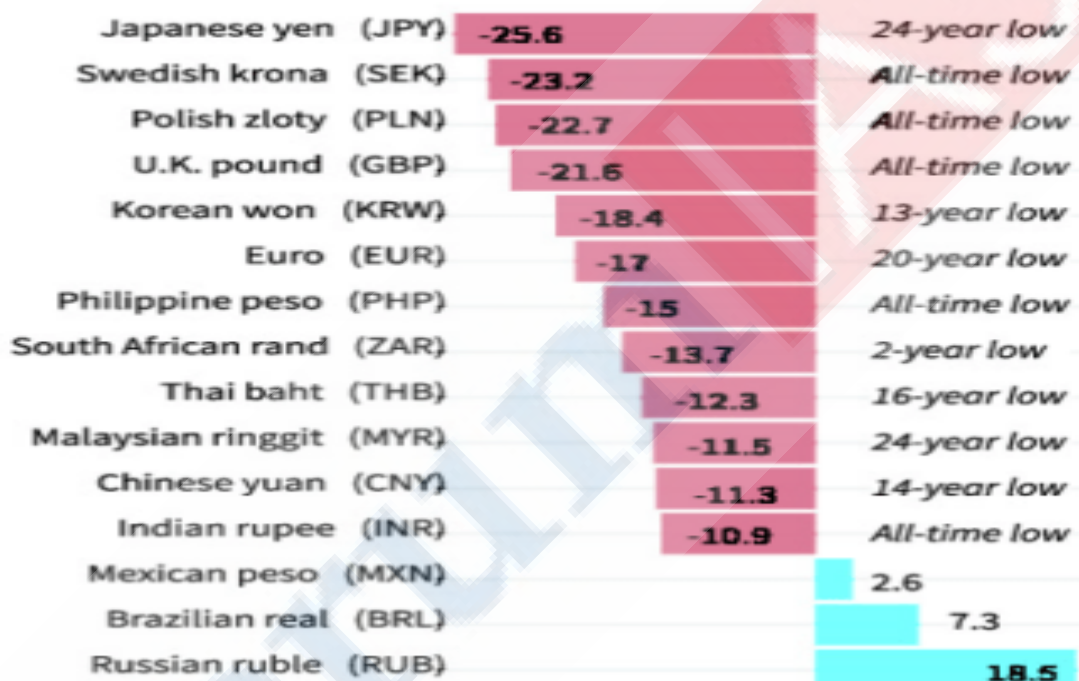
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Therefore, India's foreign reserves dropped as foreign investment decreased.

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



59. [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 18th 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.

[60. 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 **19th 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.

61. [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.

62. [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.

63. 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.

64. 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

65. [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 **20th 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.

66. [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 **20th 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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67. 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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68. [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.

69. [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](#)

70. [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.

[71. 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 CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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 CO₂ from the atmosphere?

Countries are developing new technology to capture CO₂ emitted from industries or from the air. The technology will break down and convert the CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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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72. [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.

73. [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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74. [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.

75. [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.

76. 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.

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.

77. [A renewable energy revolution, rooted in agriculture](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**A renewable energy revolution, rooted in agriculture**” published in **The Hindu** on **26th October 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Environment**

Relevance: **efforts needed to tackle stubble burning**

News: A private company has established first bio-energy plant in Sangrur district of Punjab. The plant will produce **Compressed Bio Gas (CBG)** from paddy straw.

This will eventually provide the solution to stubble burning in Punjab and will convert agricultural waste into useful products.

The government has also taken various steps to tackle stubble burning.

What are the efforts taken by the government to tackle stubble burning?

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) had developed a framework for the effective prevention and control of stubble burning.

The framework includes both in-situ and ex-situ crop management.

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In-situ management includes mixing paddy straw and stubble in the soil using heavy machinery. This machinery is subsidized and supported by crop residue management (CRM) Scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

Ex-situ CRM efforts include the use of paddy straw for biomass power projects and burning in thermal power plants, as feedstock for 2G ethanol plants, feed stock in CBG plants, fuel in industrial boilers, etc.

Further measures are also taken to ban stubble burning, monitor it and generate awareness. However, the measures have been not enough to tackle the burning issues and crop residue burning is spreading even to rabi crops and the rest of the country.

What were the recommendations of FAO?

Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) suggested to develop a crop residue supply chain in Punjab that can allow the collection, storage and final use of rice straw for other productive services.

This would reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by about 9.7 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent and around 66,000 tonnes of PM_{2.5}.

Further, farmers can expect to earn between ₹550 and ₹1,500 per ton of rice straw sold depending on market conditions.

A techno-economic assessment of energy technologies suggested that rice straw can be cost-effective for producing CBG and pellets.

These pellets can be used in thermal power plants as a substitute of coal and CBG as a transport fuel.

What is the target set under SATAT scheme?

The Government of India has set a 5% CBG production target under Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) scheme. This target can be achieved with 30% of rice straw produced in Panjab.

The plant setup by Verbio India Private Limited in Punjab will use one lakh tonnes of paddy straw produced from approximately 16,000 hectares of paddy fields.

This will reduce up to 1.5 lakh tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year and also provide employment opportunities in Punjab.

What are the benefits of SATAT scheme?

It will increase local entrepreneurship, increase farmers' income and reduce open burning of rice straw.

The paddy straw from one acre of crop can yield energy output (CBG) worth more than ₹17,000. It is an extra 30% income for a farmer.

The fermented organic manure from the plant (CBG) will be useful as compost to replenish soils heavily depleted of organic matter and b) reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers.

Therefore, this initiative is an example of a 'wealth from waste' approach and circular economy.

78. Indian sugarcane fields could yield a flex-fuel bonanza

Source: The post is based on an article "**Indian sugarcane fields could yield a flex-fuel bonanza**" published in **Live Mint** on **26th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment

Relevance: benefits of ethanol blending

News: The article discusses the benefits of ethanol blending in Brazil and measures that need to be adopted by India for ethanol blending fuel.

Ethanol blended petrol was first used in Brazil after the deployment of flex-fuel technology. Today, around 93% of the vehicles in Brazil are capable of running on ethanol.

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What are the benefits of ethanol blending and how has it benefited Brazil?

Ethanol emits between 44% and 52% less greenhouse gas emissions as compared to petrol. So, when it is combined with petrol it significantly reduces the CO₂ emissions of a vehicle. Whereas, even new technologies like Electric Vehicles require power for charging batteries, i.e. fossil fuel-based power plants.

The ethanol blending has helped Brazil in reducing contribution of CO₂ equivalents into the atmosphere.

Further, ethanol production in Brazil is highly efficient and most facilities use residual waste from the process (bagasse) for power.

In 2020, around 5% of the total power consumption of the country was met by bio-electricity generated from bagasse.

How ethanol is produced in Brazil and what are requirements to produce ethanol?

Brazilian ethanol is produced from sugarcane. It is one of the world's leading producers of sugar ethanol and one of the world's largest producers of sugarcane.

The ethanol produced from sugarcane in Brazil has a much higher energy balance than corn-based ethanol produced by the US.

Further, very few other countries can produce sugar ethanol because sugarcane needs to be converted into ethanol within 24 hours of harvesting else it spoils.

Therefore, all sugar ethanol production plants have to be located in the centre of the fields from which they get their raw material.

So, looking at the requirements to produce ethanol, India stands at the position to produce sugar-based ethanol blending.

How India can produce ethanol?

India is a major sugarcane producer like Brazil and it is one of the very few countries in the world that can adapt its fuel supply to incorporate ethanol.

Therefore, India needs to adopt production technique like Brazil and mandate that all internal combustion engine vehicles be redesigned to **incorporate flex-fuel technology** to use ethanol blended fuel.

This will eventually help India to reduce CO₂ emissions and help achieve India to fulfil its environmental targets.

What should be done?

India's Union minister for transport Nitin Gadkari launched the country's first flex-fuel car that was capable of running on petrol, ethanol or any mixture of the two. However, ethanol is not a complete solution to the climate challenges of the world but it is a great step towards achieving a sustainable future.

You have missed this point: [\[AS1\]](#)

as much as EVs are themselves zero emission, as long as the batteries they use are charged using electricity from the power grid, their net carbon impact is still high because a significant proportion of our power plants use fossil fuel for generation.

79. [Not a pre-election Budget, please!](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "Not a pre-election Budget, please!" published in **Business Standard** on **26th October 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Economic Development**

Relevance: measures to tackle fiscal deficit

News: The finance Ministry has started preparing the Union Budget for 2023-24. It would be presented on February 1, 2023.

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This budget will be a last full Budget of the present government in its second term. Therefore, the budget is expected to be a pre-election budget. It means it may include promises for spending to attract voters.

However, government should not make it a pre-election budget as these spending further increases burden on the government.

Instead, the budget of 2023 should focus on fiscal consolidation.

Why is there a need for fiscal consolidation?

The Union Finance Minister had set for the Centre a fiscal reduction plan to be achieved over a longer period.

Fifteenth Finance Commission has also recommended states to reduce its fiscal deficit.

Accordingly, the Centre's fiscal deficit is set to be brought down to 4.5 per cent by 2025-26 while the states should bring theirs down to 3 per cent by 2023-24.

As per revised estimated for 2021-22, the combined fiscal deficits of 18 major states would be about 3.4 per cent and is expected to decline to only 3.3 per cent in 2022-23.

Therefore, achieving 3 per cent fiscal deficit target for the states in 2023-24 looks difficult.

The Centre has brought down its fiscal deficit from 9.2 per cent of GDP in 2020-21 to 6.7 per cent in 2021-22 and is likely to bring it down to 6.4 per cent in 2022-23. However, reducing its fiscal deficit to the set target of 4.5 per cent would be difficult if finance ministry treats the budget for 2023-24 as a pre-election exercise.

Further, fiscal consolidation is also necessary to face the emerging global economic challenges, check the rising inflation along with depletion of forex reserves.

Therefore, ensuring financial stability through fiscal consolidation should be the goal rather than achieving higher growth through increased spending.

80. A rate-and-rupee strategy could restore India external balances

Source– The post is based on the article “A rate-and-rupee strategy could restore India external balances” published in the **mint** on **26th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy

News- The article explains the current macroeconomic scenario in the country. It talks about the policy response to improve the external balances.

What is the situation of external macroeconomics indicators?

Foreign exchange reserves are \$533 billion.

The Rupee has weakened by 4.5% against the US Dollar since September.

Trade and current account deficit are widening. CAD is likely to be 5% of GDP in the quarter ending September.

External balances are facing pressures from higher commodity prices, high inflation, monetary policy tightening across the world.

What is the internal economic scenario?

Investment scenario is weak. Some investment indicators are rising. It does not signal rising capital expenditure. It is mostly replacement capital expenditure from the pandemic period.

Saving rates have fallen. It has contributed to widening CAD. Higher public sector borrowing, lower household saving and lower bank deposits are responsible for low saving rates.

What can be the policy repose?

Policy rate hikes– It may check the inflation, incentive saving and discourage the household borrowings. But it could slow down income growth.

Increase public savings– It can lead to expenditure cuts. It will be negative for GDP growth and income.

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Currency depreciation– It will make exports more competitive, imports more expensive and lower trade deficit.

A combination of higher interest rates and weaker Rupee is the optimal response. In September RBI moved to a two-pronged strategy of higher rates and weaker Rupee.

But there are challenges to this path. Real deposit rates are negative and trade weighted REER has not weakened since May this year.

81. [Corporate insolvency: Rethinking irregular transactions](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Corporate insolvency: Rethinking irregular transactions**” published in the **Business Standard** on **26th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy

Relevance– Insolvency process

News- The article explains the impact of recent SC judgement on insolvency process.

In **Anuj Jain Vs Axis Bank Ltd**, the Supreme Court (SC) upheld the recovery of 758 acres of land valued at over Rs 5,300 crore lost through irregular transactions.

Till June this year, 786 applications have been filed to claw back Rs 2,21,104 crore allegedly lost through irregular transactions by firms undergoing the corporate insolvency resolution process.

Which are irregular transactions identified by IBC Code, 2016?

The first set is known as **avoidance transactions**. It comprises preferential transactions, undervalued transactions and extortionate transactions. **The Code mandates the liquidation process to disregard these transactions.**

The second set is known as **fraudulent transactions**. It comprises fraudulent trading or wrongful trading. **The Code requires the liquidation process to recover the loss made through these transactions.**

How reversing of avoidance transactions may promote the objectives of the Code?

Reversing avoidance transactions may be a key source of additional value in corporate insolvency over and above the existing assets of the firm.

It maximises the value of the assets of the firm. If it is not possible to get away with avoidance transactions with impunity, no one would resort to such opportunistic behaviour. The possibility of the firm getting into stress is minimised.

The code requires resolution plans to consider the order of priority for distribution of liquidation proceeds. If someone resorts to avoidance transactions, a junior stakeholder may take precedence over a senior stakeholder. It creates a disincentive for avoidance transactions.

The insolvency code also **makes the directors of the firm liable for the loss** to creditors that arise from the time when a director knew or ought to have known that there was no reasonable prospect of avoiding CIRP. It incentivises the firm as well as directors to seek resolution in the early days of stress when the possibility of rescue is higher.

A Sizable amount has been lost by firms through irregular transactions. IBBI newsletter for December 2021 quarter, indicates that firms going through CIRP have lost at least 10% of claims admitted against them through irregular transactions during the lookback period.

Resolution processes are likely to result in liquidations of firms where relatively more value has been lost through irregular transactions. Avoiding irregular transactions will avoid the liquidation of firms and keep them alive.

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82. [Ending dominance](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Ending dominance**” published in **The Hindu** on **26th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Technology. GS2- Regulatory bodies

Relevance– Regulation of digital ecosystem

News- Recently, an order was passed by **Competition Commission of India** against use of anti-competitive practices by Google to maintain its dominance.

What are the main observations of the order?

It imposed a penalty of 1337 crore on Google for abusing its dominant position in the Android mobile device market.

It criticised Google for restrictive clauses in its agreement with original equipment manufacturers.

The court observed that through these agreements Google ensured that users continue to use its search services on mobile devices. It is against the competition in the market.

The regulator directed to Google that it can not force original equipment manufacturers to choose from its app for installation on their devices. Installing them can not be a precondition for licensing of its Play Store.

Users can not be restricted from uninstalling its pre-installed apps.

83. [The overvalued rupee: Managing exchange rate volatility and forex reserves](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The overvalued rupee: Managing exchange rate volatility and forex reserves**” published in the **Business Standard** on **27th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy

Relevance– External economy

News- The article explains the need for higher foreign reserves for India.

What factors explain the need for higher foreign reserves?

To prevent any sharp appreciation/depreciation of the rupee to provide a stable environment for domestic and foreign investment.

India should be prepared **for economy-wide shocks such as the Covid-19 epidemic** and unusual interest rate and fiscal decisions of central banks and governments of large economies. This in turn means that India should have enough stock of foreign reserves.

The **overvaluation of the rupee** has been driven by the interests of Indian importers, people who remit forex abroad and Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs). The INR tends to become overvalued due to higher domestic nominal interest rates. It is the reason enough to let the rupee slide by gradual accumulation of dollars whenever there were opportunities.

Total factor productivity in India had to be much higher than in the US or western Europe if the INR were not to depreciate. The reason is higher nominal interest rates in INR debt instruments compared to the lower interest rates in G7 currencies.

Interest rates by central banks of major economies have been raised.

The US dollar is appreciating against all other major currencies.

Why US dollar has gained importance?

The US government is looking with suspicion at countries which have sustained a current account surplus of 2%. It is against the excessive accumulation of foreign reserves in dollars by central banks. India is also in a list of potential currency manipulators.

Dollar is likely to be the dominant reserve currency for at least another 10 years. It should be given a dominant weighting in estimating the six-currency real effective exchange rate (REER) of the rupee against the dollar, euro, pound sterling, yen, and China’s renminbi.

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What should be potential forex in future?

Moody's rating for India is Baa3, which is just about investment grade. The current account deficit projection for 2022-23 is around 3.5% of GDP.

Indian consumer price inflation was at 7.4% in September 2022.

Brent crude oil price per barrel was at \$93 on October 25. It may persist around this level till uncertainties related to the conflict in Ukraine persist.

India's short-term debt, with residual maturity of less than one year, was \$267.7 billion at the end of March 2022.

All things considered, it would be prudent for India to raise its FX reserves to at least \$700 billion by December 2024.

84. [The climate crisis and the urgent need for global cooperation](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“The climate crisis and the urgent need for global cooperation”** published in **The Indian Express** on **27th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

News- The article explains steps taken by the EU to fight climate change. It also suggests solutions to fight climate change.

Global warming is fast approaching the 1.5 degrees level.

It is causing degraded ecosystems, disappearing forests, collapsing glaciers, heatwaves and floods.

What are the actions taken by the EU to fight climate change?

It has set the goal of cutting emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and reaching climate neutrality by 2050.

It is ensuring affordable and clean energy through green deal.

The EU had to postpone some of the decommissioning of coal-fired power plants as a temporary emergency measure due to the Ukraine crisis. But climate commitments for 2030 and 2050 are not endangered.

The EU continues to be the world's biggest donor of climate finance. It is providing almost \$28 billion in 2020.

What should be the way forward to tackle climate change?

We have to change the paradigm of our economic models.

At the COP27 climate conference in November 2022, the international community and each country individually must set out what it has done and intends to do to limit the increase of global temperature to 1.5 degrees.

There is a need for global cooperation. We have to accelerate mitigation measures. Mitigation and adaptation must go hand in hand. Success must be demonstrated through actual and effective implementation.

How India and EU are cooperating to tackle climate change?

The EU and its Member States are working together with India on energy efficiency, renewable energy, smart grids and storage, green hydrogen, e-mobility and decarbonisation.

The EU has also strengthened its engagement with the India-based International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

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85. Why producing CBG, LBG, hydrogen, methanol from biogas can be beneficial

Source: The post is based on an article “**Why producing CBG, LBG, hydrogen, methanol from biogas can be beneficial**” published in **DTE** on **19th October 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Environment**

Relevance: Biogas and its various applications.

News: With the advancement in research and the tremendous urge to shift to greener fuels, biogas came back into the picture to supplement the rising global energy demand.

What is Biogas?

Biogas is a renewable fuel produced using the anaerobic digestion process from the organic feedstock. It is primarily composed of methane (50-65%), carbon dioxide (30-40%), hydrogen sulfide (1-2.5%) and a very small fraction of moisture.

What are the subsidiary sustainable transportation fuels one can obtain from biogas?

Biogas can be converted to produce numerous sustainable transportation fuels.

Methane

The removal of unwanted components like carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulphide and moisture from raw biogas yields pure methane (over 97% content). Some of the common methods to purify biogas include water scrubbing, membrane separation, pressure swing adsorption and adsorption.

Compressed biogas (CBG)

Upgraded or high-purity biogas compressed at 250 bar pressure results in a fuel called compressed biogas (CBG). This has properties similar to compressed natural gas (CNG) and could be directly used to power CNG engines.

However, CBG is considered more suitable to power small-sized vehicles, though heavy engines have been used for short-distance driving.

Liquefied biogas (LBG)

It is obtained by liquefying the biogas-derived methane by cooling it at -162 degrees Celsius. It has a higher energy density that lowers the storage space requirements of CBG.

At atmospheric pressure, the energy density of liquid methane is roughly 600 times more than that of gaseous methane and 2.5 times greater than that of methane at 250 bar.

Advantages of LBG: a) LBG has become a viable alternative fuel for heavy-duty road transportation since it has a comparatively high energy density (1 litre of LBG against 2.4 litres of CBG), low sulphur content and lower life cycle greenhouse gas emissions than diesel.

Read more: [Biogas: A sustainable solution for curbing pollution, improving livelihoods & enhancing quality of life](#)

Hydrogen

Gasification of biogas is performed by limiting the amount of oxygen and steam present in the reaction and heating the bio-methane to high temperatures (usually over 600°C). As a result of this process, Syngas a mixture of hydrogen and carbon monoxide is created. The hydrogen produced after the removal of carbon monoxide could be used in fuel cells to generate power.

Methanol

Direct methanol production from biogas is done through methanotrophy or partial oxidation. Methanol is an effective fuel with an octane rating of 100. It emits less particulate matter and NO_x than gasoline and doesn't produce SO_x because it doesn't contain sulphur.

Methanol is more affordable than LNG or marine oils with virtually no SO_x or NO_x emissions.

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How India is promoting biogas?

CBG is the only transportation fuel from biogas for which commercialisation efforts have been made. The government has been encouraging private businesses to set up CBG plants and provide CBG to oil marketing companies for sale as automotive and industrial fuels under the [Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation \(SATAT\) scheme](#).

The scheme has set a goal to produce 15 million tonnes of CBG from 5,000 plants by 2023–24.

What are the challenges in promoting biogas in India?

Currently, **LBG, hydrogen and methanol are not produced** from biogas in India. This is because,

a) CBG exists in the gaseous form. So, it demands bigger volumes for transportation, **b) Unavailability of biogas in bulk for such derivatives,** **c) There is an absence of infrastructure to generate and market these fuels,** **d) There is a deficiency of modified automobile engines in India,** **e) There is a lack of effective research and development push to improve process economics.**

Overall renewable sources like biogas could be used to produce numerous fuels but their potential still remains untapped.

86. [What the new UN climate report reveals](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

“What the new UN climate report reveals” published in **The Indian Express** on **28th October 2022**.

“The planet is counting on us to keep it liveable” published in **The Indian Express** on **28th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Climate change

Relevance: About the recent UN climate report and its impacts.

News: A new United Nations report warns that the efforts to limit global temperature rise are badly falling short of what’s needed to save the planet. The UN report comes less than two weeks before global climate diplomats will assemble at Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt for the UNFCCC’s COP-27.

What are the key highlights of the UN climate report?

An improvement over past performance: The national global warming mitigation targets will increase emissions by 10.6 per cent by 2030, compared to 2010 levels. This is an improvement over last year’s assessment, which projected that emissions in 2030 will rise by nearly 14 per cent over 2010 levels.

Emissions are not likely to increase after 2030: Annual emissions of countries are yet to peak and the IPCC can’t expect a dip until the end of this decade. Further, current commitments of the countries also point to an increase of 10.6% in emissions by 2030 from their level of 2010.

Cumulative climate ambition not enough: Even if countries keep their pledges to slash greenhouse gas emissions made under the Paris Agreement, the world will still be on track for a rise of around 2.5° Celsius (not 1.5° Celsius) by the end of this century.

The report also mentioned that at least 1.1° Celsius of it has already happened. Even after 2030, the emissions curve would have taken far too long to bend.

What is the status of climate change at present?

A recent study by the World Meteorological Organization found, atmospheric levels of the three worst gases—**carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide**—reached record highs in 2021.

So, missing even the outer UN target of a 2° warming cap would set us up for catastrophic weather disruptions, from droughts and heat waves to freak storms and punishing floods, with large swathes of planet Earth turning unliveable and numerous species pushed into extinction.

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The most vulnerable sections of the population would be the hardest hit, despite having had almost no role in climate change.

Must read: [LIFE, or Lifestyle for Environment brings a fresh and much-needed perspective to tackle climate change.](#)

How vulnerable is the Indian subcontinent to climate change?

In India, heat waves have damaged essential food crops even as rainfall patterns turn unstable. If the scale of destruction from this year's floods in Pakistan—1,300 dead, 30 million displaced—will be a regular impact then the subcontinent may be an early casualty.

Why do countries neglect climate targets?

At the COP-27 in Glasgow last year, 194 countries agreed to upscale their Paris Pact targets. However, only 24 of them — including India — have updated their plans. This is because,

a) Raising climate ambition requires countries to take difficult decisions in diverse areas such as agriculture, forest management, transport, and urban planning. These issues relate to people's livelihoods and well-being and demand that policymakers balance sustainability with developmental goals.

b) Inadequate technology transfer from the developed world remains a persistent grouse of developing countries. There are fears that the ambitious targets of several countries could remain on paper if they are not matched by **adequate financing**.

Read more: [Impact of Climate Change on Monetary Policy – Explained, pointwise](#)

What needs to be done to mitigate the climate threat?

Rich countries should give their share: In 2009, wealthy nations said they would give \$100 billion a year by 2020 to help others out. But they have largely failed to provide.

However, considering the economic turbulence and the West is currently in a war, energy crisis and inflation issues the fund is not expected to be available sooner. What's needed is the political will to live up to our collective responsibility.

Transform the necessary things: The world needs to transform industrial, energy and transport systems. Further, the world needs to utilise technological advances.

The principles of equity and climate justice should be acknowledged in letter and spirit.

87. [GM crops – on approval to GM Mustard](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**That it has taken so long for India's farmers to plant a genetically modified food crop shows an approach that is neither scientific nor swadeshi**” published in **The Indian Express** and “**Keen as mustard: GM crops need quick regulatory okays, Indian farming & Indian science will hugely benefit**” in **The Times of India** on **28th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Technology

Relevance– Application of biotechnology

News- The article explains the need for commercial cultivation and seed production of GM mustard.

What are some facts about GM mustard?

The **Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee** has recommended the “environmental release” of the transgenic hybrid mustard DMH-11 for seed production and commercial cultivation. It contains three alien bacterial genes that enable hybridisation.

It would also be the first GM food crop after its original version that contains a single insect pest-resistant gene, released in 2002 and an improved double-gene product in 2006.

Why is there a need to approve GM Mustard for commercial cultivation?

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Multi-location field trials of DMH-11 have shown that its **average grain yield** is 2.4-3 tonnes per hectare. While the yield for the present best grain variety Varuna is 1.9-2.2 tonnes and the all-India average yield is 1.2-1.3 tonnes.

GEAC has approved not just the product but also the **hybridisation platform**. GM parent lines can be shared with others, including private seed companies. They can breed mustard hybrids giving higher yields than DMH-11 or possessing other traits such as better oil quality and disease resistance.

India imports about 60% of its edible oil. It was valued at \$19 billion last financial year. This level of **import dependency** undermines food security. For years, Indians have also been consuming imported GM soybean oil. Given these factors, GM mustard can be a better alternative.

What has been the experience of GM crops till now?

Bt cotton has increased the yields. It has turned India from an importer to the world's second largest exporter. ICAR study on the impact of Bt-cotton in Maharashtra has found that the average seed cotton yield increased after the adoption of GM technology. Also, no adverse outcomes have been reported from the consumption of its oil and seed cake fed to cattle over the last 20 years.

There's no scientific **evidence demonstrating the harmful effects** of any GM crop like maize, soyabean or mustard's cousin canola on human and animal health and environment.

GoI representatives told a parliamentary committee in 2017 that Indian regulators had assessed Bt-cotton, Bt-brinjal and GM mustard, and found them to be safe as feed to animals.

88. Preparing For Wars of Tomorrow – on advance weapons

Source– The post is based on the article **“Preparing For Wars of Tomorrow”** published in **The Times of India** on **28th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security

Relevance– Changing nature of warfare

News- The article explains the need for re-assessing war doctrines in context changing nature of warfare.

Why is there a need to re-assess war-fighting doctrines and techniques?

New Developments in Russia-Ukraine war like attacks on strategic infrastructure like the Nord Stream pipeline and the Kerch bridge, are emphasising the need to reassess.

Earlier military needs and doctrines were drivers of innovation. For example, the requirement of detecting aircraft led to development of radar.

Things have reversed now. Tech-driven products are coming first. Doctrines are re-aligned by assessing how these products fit into overall military capability.

Importance of drones has increased. The 21st century will witness the see-saw battle between drone and counter-drone systems. Military across the world are evolving doctrines that incorporate drone warfare.

Use of drones and cutting-edge technologies in the Ukraine conflict shows the changing character of war.

What should be the approach of the defence establishment?

Complex weapons systems take decades of R&D. Once introduced into service, they continue for three to four decades. The platforms now included should be relevant beyond 2050 and beyond. There is a need for a **transformative approach** with **dynamic interplay between doctrine and technology**.

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Primaevial nature of war has not changed. There is **centricity of land** in all formulations. Technology cannot supplant the boots on ground. Sovereignty and integrity of territory can only be achieved by physical presence of troops.

89. [Should governments sell liquor and run lotteries?](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Should governments sell liquor and run lotteries?**” published in **The Hindu** on **28th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy GS2- Government policies and interventions

Relevance– Government intervention in market

News- The article explains the government involvement in selling of sin goods.

What are different viewpoints about the role of states in the sale of sin goods?

Government should not be in sin business. **The role of the state is to provide public goods.** The consumption of sin goods is instead linked with ‘public bad’. The negative effects of these sin goods disproportionately impact the weaker sections of society.

Role of the state needs to be considered not just from the supply side, but from the demand side as well. **The rising demand for alcohol is a public health concern.**

The state can **play a positive role in regulating the sale and consumption of sin goods.** An important instrument is taxes. Studies have shown that raising the tax rates on sin goods will discourage people from consuming them. The taxes collected can be used for development programmes.

What is the reason behind the state government’s involvement in selling sin goods?

State’s involvement in sin goods has been motivated by the desire **to raise revenue.** Revenue-maximising objective takes precedence over public interest.

But this situation must be viewed against the larger context of Centre-State financial resources and responsibilities. In 2019-20, tax collected by states accounted for only 43.5% of the total revenues of all States and Union Territories combined.

State governments are heavily **dependent on the financial devolutions** from the Centre. They also have a greater responsibility for expenditure on social sectors. With the introduction of GST, there are only a limited number of goods and services, mainly alcohol and petroleum products on which the State governments can independently set tax rates.

What are the impacts of state monopoly in sin goods?

When there is government monopoly and the intention is to restrict supply, it leads to increase in Prices. Quality products are also discouraged.

When liquor is privatised prices come down . But they don’t not come down by much because price also depends on other factors such as indirect controls like licensing policies and taxes and consumer demand.

What is the role of special interest groups in the case of sin goods?

Role of special interest groups needs to be considered. Legislators, politicians, bureaucrats, regulators, experts in the enforcement side each of them has their own interests. Like in the case of toddy, you could have special interest groups coming together in a way that goes against true public interest.

The concerns of all stakeholders must be looked into while formulating policy interventions to restrict the consumption of sin goods. Consider the example of the tobacco industry. In 2017-18, it provided employment to 3.4 million Indians, 3 million of whom were women. We should provide alternative livelihood opportunities for those engaged in tobacco farming and processing along with measures to limit tobacco consumption.

What are the impacts of the government control over sin goods on poor people?

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There are limitations to using taxes or high prices as the only instrument to restrict the consumption of sin goods. If a person addicted to alcohol is unable to let go of that habit despite high prices, his household will suffer.

Sin tax may have an income effect on poor. They may shift to consumption of illicit liquor. So, it becomes important to deploy other instruments like public campaigns.

Is alcohol consumption becoming more socially acceptable?

There is an increase in consumption among women, and the middle and upper-middle classes. The rising aspiration of the middle class is behind the rise in alcohol consumption.

Cultural and religious norms are no longer as effective as they may have been earlier.

90. Why spectrum needs a change in approach

Source: The post is based on an article “Why spectrum needs a change in approach” published in **The Indian Express** on **29th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Growth and Development

News: The government has recently released the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022. It will replace the colonial era Indian Telegraph Act, 1885. The draft bill includes spectrum policy. The spectrum policy in India is not up to the mark and it has failed to provide meaningful connectivity to all citizens.

What draft Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022 say?

The bill aims to improve the **accessibility** of the spectrum and enhance its **benefits**. This will ensure better connectivity to all Indians and will help in reducing the **digital divides**.

The draft bill refers to the spectrum as a **public good** and an **inexhaustible resource**. However, spectrum being an inexhaustible resource has some technical limitation and its recent cost in auction has also raised concerns.

What are the concerns associated with spectrum?

The **cost of spectrum** is one of the major concerns.

Since 2010, the government has consistently used auctions for spectrum allocation and except the 2010 auction all other auctions saw a grim response from the buyer due to the high cost.

According to one estimate, at **7.6 per cent of the aggregate revenue** of the network operators, spectrum cost in India is amongst the most expensive in the world.

This impacts the investment in network upgradation and infrastructure of the network operators which finally result in poor quality services.

The recent auction of the spectrum was sold at **reserve price** due to bring down the cost of the spectrum but this also has issues.

There are chances of unsold spectrum due to the high reserve price which will affect the revenue of the government and in turn it will affect the quality and quantity of the services in certain areas.

Moreover, the licences and spectrum are assigned for specific service areas which are mostly identified by the state boundaries.

But the operators mostly focus on urban markets and the spectrum in remote areas remains unutilised due to a **lack of investment** in infrastructure by the network operators.

How does draft bill provide the solution to problems of spectrum?

The draft bill includes the provision on the spectrum such as **use it, share it, or lose it**. However, it needs innovative support to be successful.

The draft bill also provides solution to unsold spectrum by supplementing auctions by **administrative allocation**, and any other manner as may be prescribed by the government. Thus, ending the process of auction.

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What steps can be taken by the government?

First, Government should come up with a different approach towards bridging the digital divide between the rural and urban areas as the **cost to revenue ratio** is low in the rural areas.

Second, the unutilized spectrum of the licensed operators can be given to **local entrepreneurs** who are better in understanding the local needs. This will ensure better services along with development of local entrepreneurs.

Third, the government can explore innovative methods of spectrum access such as a **non-competitive licensing framework** for certain specific cases.

Fourth, the idea of niche operators providing services to telecom operators and manufacturers needs revival and spectrum should be combined with other infrastructure to enable better service delivery.

Fifth, the government should build an ecosystem that enables transparency in moving away from auction along with a reasonable price for operators and strict service obligations.

Sixth, there should be no unsold spectrum and niche operators should be encouraged to get involved in the auction.

91. [Desi dil, global lifesaver](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Desi dil, global lifesaver**” published in the **The Times of India** on **29th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Technology

Relevance– Technological advances in medical science in India

News- The article explains the project of developing artificial heart by IIT Kanpur.

What is the importance of the artificial heart being built by IIT Kanpur?

32% of global deaths are due to cardiovascular diseases.

Artificial heart is a **logical solution**. Earlier it was meant to be a bridge to heart transplant. But now there is no need for a transplant. Patients with artificial hearts are leading active life.

But it is not affordable. It cost around 1 crore rupee in India.

The artificial heart built by IIT Kanpur is the **cheapest and the most advanced**. It will be beneficial for the common man.

What is the model strategy by IIT Kanpur to develop this product?

A team of engineers from IIT Kanpur is executing the project.

The mentorship is provided by alumni having knowledge of building machines to support failing hearts.

Initial capital is being provided by the alumni. The future capital will come from government and private funding agencies.

Leading heart specialists from India with domain knowledge are acting as advisors to the project.

What are some facts related to the technological potential of our country?

We have made phenomenal progress in space and defence technology.

Vital healthcare equipment like MRIs, Ultrasounds and lasers are products of defence research.

Today platforms for defence and healthcare on software where we are undisputed leaders.

92. [CBIC seeks details on digital assets from India's top crypto bourses](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**CBIC seeks details on digital assets from India's top crypto bourses**” published in the **Business Standard** on **29th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance– Regulation of digital currencies

News- The article explains the taxation related provisions on cryptocurrencies.

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The CBIC wants to bring crypto assets within the ambit of GST. It is working on the definition and classification of the crypto asset class to determine taxability on the value of each transaction.

What is the rationale behind this move by CBIC?

Clarity on the value of these crypto products being traded and their mode of transaction would give a fair idea of how it could fit into the GST regime and tax rate applicable to them.

There are various interpretations by different authorities on the taxability and classification of various crypto transactions. These need to be harmonised.

What are some facts related to cryptocurrencies?

There are several types of tokens of all cryptocurrencies. The most common are **utility and payment tokens**.

These do not have their investment backed or guaranteed by regulation.

What is the government stand on cryptocurrencies?

India is yet to clear its stand on whether to ban or legalise digital tokens. The Reserve Bank of India has time and again said they are a threat to the nation's financial stability.

The government is pitching for **global cooperation** on regulating such assets.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has developed the **Crypto Asset Reporting Framework (CARF)**.

What are taxation provisions related to cryptocurrencies?

Currently 18% is levied on the service provided by crypto exchanges and is categorised as financial services.

The Centre has defined cryptocurrencies as **virtual digital assets** under the direct tax regime.

India's tax provisions define virtual digital assets as any information, code, number or token generated through cryptographic means or otherwise.

The government in this year's Budget imposed a 30% tax on income from crypto assets. There will be 1% tax deducted at source on payment of virtual assets of more than Rs 10,000 in a year.

93. At COP27, move the needle on climate action

Source– The post is based on the article “**At COP27, move the needle on climate action**” published in **The Hindu** on **29th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

Relevance– Climate change

News- The article explains the issues related to climate change. It suggests the way forward to the low carbon path.

What are the core issues related to fighting against climate change?

The climate action plans of countries are inadequate for reaching **carbon neutrality** by 2050.

Developed economies are not taking responsibility for their past emissions. They are not willing to extend financial help to developing economies.

There is still heavy burning of fossil fuels by the top five emitters — China, the United States, India, Russia, and Japan as well as Southeast Asian countries taken together.

What is the scenario with India and China?

Both India and China have high reliance on fossil fuels. In China, Coal and gas contribute 70% to energy production.

India has announced **net zero** for 2070 and China for 2070. This is not sufficient to fight climate change.

There is a need to advance their date for net zero to 2050.

What is the way forward?

There should be extensive use of markets to help shift the global economy to a **low-carbon path**.

Radical shift in countries adopting carbon pricing is needed. For example, significant **carbon tax** on the source of pollution.

It should reiterate the need for all countries to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies.

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For climate financing, something similar could be done to what was achieved during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rich countries raised vast amounts of financing during the crisis. Climate projects can be vastly scaled up by multilateral development banks, such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank.

Massive investment in clean energy is needed. Energy is responsible for three-fourth of GHG emissions in air.

94. [The UK or Korea: What is the ideal benchmark for the size of India's govts?](#)

Source: This post is based on the article **“The UK or Korea: What is the ideal benchmark for the size of India's govts?”** published in the **Business Standard** on **28th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Indian Economy

Relevance: About government expenditure and low taxes.

News: The last UK PM has given the “low taxes, high growth” framework a bad name. This shows that there is no clear relationship between income-tax rates and economic growth. However, lower taxes might result in smaller welfare budgets (such as a lower health service budget) which will reduce the popularity of the existing government.

What is the average tax rate of global economies?

In general, the advanced economies have higher tax rates than the rising economies of East Asia, where tax rates peak around the 35 per cent level. This is because of their ambitious welfare programmes. Britain's peak income-tax rate of 45 per cent is not very different from the average for the euro area.

Among the advanced economies (leaving out places like Singapore), only Canada has a markedly lower peak rate (33 per cent). The higher-income countries in East Asia (South Korea and Taiwan) have peak rates closer to the euro average.

What is the government expenditure status of middle-income economies?

Rising economies without comparable social-safety nets have smaller government expenditure in relation to GDP. The successful middle-income economies of East Asia tends to have smaller budgets and lower levels of a deficit than other economies.

Even the super-successful South Korea has government expenditure that is equal to only a quarter of GDP (for instance, France has it over 60 per cent), and a deficit of just 2.8 per cent. Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam reflect broadly the South Korean example.

What is the government expenditure status of India?

India's government expenditure is about a third of GDP, with much higher deficits (about 10 per cent for the Centre and states combined). South Korea's debt is less than half its GDP, whereas for India it is over 85 per cent.

India's government sector is large, relative to GDP when compared to East Asia (excluding Japan and China). Yet, India has poor-quality public services in every direction and under-spending on defence.

What India needs to do?

Some of the most problem-ridden middle-income economies have big governments, big deficits, high levels of debt, and large-scale corruption. Two prominent examples are Brazil and South Africa. So, India has to avoid that path.

The finance ministry or NITI Aayog must look into ways to improve and expand services, save money, provide more roles to private sector, and others.