



9 PM

Compilation

21st to 26th November, 2022

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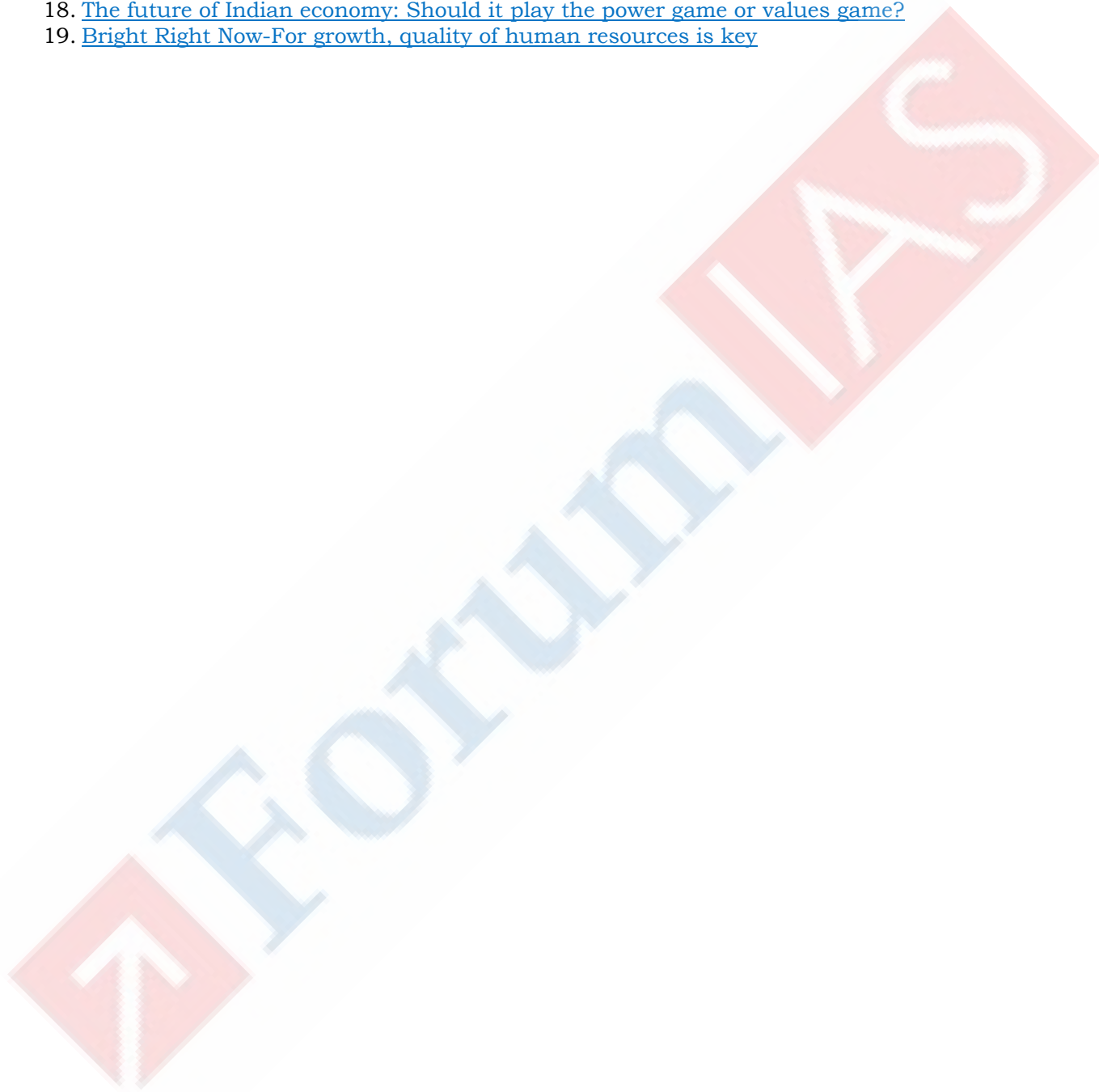
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General

Studies

Paper – 1

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General Studies - 1

1. [China, India population: Implications of slowing dragon, racing elephant](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**China, India population: Implications of slowing dragon, racing elephant**” published in **The Indian Express** on **22nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1 – Population

News: China will for the first time register an absolute decline in its population in 2022 whereas India’s population is expected to surpass China in 2023.

What are the factors responsible for change in the population?

There are two main factors – **Mortality rate and Fertility rate**.

Reduction in mortality rate leads to a rising population whereas a decline in fertility rate slows down population growth.

Mortality rate has fallen due to increased education levels, public health and vaccination programs, access to food and medical care, and provision of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in both nations.

The **Crude Death Rate (CDR)** has fallen from double digit to single digit for both countries and in 2020 it was 7.3-7.4 for both nations. **Life expectancy** at birth has also increased for both nations.

However, the **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** has fallen for India in the last three decades (**Chart 1**). It came down from 3.4 to 2 between 1993-93 and 2019-21. It implies that India has reached **replacement-level fertility**.

A TFR 2.1 is considered as replacement-level fertility. It means that two new lives are born to replace parents. However, India’s population is still increasing despite the low level of TFR.

Why is the population still increasing?

It is because in order to reduce population growth, the TFR should be **below replacement level** which is not the case with India.

For Example, China’s TFR fell below replacement first in 1991 and it took over 30 years for below-replacement fertility rates to translate into negative population growth.

How is population decline a concern for China and increasing population advantage for India?

China

China’s declining population became a cause of concerns due to the **decline in the working age population**. China officially ended its one-child policy from 2016.

The working age population is useful for **economic growth** but a fall in the working age population results in less labour force required to look after the aging population with low economic growth.

India

India has just begun seeing fertility rates fall to replacement levels including in rural areas. India will achieve **below replacement level** of growth about 40 years from now even though it is seeing decline in fertility rate.

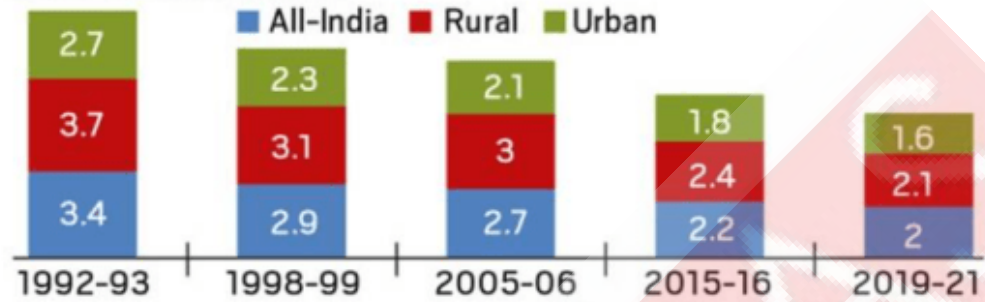
The share of the **working age population** is expected to peak in the mid-2030s. Therefore, India has an opportunity in the coming years to utilise its **demographic dividend** like China did from the late 1980s until up to 2015.

However, **creating jobs** that promote growth outside agriculture will remain a challenge for India as agriculture accounts for a large workforce in India (**Chart 3**).

Therefore, India needs to create job opportunities in manufacturing and modern services that employ its workforce and benefit its economic growth.

CHART-1

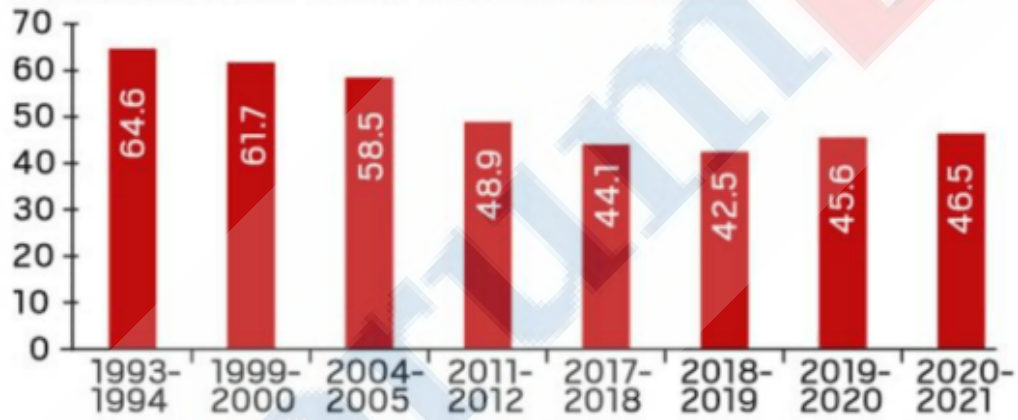
TOTAL FERTILITY RATE



Source: National Family Health Surveys

CHART-3

PERCENT SHARE OF WORKFORCE IN AGRICULTURE



Source: Employment & Unemployment and Periodic Labour Force Surveys

General Studies Paper – 2

General Studies - 2

1. [A place for all refugees under India's welfare umbrella](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**A place for all refugees under India's welfare umbrella**” published in **The Hindu** on **20th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Mechanisms for protection of vulnerable sections. GS2- International relations

Relevance: Protection of women refugees

News- The article explains the need for protection of women refugees especially in the context of India. It also explains the steps taken by India for women empowerment and protection.

Why is there a need for global protection for women?

There is global increase in reported domestic violence, child marriage, trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse.

The coup in Myanmar, a Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have each underscored the fact that women bear a disproportionate burden in conflict, COVID-19 has further exacerbated the situation. Important markers in **gender equality** and the protection of civilians have been reversed in many countries.

What are initiatives by India for women empowerment?

Indian women received universal suffrage during India's independence in 1947. During the drafting of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, India was instrumental in ensuring that gender sensitive norms were respected.

India has also ratified key international conventions to end discrimination against women which include the **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**.

Women in India continue to make progress in politics, science, business, medicine, sports and agriculture. Women have overcome “**the glass ceiling**” in the armed forces. Today, India has the largest number of women in the United Nations peacekeeping forces.

The central and State governments have launched new schemes, policies and programmes for women empowerment.

Marginalised populations, such as refugees, have access to protection and assistance services. The '**Nari Shakti for New India**' campaign represents the aspirations of millions of women in India.

What is the case of refugees in India?

There are over 212000 refugees in India including those supported by the Government of India. More than half of whom are women and girls.

India ensures that refugees can access **protection services** at par with their fellow Indian citizens. Refugees registered directly by the Government are entitled to Aadhaar cards and PAN cards to enable their **economic and financial inclusion**. They can have access to national welfare schemes and contribute effectively to the Indian economy.

Refugees registered with the UNHCR have access to protection and limited assistance services. But they do not possess government-issued documentation. Thus, they are unable to open bank accounts, benefit from all government welfare schemes.

There is a need to include all refugees in existing national welfare and economic schemes regardless of their legal status. It will ensure India's commitment to **women empowerment and protection**.

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2. Threat to federalism in agricultural education

Source– The post is based on the article “**Threat to federalism in agricultural education**” published in **The Hindu** on **20th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issues and challenges pertaining to federal structure

Relevance: Centre-state legislative relations

News- The article explains the issues related to KUFOS judgement by Kerala High Court

What is KUFOS judgement?

It annulled the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor of the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS). The court said that the appointment violated the UGC Regulations of 2018.

It listed two specific violations: (a) the search committee recommended a single name and not a panel; and (b) in the search committee, the State government included the Director-General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) instead of a UGC nominee.

What are the issues related to judgement?

It weakens the **principle of federalism**. It dismantles the role of State governments in the governance of agricultural universities.

It raises an existential threat for the **facilitator and coordinator** of agricultural education – the ICAR. It has sought to substitute the role of the ICAR with the UGC’s Regulations.

It also jeopardises the ICAR’s efforts to ensure a minimum level of uniformity in agricultural education. The Model Act for agriculture universities stipulates three members in the search committee for Vice-Chancellors: the Director-General of ICAR; one nominee of the government; and one nominee of the Chancellor.

The KUFOS judgement makes the presence of the ICAR representative invalid. In short, all appointments of Vice-Chancellors of State agricultural, veterinary, fisheries universities made under the ICAR’s Model Act are likely to be rendered untenable.

What are the constitutional provisions related to agriculture education?

Agriculture education is included in the state list in the seventh schedule. **Entry 14 of List II** reads: “Agriculture, including agricultural education and research”.

Education is on the **Concurrent List**. **Entry 25 of List III** reads: “Education, including technical education, medical education and universities, subject to the provisions of **entry 66 of List**”. But there is no mention of agricultural education in **Entry 25 of List III**.

The legal implication is that agricultural education is not subject to **Entry 66 of List I**. Entry 66 of List I provides the basis for the applicability of **UGC Regulations 2018**.

The basis of the **KUFOS judgement** is that **Entry 66 of List I** provides the basis for the applicability of **UGC Regulations 2018**.

The poor applicability of **Entry 66 of List I** is the reason why agricultural universities have been facilitated and coordinated by the ICAR, even when they were governed by State governments.

What are some facts about ICAR?

The ICAR has had a **unique legal status**. It was established in 1929 as a department of the Government of India. It was also a **society** registered under the Societies Registration Act. In 1973, the Department of Agricultural Research and Education was set up under the Agriculture Ministry.

The purpose was to facilitate agricultural research and education, **coordinate** between the Centre and States, and **administrate** the ICAR.

ICAR has not overstepped into the constitutional jurisdiction of the State governments. For instance, ICAR proposed the Model Act for Agricultural Universities in India to bring uniformity in administration.

3. [10 steps to make quasi-judicial courts work for the people](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “10 steps to make quasi-judicial courts work for the people” published in **The Indian Express** on **21st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

Relevance: measures required to improve quasi-judicial agencies.

News: There is a class of quasi-judicial agencies that are generally handled by the revenue authorities and are largely relate to land, tenancy, excise, or preventive functions under the Criminal Procedure Code.

These agencies are important but they face many issues.

What are the issues faced by quasi-judicial agencies?

Work overload: These quasi-judicial agencies are staffed by revenue authorities who have several other functions such as law and order, coordination and other administrative functions which leaves them with much less time for court work.

Understaffed: Many of the agencies are understaffed.

Lack of electronic platform: These agencies do not have computers and video recorders or supporting activities such as the filing of cases and sending summons. Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are only some of the states that have these facilities.

Lack of knowledge: Many presiding officers lack proper knowledge of law and procedures.

Harassment of citizens: Due to the workload and understaffing, speedy justice is not made which harasses citizens.

Lack of adequate supervision: These agencies are not properly supervised by the administrative and political leadership. This leads to inadequate data on the pendency of the cases which becomes the reason for understaffing.

Therefore, there is a need to address these issues.

What is the way forward?

First, the proper functioning of these agencies should be the priority for the government.

Second, detailed data on the functioning of these agencies must be collected and published from time to time. It should be laid before the concerned legislature and the staff strength should be decided based on these data. It will ensure accountability.

Third, an **electronic platform** should be established to handle all subsidiary work related to the administration of justice. This would help in analysing the functioning of these bodies.

Fourth, annual **inspections** of the subordinate courts should be made mandatory by the superior authority. The training of presiding officers should be decided based on these inspections.

Fifth, interdisciplinary research on the functioning of these courts should be encouraged. This would identify the areas of improvement such as legal reforms or issue of clear guidelines.

Sixth, regular **training and orientation** of the adjudicating authorities should be taken up from time to time.

Seventh, the **state index of performance** of these quasi-judicial courts should be published. It would help those states lacking in the index to focus on the improvement of these agencies.

Eighth, important decisions, guidelines and directions could be compiled and published on the portal of the apex adjudicating forum such as the Board of Revenue. These would be helpful for lower-level agencies.

Ninth, proper training should be given to the officials handling judicial work in the revenue courts.

Tenth, reform proposed by **the Law Commission** for reform of the Civil Procedure Code along with other **procedural reforms** should be adopted by these adjudicating bodies.

4. [Decoding The New PDP Bill](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Decoding The New PDP Bill**” published in **The Times of India** on **21st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

Relevance: provisions of the new draft Digital Personal Data Protection Bill

News: The draft of the Digital Personal Data Protection (PDP) bill has been recently released. This article discusses the provision of the draft bill.

What are the provisions under the draft bill?

a) It focuses on personal data and excludes non personal data, b) It eliminates the categorisation of personal data into sensitive and critical c) It has restricted cross-border data flows which was not present in the previous data protection bill d) It provides for the setting up a new regulatory board.

What is the new regulatory board?

Data Protection Board: The bill provides for setting up a Data Protection Board with roles limited to enforcement and penalties. The earlier regulator, the Data Protection Authority had a wider role than the current regulator.

Appointment: The government will appoint members, prescribe terms and conditions of appointment, and decide other functions of the regulator which were earlier done either by a statute or an expert committee.

Although the draft says that the regulator will be independent but government now has greater control.

The Board can accept a **voluntary undertaking** from the person facing action. This undertaking can be later modified and no further action can be taken for the contents, depending on the consent between the Board and person.

What are the details provided for localisation of data and cross border data transfers?

The present draft does not require localisation of data like the previous bill. However, it also does not allow free flows of data across borders. It says –

Businesses can only transfer data to countries that are **notified by the Indian government**.

It allows the government to discuss digital trade and allow the flow of data only with those countries that are **whitelisted by the government**. It does not provide for alternate mechanisms like contracts or certifications to transfer data out of the country.

This means that data can only be transferred if the country is notified by the government else the data will be localized. However, the mechanism of notifying the countries is not mentioned in the draft.

What penalties are proposed by the draft bill and what are the guidelines for individuals?

It imposes penalties upto Rs 500 crore for violations of the guidelines but these penalties cannot be claimed by individuals for the harm they suffer.

The bill also provides **the duty an individual** has to follow such as they should not register irrelevant complaints and must provide authentic information when seeking correction of their data. The bill imposes a fine upto Rs 10,000 on individuals failing to abide by the duties.

Further, it does not allow individuals **to port their data** across platforms. They also do not enjoy the same rights and safeguards over their data against the state as they do against private companies.

Who is exempted from the law?

State bodies are exempted from the application of the law in the interests of India’s sovereignty and integrity, security, foreign relations, public order and others. There is also **no bar on the time period** of keeping data by the government agencies.

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The previous bill contained “just, fair, reasonable and proportionate” procedure for the exemption but this is missing in the current bill. However, states are expected to follow the fundamental **right to privacy** while dealing with data.

5. [G20: Lessons from Bali summit and what it implies for India's presidency](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**G20: Lessons from Bali summit and what it implies for India's presidency**” published in the **Business Standard** on **21st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS – 2: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Relevance: About G20's joint communique and its lessons for India.

News: The recent G20 Summit in Bali concluded by the release of a joint communique.

Why signing a joint communique is an achievement?

Getting 20 leaders to sign up for one document in today's sharply divided world is in itself remarkable. This is because any final document would have to deal with the Ukraine war.

However, a joint communique was reached due to **a)** The absence of the Russian President from G20 Summit, **b)** Indonesia focused primarily on the impact of the invasion on global food supplies.

Read more: [Preparing for the presidency – On Assuming G20 Presidency](#)

What is the importance of G20 in international agreements?

The G-20 is one of the few effective organisations functioning at its best level. For instance, the G20 arrived at a joint communique despite the issues such as, **a)** The effects of the war in Ukraine on global supply chains and inflation and **b)** Trade tensions between the US and China have congealed into open disagreement along multiple frontiers and momentum towards “decoupling”. The above mentioned issues reduced the relevance of United Nations frameworks for agreement and dispute resolution from the Conference of the Parties on climate change to the World Trade Organization.

Read more: [Heading the G20 and New Delhi's choices](#)

What are the lessons for India as a G20 President?

a) Like Indonesia, India too needs to lay the groundwork for dealing with the agenda well in advance, **b)** The G20 agenda must not be driven by the West or by Moscow and Beijing. Instead, it should be driven by middle powers such as Argentina, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, etc, **c)** India must find like-minded allies like the Indonesians clearly relied on the Indians, **d)** India should underline the importance of the G-20.

Read more: [During its G20 presidency, India can be a voice for developing world](#)

6. [About transferring the judges: The Bar and the Bench](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The Bar and the Bench**” published in the **Indian Express** on **22nd November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About transferring the judges of High Courts.

News: The transfers of high court judges, especially from Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh High Courts once again stirred the debate on transferring the judges.

What does the constitution say about the transfer of high court judges?

Article 222 deals with the transfer of a judge from one high court to another by the President after consultation with the CJI.

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What are the concerns associated with transferring the judges?

The desire to protect the independence of the judiciary was the bedrock of the Supreme Court. This is evident by its decision in 2016 to declare the Constitution (99th Amendment) Act, including Article 124 A of the Constitution as unconstitutional.

But transferring of judges like the recent one from the collegium have raised serious doubt about their intentions to protect the independence of the judiciary.

Read more: [Why does the SC collegium hold primacy over transfers?](#)

What needs to be done while transferring the judges?

According to Justice J S Verma, **a)** Constitutional functionaries, who are involved in the process of appointing superior judges, have to “be fully alive to the serious implications of their constitutional obligations and be zealous in its discharge in order to ensure that no doubtful appointment can be made”, **b)** The primacy of the CJI and of the HCs was to **ensure the best suitability** and **eliminate political influences**, **c)** The personal factors relating to the judge concerned, and his response to the proposal, including his preference of places of transfer, should be taken into account by the Chief Justice of India before forming his final opinion. Further, the CJI must take the views of those senior members of the Bar who can express views which may be considered relevant.

Read more: [There's a need for transparency in transfer of judges](#)

7. [Revised Personal Data Protection Bill: One step forward, one step back](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Revised Personal Data Protection Bill: One step forward, one step back**” published in the **Indian Express** on **22nd November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022.

News: The Union government released the revised version of the Personal Data Protection Bill for public comment. The Bill is now called as the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022.

What are the salient features of the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022?

Read here: [Draft digital data protection Bill tabled for comments](#)

What are the major changes in the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill?

Liberal on cross-border data: The earlier version of the Bill imposes stringent conditions on cross-border data flows. Companies were mandated to store a copy of “sensitive” personal data within India, while taking out “critical” personal data from the country was barred.

The new draft does not impose any such requirements on firms. They can now transfer the data to countries which are listed by the government. This will be welcomed not only by Big Tech but also by the burgeoning start-up ecosystem in the country.

What are the major concerns with the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill?

a) Wider exemptions are extended to government agencies from adhering to some of the provisions of the Bill along with limited safeguards, **b)** The new bill curtailed the independence and the extent of the authority vested in the proposed Data Protection Board, and **c)** The basis on which the government chooses a particular country is not yet clear.

Read more: [Why the Personal Data Protection Bill is bad news for business](#)

What needs to be done to improve the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill?

Implement the recommendations of the joint parliamentary committee: The committee's study on an earlier version of the Bill suggested that the exemption provided under the Bill

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should be “just, fair, reasonable and proportionate procedure”. So, providing greater power to the government as opposed to an independent statutory authority, need to be re-examined.

8. [Judging A Decade Of POCSO](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Judging A Decade Of POCSO**” published in **The Times of India** on **22nd November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the implementation of the POCSO Act.

News: On November 14, 2022, the POCSO Act completed a decade of being on the statute books in India. It is now time to analyse how the Act meets the objectives it set out to achieve.

What is the POCSO Act?

Read here: [POCSO Act](#)

What are the hurdles in the implementation of POCSO Act?

The Act has encountered hurdles at all stages of its implementation. This is because, On the **government side**, there is **a)** A slow pace to designate Special Courts. **b)** A delay in investigation and filing of chargesheets, **c)** A non-appointment of support persons for child victims.

From the **judicial angle**, there is a **delay in the disposal of POCSO cases** presents one of the biggest challenges in meeting the Act’s objectives.

For instance, **a)** For cases ending in **acquittal**, while Chandigarh takes about six months (on average) to dispose of a case, Himachal Pradesh takes about two years and 10 months, **b)** For cases ending in conviction, the average case length ranges from about 10 months in Chandigarh to over three years and nine months in Delhi.

What are the potential impacts of the hurdles on the implementation of the POCSO Act?

1) Negatively impact the child victim who might be re-traumatised by being forced to relive the details of an incident of sexual violence years later, **2)** Slow disposals may also have a bearing on the outcome of the trial. As more time passes, witnesses might start to forget important details pertaining to the case.

Read more: [The POCSO Act and associated issues](#)

What are the positive aspects in the implementation of the POSCO Act?

a) The criminal justice system is more sensitive towards child victims today than it was a decade ago, **b)** Varying performance of states in the time they take to dispose of POCSO cases goes on to show that the states lagging behind might catch up in some time.

Read more: [Historical Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse under POCSO Act](#)

What should be done to improve the implementation of the POCSO Act?

The government and the judiciary need to assess the gaps in implementation and strengthen the capacity of the various actors to meet the objectives of the Act.

-Policy interventions to improve the functioning of the Act must be tailored to meet the specific capacity constraints faced by different states and a one-size-fits-all approach is best avoided.

-The better-performing states can help to **evolve certain best practices** that can be adopted by other states.

-Strong **data systems and digital platforms** can help transfer learning across states and contextualise the best practices to the local courts.

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9. [Politics over pension – on NPS](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Politics over pension” published in **Business Standard** on **23rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

Relevance: concerns associated with Old Pension Scheme.

News: Punjab along with other states such as Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand have opted to restore the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) from the current National Pension System (NPS).

What is the difference between OPS and NPS?

NPS was adopted by every state except West Bengal for the government employees who joined from 1st April 2004.

NPS and OPS both have **tax benefits** but the OPS is **inflation-linked** and there is a hike in pension every six months in the form of dearness allowance (DA).

The **government bears the entire cost** of the OPS whereas in NPS employees contribution is 10 percent of salary and DA and 14 percent is contributed by the government.

The funds contributed by the government and the employees are deposited in different schemes approved by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (**PFRDA**).

The deposited fund is then invested in the **equity and debt market** depending on the employee's choice and subject to guidelines. Therefore, NPS reduces financial burden on the states.

What are the problems with adopting OPS?

OPS acts as a **fiscal burden** on the states.

For example, Punjab's projected expenditure on the pension for the current fiscal year is estimated at one-third the state's own tax revenues. The liabilities would exceed the state's own tax revenue by 46 per cent if the salaries and interest payments were added to it.

Similar is the case with Gujarat which is in better financial shape than Punjab. The pension and salary costs would amount to 72 per cent of its tax revenues.

Therefore, it is not wise to return to OPS as it acts as burden on the state government and on the taxpayers.

10. [The 'India pole' in international politics](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**The 'India pole' in international politics**” published in **The Hindu** on **23rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance: Foreign policy of India

News- The article explains the Indian foreign policy.

Why is India reluctant to take sides in international affairs?

The reason is that India views itself as a pole in the international system, and not as a satellite state or a camp follower.

The origins of this thought can be found in the character of the country's long struggle for independence.

The pre and post-Independence articulations of leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhiji, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak on international politics contained this thought.

The primacy India inherited as the legatee state of the British empire in South Asia gave strength to this thought. India's ancient civilisational sense and the Non-Aligned Movement experiment, have contributed to India's desire for a unique foreign policy identity.

What are the priorities of the Indian foreign policy establishment?

India's non-alignment is often misunderstood as neutrality. However, it is not neutrality, but the ability to take a position on a given issue on a case-by-case basis.

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New Delhi does not fall in line with either of the camps. India's recent or past statements on issues of global importance like Ukraine or Iraq, North Atlantic Treaty Organization's aerial campaign in Serbia, or UNSC shows its position.

It indicates that it tends to take positions that not just suit its interests but are also informed by its sense of being a unique player on the global stage.

What is the classic view of polarity?

The classical view of polarity is domination of the international system by the great powers. It seeks balances of power by them, and alliance-building based on ideology

What does being a pole mean for India?

India, however, has a different view of itself as a pole. It has not actively sought to dominate the South Asian regional subsystem even when it could. Its balancing behaviour has been subpar.

It has refused to build alliances in the classical sense of the term, or sought camp followers or allegiances. Even its occasional balancing behaviour was contingent on emergencies.

It believes that it has a strategic periphery in South Asia where it has a natural claim to primacy. It discourages interference by other powers in that space. It welcomes the rule of law and regional order.

What should be considered by the international community?

India is a pivotal power in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. It has the ability to help tackle security, climate and other challenges of global consequence.

Western powers must, therefore, treat India as a partner rather than as a cheerleader. They should mainstream India into global institutions such as the UNSC. It should consult India rather than dictate to India which side to take.

11. [A solution to the problem of judicial pendency, posed by the law minister – don't mechanically arrest a suspect](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"A solution to the problem of judicial pendency, posed by the law minister – don't mechanically arrest a suspect"** published in the **Indian Express** on **23rd November**.

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

Relevance: About restricting bail pleas to trial courts alone.

News: Recently, the Union Law Minister suggested that the large number of bail pleas being filed add to the pendency in the country's courts. To address that he suggested that these pleas should only be heard by trial courts, and should not be allowed to go to even the high courts.

About the bail pleas and pendency in India

The Chief Justice of India said that the higher judiciary is getting flooded with bail matters because of the reluctance of the district courts to grant bail.

According to the State of the Indian Judiciary Report published in 2019, **a)** On average, at the district court level, a case remains pending for five years or more, **b)** If the losing side goes up in appeal, then the average time for the case to be settled may go up to 13 years.

Read more: [Pandemic blues: Lower court pendency at record 4cr nowX](#)

What are the concerns associated with restricting bail pleas to trial courts alone?

a) It does not do anything to the pendency at the district court level, **b)** The law in India permits the police to arrest a person on "reasonable suspicion" of him having committed an offence. The ease with which people of India are arrested and restricting them to trial court alone for bail will **violate the fundamental right to personal liberty.**, **c)** It will hamper the **right to access justice**, and **d)** Typically a criminal trial could take anything between 5-10 years in India. For

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under-trials, the only remedy is to keep filing bail applications. By limiting the bail pleas to trial court alone, a person might spend up to 10 years in prison despite being innocent of the crime.

Read more: [Pendency of Cases of Constitutional Importance – Explained, pointwise](#)

What needs to be done to reduce the pendency of cases?

Need to review government litigation: This is because the government is the biggest litigant in the courts. The various departments of the central and state governments are a party in 46 per cent of all cases.

There is a serious need to **review the excessive cases** that are forced into the system by investigating agencies which led to unmerited arrests.

Restrict the custodial remands: As a principle of law, the “arrest” or remand of an accused should take place at the end of the investigative process, when the police are ready to confront the accused with evidence gathered and formally charge him immediately thereafter.

But in India, the purpose of “arrest” is not to ensure appearance at trial, but as to “aid investigation”. Most common law jurisdictions allow only between 12 hours to four days of pre-charge detention. But in India, a suspect may be kept in custody for up to 90 days before the police formally charge her. This should change.

12. [Strategy to save: The National Suicide Prevention Strategy must percolate to every district](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Strategy to save – The National Suicide Prevention Strategy must percolate to every district**” published in **The Hindu** on **23rd November**.

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

Relevance: About India’s Suicide Prevention Strategy.

News: Recently, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare announced a National Suicide Prevention Strategy.

What is the National Suicide Prevention Strategy?

Read here: [Union Health Ministry rolls out country’s first suicide prevention policy](#)

What is the status of suicides in India?

In India, more than one lakh lives are lost every year to suicide. In the past three years, the suicide rate has increased from 10.2 to 11.3 per 1,00,000 population.

As per National Crime Records Bureau statistics, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka have the highest percentage share of suicides (2018-2020), ranging between 8% to 11%.

The **most common reasons** include **a)** Family problems and illnesses, **b)** Other causes include marital conflicts, love affairs, bankruptcy, substance abuse and dependence. In approximately 10% of cases, the cause of suicide remains unknown.

What is the significance of India’s Suicide Prevention Strategy?

The strategy calls attention to **a)** The massive burden of suicides in the country and initiates steps to achieve a reduction in suicide mortality by 10% by 2030, **b)** Focus on multiple sectoral collaborations to provide a cohesive strategy and achieve the intended reduction in the number of suicides, and **c)** Create mental health curriculum in educational institutions within the next eight years.

What needs to be done to effectively prevent suicides?

India needs to work on **a) Targeted intervention programmes**, and **stigma reduction strategies**, **b)** Reduce access to pesticides and alcoholism.

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States need to participate enthusiastically in the rollout of the Suicide Prevention Strategy to ensure its proper implementation of the strategy in the federal country.

13. [Why the judiciary may not be the best selector of election commissioners](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles “**Space, not time**” published in **The Hindu** on **24th November 2022**.

“**Why the judiciary may not be the best selector of election commissioners**” published in the **Indian Express** on **24th November 2022**.

“**Make a house call: EC does a great job holding polls. Let Parliament decide who should make appointments in EC**” published in **The Times of India** on **24th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS – 2 – Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

Relevance: About SC questioning the appointment of election commissioners

News: The Supreme Court is hearing a case about the election commissioners’ (ECs) appointment.

What is the suggestion given by the Supreme Court in the appointment of CEC and Election Commissioners?

The court suggested a “collegium” type system in which the Chief Justice of India is a member.

Read more: [Supreme Court calls out Centre over short tenures of Chief Election Commissioners](#)

What are the merits of SC’s questioning appointment of election commissioners?

Might ensure the security of tenure: Except Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), none of the ECs has the security of tenure that could provide them operational freedom and space. There is a good case for extending the same tenure security to the ECs too, regardless of what kind of appointment process is in place.

Ensure neutral appointments: Demands for bipartisan appointments to the Election Commission have been around for decades, but governments have seldom agreed. In the present case, the court might provide a way for neutral appointments to Election Commission.

Further, the shift towards a bipartisan, consultative appointment process would be desirable because that has been the larger trend of India’s legislative and democratic evolution in the past two decades.

Role of CJI in other institutional appointments: The CVC Act 2003 empowers a committee comprising the PM, CJI and the leader of the opposition to recommend central vigilance commissioners. These three also make recommendations for appointment to the Lokpal body and CBI director under the Lokpal Act 2013. So, the role of CJI in appointments is not new.

What are the counter-views about SC’s questioning appointment of election commissioners?

No need to question the appointments of ECs: Elections were held on time and there was no need to question the system of appointment. The court should only intervene if a challenge had been raised against any specific appointment of Election Commissioner.

Further, there is no abuse of power has happened in Election Commission like the malafide executive interference in pre-collegium era judicial appointments.

SC should question other serious challenges instead of appointments: In terms of maintaining the integrity of the electoral process, the case pertaining to electoral bonds is far more consequential than the question of the appointment of ECs. Further, electoral bonds will showcase the Court’s real commitment to the integrity of the electoral process.

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Violate separation of powers: The role of the CJI in selection committees can be counterproductive, and it is like one constitutional body involved in the functioning of another body. This might create a view the court is violating the separation of powers.

The question of the best candidate is subjective: The role of the Election Commissioner is complex. So many of India's independent institutions, judiciary included, might not function well if a search for good candidates is prolonged. In the end, structures of accountability matter more than the process of selection.

For instance, many ex-post heroes like T N Seshan, would have been disqualified on their prior reputations for political intrigue.

Brief tenures do not undermine independence: The CEC has a six-year tenure, but should demit office on attaining 65. The Court has questioned the practice of appointing CECs close to that age so that they have only a brief tenure. However, it may be argued that even Chief Justices have brief tenures, but that does not undermine their independence.

Ideally, political parties should arrive at a consensus and work out the EC appointment process in Parliament. SC has a point, but the Parliament should decide.

14. [India-Australia trade pact](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "**India-Australia ECTA is a landmark in bilateral relations, will deepen ties**" published in **The Indian Express** and "**Growth through trade**" in the **Business Standard** on **24th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Bilateral groupings and agreements

News- The article explains the recently concluded India-Australia ECTA (Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)).

What is the importance of this relationship?

India and Australia both are Commonwealth countries, and parliamentary democracies with similar legal systems. Both are members of the **Quad, a trilateral Supply Chain Resilience Initiative and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework**.

What is the status of an economic relationship?

India has 3.7% share in Australia export and a 2.4 per cent share in its imports as of 2021.

Manufactured goods constitute 72 per cent of India's exports to Australia.

India primarily imports raw materials. 82% of its imports from Australia are these materials.

What are the main points of the agreement?

Australia will eliminate Customs duties on 98% of the traded goods and 100% of its tariff lines. India will do so for about 40% of its import tariffs immediately and 70.3% of its import tariffs over a 10-year period.

The agreement would provide **duty-free access** to over 6,000 broad categories of Indian products in the Australian market.

The Ind-Aus ECTA goes beyond **merchandise trade**. The Indian services sector also gets a major boost as it makes wide-ranging commitments in around 135 service sectors.

The **Most Favoured Nation status** will be granted in about 120 sub-sectors covering key areas of India's interest such as IT, ITES, education, health and audio-visual.

The deal provides an annual quota of 1,800 for yoga teachers and Indian chefs. It provides a commitment to over one lakh of India's outgoing students to Australia.

What is the importance of this agreement?

This is salient also because most free trade deals New Delhi has negotiated and entered into have been mostly with South Asian countries. These have hardly served India's trade interests. This is the first trade deal concluded with a developed country in a decade.

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It provides an opportunity for Australian exporters to tap the vast Indian market of 1.4 billion consumers. Indian exporters can market their **value-added products**.

The deal should be complemented for excluding the **most sensitive sectors**, dairy and agriculture. These provide employment in rural areas to about 50-55 per cent of its population with small landholdings and 1-2 cattle per farmer. This is in sharp contrast to Australian agriculture and dairying.

China is Australia's largest trade partner. Strategically, there is a need for **trade diversification** away from China for Australia, in view of a multiplicity of **geopolitical factors**. It tilts the balance in favour of India. It is a win-win partnership for both.

What are the economic benefits of this deal?

It will benefit India's **labour-intensive exports** such as textiles and apparel, agriculture and fish products. These now fetch 4-5 per cent import duty in the Australian market.

The trade deal will boost exports of pharmaceuticals to Australia.

India is the world's largest importer of coal. Out of India's coal trade deficit of \$24 billion, Australia accounts for \$11 billion. The Ind-Aus ECTA is likely to make coal available at competitive prices.

The **duty-free imports** of Australian raw materials such as copper, nickel would boost the competitiveness of Indian industry and create enormous job opportunities.

The Ind-Aus ECTA is expected to increase **bilateral merchandise exports** by \$10 billion by 2026-27. It will contribute to the creation of additional job opportunities for Indians in Australia and an additional 10 lakh jobs in India as a result of Australian investments.

The trade deal also resolves the long-pending **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement** related to IT/ITES. This will lead to yearly savings of over \$200 million.

What are the major concerns with FTAs in the case of India?

The principal concern is the move towards **greater protectionism** in Indian economic policy. There is a steady rise in Customs tariffs on a wide range of goods since 2017. The Make in India **production-linked incentive schemes** for a range of industries shows an inwards looking approach.

A related question is whether India will now discard its earlier reservations about the RCEP among Asia-Pacific nations, from which it abruptly withdrew in 2019.

15. India's G-force moment

Source– The post is based on the article “**India's G-force moment**” and published in **The Hindu** on **24th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Global groupings and agreements

News- The article explains the opportunity provided by G20 leadership to increase its stature in the international community.

Together, the G20 members represent over 80% of the world's GDP, 75% of international trade and 60% of the population.

What should be the policy formulation that India must come up with at G20?

First, the world needs new windows for **financing climate infrastructure**. Using the G20, India should press the IMF, the World Bank Group and the Asian Development Bank to open new windows for financing climate infrastructure to support the **Panchamrit goals**.

Second, India should use the G20 to roll-out the **India Stack** on the global stage. India Stack is the world's largest **digital public utility** and is growing fastly. Some of its principal components are Aadhaar, UPI, eKYC, DigiLocker.

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Third, India could use the platform to push its own agenda and South Asia's agenda on a global scale. For example, coming up with an **alternative financial mechanism to SWIFT** and taking steps for making the rupee more international.

Fourth, India should leverage the G20 to re-imagine the **shareholding structures of the IMF** and World Bank. The current structures of the World Bank and the IMF are at variance with the emerging world in general and India in particular. India can use the leadership to re-imagine the shareholding structure in such a way that it reflects its **global aspirations and power position** and also those of other emerging markets.

Fifth, India, like the European Union, represents a **multicultural and multi-religious quasi-federal structure**. The G20 would be a good platform for India to showcase the multiple aspects of its composite culture so that the world begins to appreciate the richness and cultural tenacity of the country.

Lastly, India can use this opportunity to **boost tourism** in the country. India has a huge potential to boost tourism. India receives around 17 million-18 million tourists every year. Compared to this, Las Vegas gets over 30 million tourists.

16. [Fixing India's malnutrition problem](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Fixing India's malnutrition problem”** and published in **The Hindu** on **24th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issue related to hunger

News- The article explains the issues related to malnutrition in India.

The **Global Hunger Index** 2022 has ranked 107 out of 121 countries.

The GHI is an important indicator of nutrition, particularly among children. It looks at stunting, wasting and mortality among children, and calorific deficiency across the population.

What are the issues with government interventions to tackle malnutrition?

Funding– Government of India implements the **Saksham Anganwadi** and **POSHAN 2.0 scheme** to tackle the problem of malnutrition. However, the budget for this scheme for FY 2022-23 was ₹20,263 crore. It is less than 1% more than the actual spend in FY 2020-21.

An Accountability Initiative budget brief reports that per capita costs of the Supplementary Nutrition Programme **POSHAN 2.0** has not increased since 2017 and remains grossly underfunded. It is catering to only 41% of the funds required.

Manpower constraints– The budget brief also mentions that over 50% Child Development Project Officer posts were vacant in Jharkhand, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

Monitoring- Social audits that are meant to allow for **community oversight** of the quality of services provided in schools are not carried out routinely.

Cash transfer– It seems to be a favoured solution for several **social sector interventions** in India today. Evidence suggests primarily that cash transfers improve household food security. But, they do not necessarily translate into improved child nutrition outcomes.

The effect of cash transfers is also limited in a context where food prices are volatile and inflation depletes the value of cash. There are social factors such as **'son preference'**, which continues to be prevalent in India. They can influence **household-level decisions** when responding to the nutrition needs of sons and daughters.

What is the way forward?

Cash transfers have a role to play here. They are useful in regions experiencing acute distress, where household purchasing power is very depressed. Cash transfers can also be used to incentivise **behavioural change** in terms of seeking greater **institutional support**.

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Food rations through PDS and **special supplements** for the target group of pregnant and lactating mothers, and infants and young children, are essential.

There is a need for greater involvement of local government and local community groups in the design and delivery of tailored nutrition interventions.

A **comprehensive programme** targeting adolescent girls is required if the **intergenerational nature** of malnutrition is to be tackled.

17. [The Borders Inside – on interstate border disputes](#)

Source: This post has been developed based on the article “**The Borders Inside**”, published in **The Times of India on 24th November, 2022**.

Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure

News: Recently, a dispute between Assam and Meghalaya at the border resulted into loss of lives. Also, a border dispute between Karnataka and Maharashtra is boiling.

The conflict is happening despite the rule of same party or allies in these states.

What are the reasons behind these conflicts?

These conflicts are rooted in reorganisation of states. Initially the states were reorganised on linguistic lines and later over other issues. It left many matters unresolved over borders and river water sharing.

The zonal councils with CMs, although meet regularly, it is not enough. For example, Maharashtra and Karnataka fall in different zones.

The national level mechanisms like Inter-State Councils (ISCs) are ineffective. In the last 16 years, just two meetings of ISCs have been held. In the last 16 years, just two meetings have been held

What can be the course of action?

Strengthen [Inter-State Councils \(ISCs\)](#). ISCs were set up 32 years ago under Article 263 of the Constitution. They are the most effective mechanism at present, to resolve these issues. Therefore, regular meetings must be held.

18. [India is losing its cherished right to know](#)

Source: This post is created based on the article “**India is losing its cherished right to know**”, published in **The Hindu on 24th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS Paper 2- Governance – Transparency

News: Central Information Commission (CIC) has largely become ineffective in carrying out the assigned mandate.

Central Information Commission’s main mandate is to decide, whether to disclose or not the information sought by the citizens.

Read more – [About RTI Act](#)

What are the reasons behind CIC’s ineffectiveness?

CIC was a well-functioning institution before [2019 amendment to the RTI Act](#). It passed many effective orders, like;

1. Political parties were under the RTI Act’s ambit, and hence accountable to the public.
2. Disclosure of the current Prime Minister’s education qualifications
3. Reserve Bank of India’s list of wilful defaulters of loans.

However, now, CIC has become like a walking dead institution. In the recent times, not a single order for disclosure has been forthcoming in matters of public importance.

Cases at the CIC come up for a hearing roughly after a two year wait. The matter loses its significance in that long period.

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In the matter of national importance, CIC has adopted a new approach. It delegates the decision to the concerned ministry. In most cases, the Ministries reiterate their earlier stand of non-disclosure, most often under vague grounds of national interest.

Furthermore, once the public authorities pass the order against disclosure, the CIC refuses to accept any further challenge to such order.

By allowing concerned ministries to decide, CIC is violating the **cardinal rules of natural justice** that no one should be a judge in their own cause.

A similar situation arose when the Home ministry passed non-disclosure order in the phone tapping case and CIC refused to hear the Internet Freedom Foundation's challenge to it. However, the organisation was able to get the fair hearing in CIC, after challenge the order before the Delhi High Court. But, **most organisation do not have that much resource to challenges the order.**

Also, commission is taking the steps that are not allowed in the RTI act. For example;

1. In a case seeking disclosure of documents relating to the making of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019, the commission has resorted to keeping the matter pending for final order for more than three months now. **Keeping the matter pending is something which is unheard of.**
2. In another case the disclosure of non-performing assets and top defaulters of a co-operative bank was sought. The matter was listed out-of-turn and a "stay" order was issued against the Bank's First Appellate Authority's order for disclosure. **A stay order is unheard of** and there is no provision in the RTI Act for the same.

What are its Implications?

These issues **frustrate citizens who dare to seek answers** from the powers that be, and reduce the efficiency of the RTI Act.

It is **becoming difficult to extract any information of importance** under the present system. Bureaucrats are losing fear of facing penal provisions outlined in Section 20 of the RTI Act for non-disclosure.

19. [The G20 president's responsibility: Ensuring the delivery of the new loss and damage climate fund](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“The G20 president's responsibility: Ensuring the delivery of the new loss and damage climate fund”** published in **The Indian Express** on **25th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Bilateral groupings involving India interest. GS3- Environment degradation

News- The article explains the opportunity provided by the G20 presidency to ensure concrete steps on climate change.

COP27 agreed to enable financing Loss and Damage associated with climate change.

What is Loss and Damage?

It refers to the adverse impacts that vulnerable communities and countries face as a result of a changing climate.

It includes the increased incidents and intensity of natural disasters and extreme weather as well as slow-onset temperature increase, sea-level rise, or desertification.

What was decided at COP27 on climate change?

The COP27 decision includes the development of a **Transition Committee** dedicated to Loss and Damage, with equal representation across rich and poor countries.

This committee has been tasked with configuring **institutional arrangements**, identifying and expanding **sources of funding**, and coordinating with existing **funding arrangements**. It has to be done by COP28 in the UAE next year.

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How should India use the opportunity provided by the G20 presidency to ensure concrete steps on Loss and Damage provisions agreed at COP27?

First, develop a **Global Vulnerability Index** to climate change. Such data and research in the public domain helps map **critical vulnerabilities**. It helps to plan strategies to build **resilience** by **climate-proofing** communities, economies and infrastructure.

Last year, **CEEW** developed a **Climate Vulnerability Index for India**. It was based on exposure to extreme events, sensitivity of the communities, and **adaptive capacity** of local administrations.

Pressure will also be put on large emerging economies, with rising emissions, to contribute to LD financing. India must continue to press for higher volumes of international **adaptation funds**.

Secondly, there is a need to encourage **attribution science**. The purpose is to assess whether and to what extent human-caused climate change altered the likelihood and intensity of extreme climatic events.

Contributions from the Global South on global research on climate change are limited. A recent study found that only 3.8% of global climate research spending is dedicated to Africa. 78% is spent in Europe and North America.

India should encourage the development of a **South-led research consortium** dedicated to scientific exploration of **event attribution science**.

Thirdly, there is a need to promote **Early Warning Systems Initiative**. The Executive Action Plan for the Early Warnings for All Initiative, unveiled at COP27 aims to ensure every person on Earth is protected by early warning systems within five years.

It has called for targeted investments of \$3.1 billion during 2023-27. It could avoid annual losses of \$3-16 billion against natural hazards in developing countries.

The rollout of such systems with last mile connectivity in Odisha has already shown its usefulness.

Fourthly, leverage the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**. India founded CDRI to promote the **resilience** of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of **sustainable development**.

India can also push for a **Global Resilience Reserve Fund**. It will act as insurance cushion against severe physical and macroeconomic shocks imposed by climate risks. It can be capitalised by IMF Special Drawing Rights.

What should be the way forward to fight climate change?

L&D financing is not enough. **Enhanced and accelerated emissions mitigation** is still much needed. This is in India's development interests.

In the case of technology, **sectoral partnerships and technology co-development** are likely to be the way forward. We should not wait for technologies that never get transferred.

Future COPs must focus almost exclusively on ensuring delivery and accountability. Otherwise, the COP process will be lost and **multilateralism** more permanently damaged.

20. [Russia's nuclear icebreakers and militarisation of the Arctic](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Russia's nuclear icebreakers and militarisation of the Arctic”** published in **The Hindu** on **25th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Effects of policies of developed and developing countries on India interest

Relevance: Increasing importance of Arctic

News- The article explains the increasing significance of the Arctic. It also explains the recent Russian efforts to increase its presence in this region.

The Russian President recently launched two nuclear-powered icebreakers **Ural and Yakutia**.

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Why are Russian icebreakers significant?

The icebreakers were laid down as part of their systematic work to re-equip and replenish the domestic icebreaker fleet. There are two already similar vessels in service.

A much more powerful nuclear icebreaker “Rossiya” would be completed by 2027.

In the last two decades, Russia has reactivated several Soviet era **Arctic military bases** and upgraded its capabilities.

It will strengthen Russia’s status as a “**great Arctic power**”.

Northern sea route is important for Russia. It cuts down time to reach Asia by up to two weeks compared to the current route via the **Suez canal**.

Why are countries racing towards the Arctic?

There has been a race among Arctic states and near-Arctic states to augment their capabilities. They want to capitalise on the melting Arctic. Climate change is opening up the Arctic giving access to new routes and resources.

Russian military modernisation in the Arctic has prompted other Arctic states to join the race. NATO has been conducting regular exercises in the region. Its partner countries are investing in upgrading military capabilities.

China has also announced ambitious plans for a ‘**polar silk route**’ to connect to Europe as well as building massive icebreakers.

Where does India stand with respect to the Arctic?

Since 2007, India has an **Arctic research programme**. It has undertaken as many as 13 expeditions till date.

In March 2022, India unveiled its first Arctic policy titled: ‘**India and the Arctic: building a partnership for sustainable development**’.

India is also one of the 13 Observers In the **Arctic Council**, the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation in the Arctic.

21. [Courts’ Pendency Crisis: One Wheel Cannot Move A Chariot](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Courts’ Pendency Crisis: One Wheel Cannot Move A Chariot**” published in **The Times of India** on **25th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

Relevance: reforms required in Indian judiciary

News: India has the **largest number of pending court cases in the world** which is around 47 million and as per **Niti Aayog**, it would take more than 324 years to clear the backlog. Therefore, reforms are needed for proper functioning of the court.

What reforms are required?

Government agencies: The cases involving centre and state governments constitute 46% of the pending cases. So, it would be better to come up with proper mechanism which would not require government agencies to move courts for every small case.

Number of judges: As per the data, there were 21. 03 judges per million people in 2021 while the UK had 51 and the US- 107 judges per million people. Therefore, more judges are required in the courts.

Appointment of judges: Judges are appointed by judges. This should be changed and tussle between the executive and the judiciary in deciding judicial appointments must be resolved.

Work Overload: Judges in India also get involved in administrative work such as scheduling hearings, deciding admission, etc. Therefore, this should be corrected and **external agencies** should be hired for looking at the administrative work like other developed countries.

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Disincentive for litigations: Cases such as dishonouring of cheques or landlord-tenant disputes take a lot of time of the court. Therefore, disincentives should be created for such type of litigation by which the losing party would pay a hefty fine.

Retirement: Judges of High Court retire at 62 and Supreme Court judges retire at 65 while judges in the UK and Canada continue for till the age of 75. The judges of the Supreme and subordinate courts in the US hold office for life. Therefore, the retirement of judges in India should also be increased.

Technology: Certain categories of cases should be completely made online by leveraging technology. Computer algorithms could also be used to manage the list.

Indian Bail Act: The act should be introduced because around 76% of prisoners in Indian jails are those waiting for trial and three out of four prisoners are not even convicted.

Adjournments: Adjournments should be made expensive; this would help in speedy hearing of the cases.

Reducing appeals: SC judges waste a lot of time in hearing Special Leave Petitions each day. Almost 40% of the working days of SC judges are consumed in determining admission while 90% of those SLPs are rejected. Therefore, hearing of SLPs should be reduced.

Best Management practices: Judiciary in India should be in line with best management practices such as ending vacation, reviewing the productivity of judges periodically, using simple legal languages among others.

Therefore, Kautilya's Arthashastra quote should be kept in mind that says "Judges shall discharge their duties objectively and impartially so that they may earn the trust and the affection of the people."

[22. Why the admission of a disabled person to the European Space Agency is a win](#)

Source: This post is created based on the article "**Why the admission of a disabled person to the European Space Agency is a win**" published in **Indian Express** on **25th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Social Issues

News: European Space Agency (ESA) has expanded the requirements to become an astronaut to make it more inclusive.

The space flights in the beginning were much more dangerous, and more exclusive, than today. In the beginning of space age, the idea that who should be an astronaut was limited by imagination, opportunity and resources. The requirements to become an astronaut or cosmonaut are not the same now.

Women, people of colour, and those with disabilities can also become astronaut or cosmonaut. Therefore, European Space Agency (ESA) has expanded the mental and physical fortitude required to be an astronaut or cosmonaut.

A Paralympics medallist John Mcfall may become the first disabled person in the ESA's astronaut programme. He lost a leg at the age of 19 and since then has achieved peak physical and medical condition. However, he will have to undergo a feasibility programme along with other potential candidates.

Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections

23. [Disquiet in Northeast](#)

Source: This post is created based on the article “**Disquiet in Northeast**” published in **The Hindu** on **25th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure

News: The boundary dispute between Meghalaya and Assam has resurfaced after the killing of five villagers from Meghalaya by Assam forest guards. Both state governments are putting their versions of the incident, blaming each other for the incident.

Meghalaya was carved out of Assam in 1970 as an autonomous region and became a full-fledged State in 1972.

In March, Assam and Meghalaya resolved the boundary dispute at six out of total 12 such locations along their 884.9 km boundary.

Though the latest flare-up did not arise out of this dispute, it happened along a disputed border stretch.

Assam has boundary disputes at various points in time with the States carved out of it — Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram.

Last year, the police forces of Assam and Mizoram clashed, killing five on the Assam side. Dozens of people have died in conflicts along State borders in the northeast over the years.

Read more – [The Borders Inside – on interstate border disputes](#)

What are the reasons behind such interstate disputes?

These conflicts have their origins in the colonial cartography that overlooked the life patterns of local communities.

Traditional hunting, grazing and farming grounds of communities got divided by modern administrative boundaries at many places.

When new States were formed, such concerns acquired a more serious nature, and the Naga demand for a unified homeland that is now spread beyond the State of Nagaland is instructive.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had asked Assam to take the lead in resolving the lingering disputes.

24. [India-Australia trade pact's ratification is good, but staying competitive is critical](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**India-Australia trade pact's ratification is good, but staying competitive is critical**” published in **The Hindu** on **25th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Bilateral groupings and agreements

Relevance: India-Australia trade and economic relations

News- The article explains the recently concluded free trade agreement between India and Australia.

What are the strategic reasons behind this trade pact?

Australia has been particularly upset with what it called the ‘**weaponization of trade**’ by China. Countries across the world want to reduce their dependence on China as part of “**China plus one strategy**”. They want to ensure a **resilient supply chain**.

There is growing strategic convergence between India and Australia. Both are part of strategic groupings like **Quad, the trilateral Supply Chain Resilience Initiative and the Indo-Pacific Economic Forum (IPEF)**.

What is the way forward for India?

It is critical to remember that trade deals open new doors. They do not automatically mean higher exports or better trade balances, as India's past pacts with ASEAN and Japan have shown. India should increase its overall global competitiveness.

For further reading– <https://blog.forumias.com/india-australia-trade-pact/>

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25. [A word of advice on OTT and the draft Telecom Bill](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**A word of advice on OTT and the draft Telecom Bill**” published in **The Hindu** on **25th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Parliament and state legislatures

Relevance: Bills and Acts of the Parliament

News- The article explains the issues related to inclusion of OTT communication services within the new Telecom Bill.

Why is the rationale behind this move not logical?

The main argument behind its inclusion is the principle of “**same service, same rules**”. However, this is erroneous. Same service means the user should be able to substitute one for the other at their own discretion. But no OTT provider can reach a customer without the intermediation and services of a telecom service provider.

OTT communication services are applications or **value-added communication services** that ride on the basic communication services that telcos provide. The latter is in the **domain of carriage** and the former is in the **domain of applications** such as group and video communication, encryption, etc.

The inflow of **venture capital funding** to OTTs would be severely discouraged.

Telecom Bill will impact only India-based OTT players. Those operating from overseas would not be impacted. This would be disadvantageous for Indian service providers vis a vis their foreign competitors.

Why should OTT communication services be kept out of the ambit of Telecom law?

OTT communication services are already covered under the existing **IT Act**. OTTs can be regulated but not **licensed or pre-authorized**.

The Telecom Bill is based on the principle that provision of telecommunication services is the sole privilege of the government except to the extent that private entities are **licensed or authorized**.

On the other hand, the IT Act is based on the exact opposite premise. Everything is permitted except that which is specifically and explicitly barred. It enables and encourages **creativity, innovation**, new products and venture capital funding.

What if only the communications component of OTTs were to be regulated?

It is not possible to distinguish an OTT communication service from any other OTT platform. Every OTT platform such as Flipkart, Ola, MakeMyTrip also incorporate an element of messaging. Requiring a licence or authorisation for an element that is an inherent part of a platform’s activity would be tantamount to control of the entire activity.

26. [What the measles outbreak in India reveals](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**What the measles outbreak in India reveals**” published in the **Indian Express** on **25th November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About the recent Measles outbreak.

News: A measles outbreak in Mumbai has raised concerns amongst the country’s public health authorities. A rise in measles cases has also been reported from Ranchi, Ahmedabad and Malappuram. The outbreak highlighted a backslide in the performance of India’s universal immunisation programme during the pandemic.

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What is Measles?

Read here: [Measles and Rubella](#)

Why there is a measles outbreak at present?

The measles outbreak has occurred at present because,

-According to the state government(Maharashtra) data, only 41% of the eligible children have been inoculated against measles in Mumbai. This is because **a)** Parents are showing a disinclination to continue the inoculation regime for their children after they developed a fever on being administered the first jab, **b)** Early in the pandemic, the National Health Mission's information system reported that at least 100,000 children missed their shots because of the restrictions on movement.

-The Centre's [Mission Indradhanush](#) project has improved vaccine coverage and reduced delays between shots. But WHO and UNICEF studies have shown that immunisation programmes especially those focusing on DPT (diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus) and measles have taken a hit in low and mid-income countries, including India.

- Measles is a highly contagious disease. Experts had cautioned that even a 5% fall in the vaccination rate can disrupt herd immunity and precipitate an outbreak.

What should be done to contain the measles outbreak?

Implement Centre's request: The Centre asked States to consider administering an extra dose of vaccines to children, aged five to nine, in vulnerable areas. This should be done immediately.

Look beyond emergency measures: India has to look beyond emergency measures and provide a boost to the country's public health services through more fund allocation.

27. [The Constitution of India deserves better](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "**Constitution Day: A rare, enduring document**" published in **The India Express** and "**The Constitution of India deserves better**" published in **The Hindu** on **26th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian Constitution

Relevance: Making of Indian constitution

News- The article explains the basic facts about evolution and present working of the constitution of India.

The Constitution of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949. The day began to be celebrated as Constitution Day since 2015.

How the constituent assembly drafted the Indian constitution?

Constitution-making itself is a relatively unexceptional endeavor. According to a study, on average, the constitution-making process took 16 months. India's constitution took about three years for completion from 1946 to 1949.

It was written under **extraordinarily difficult conditions**. The partition of India was accompanied by mass deaths, devastation, violence, and brutality.

Constituent assembly relied on **consensus-oriented methods**. For instance, when debating the adoption of Hindi as a national language, Rajendra Prasad said that the choice of national language would have to be "carried out by the whole country".

While the drafters opted for **compromise and consensus** in some areas, they made **bold choices** on others. **For instance**, breaking down traditional privileges like the abolition of princely states and royal titles, and crafting the country as a democracy based on universal adult franchise, and ending discrimination on grounds of caste, or sex or religion.

Why does the constitution of India enjoy legitimacy among people?

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People would submit to a constitution, when the constituent assembly crafts a narrative about the creation of the body that is both **politically acceptable and historically plausible**.

Key national leaders enjoyed **political goodwill**. It was used by drafters of the constitution to give legitimacy to the Constitution.

The freedom movement provided good training for drafting the constitution. Reforms introduced by the British colonizer were designed to fulfill certain demands. These reforms lead to inspiring new agitations.

The Constitution had its inspiration in sources like **Tilak's Swaraj Bill of 1895 and the Declaration of Rights of 1918**. These sources contained **civil and political rights**.

The constitution of India also drew from the **Resolution of Fundamental Rights and Economic Changes** at the Karachi Session of the Congress in 1931. This resolution argues that "in order to end exploitation of the masses, **political freedom** must include **economic freedom**".

All these demands would find their way into **Part III and Part IV** of the Constitution. Government of India Act, 1935 also heavily influenced the constitution.

Why is there indifference to the constitution in India?

There is a **lack of awareness among** people about the constitution. Even the well-educated and well-placed don't have a copy of the Constitution in their houses unless they are advocates. While educated people are broadly aware about fundamental rights, they are largely unaware of the fundamental duties enshrined in the Constitution.

Society is unable to inculcate **constitutional values** like treating every citizen equally irrespective of caste and religion among children.

There is hardly any focus on the Constitution at the school level, not to speak of tertiary education.

What is the way forward to inculcate constitutional values ?

The Constitution should get **due recognition** across the educational system.

We should not restrict ourselves to **symbolism**. We should look at the **substantive issues** dealt with by the Constitution.

Our ancient texts teach us that **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**. We should first learn to treat fellow Indians as a fraternity.

28. [How to cement the Election Commission's credibility](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**How to cement the Election Commission's credibility**" published in the **Indian Express** on **26th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS - 2 - Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

Relevance: About the independence of the Election Commission.

News: The Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court is hearing a series of petitions seeking functional independence for Election Commissioners. The petitioners pleaded for the creation of an independent collegium or selection committee for the future appointment of CEC and ECs.

About the case

Read here: [Election Commissioner shouldn't be a 'yes-man': Supreme Court](#)

What are the court's observations regarding the appointment of Election Commissioners(ECs)?

Read here: [Supreme Court questions 'lightning speed', 24-hour procedure appointing Arun Goel as Election Commissioner](#)

How the constitution ensures the autonomy of the Election Commission?

The Constitution intended the Election Commission of India(ECI) to be fiercely independent and vested it with enormous powers of superintendence, direction and control over all elections.

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The apex court has repeatedly adjudged these powers to be absolute and unquestionable. The court also declared that Article 324 is the reservoir of all powers of the ECI and declared free and fair elections to be part of the basic structure of the Constitution.

About previous demands for creating a collegium or selection committee for appointing ECs In its 255th Report, the Law Commission of India also recommended a collegium system for appointing Election Commissioners.

Political stalwarts and many former CECs including BB Tandon, TS Krishnamurthy have supported the idea, even while in office.

In a recent debate on electoral reforms in the Rajya Sabha, many political parties demanded the introduction of a collegium system.

What about the performance of the ECI so far?

For much of Indian democracy's history, the ECI has performed very well, earning accolades not only from the citizens of India but the world.

The track record of most Chief Election Commissioners (CECs) was exemplary in displaying independence and neutrality. There has to be an institutional mechanism to ensure the independence and neutrality of the ECI.

What are the concerns associated with Election Commissioners?

ECs can be influenced by the Executive: B R Ambedkar's said in the Constituent Assembly that "the tenure (of ECI) can't be made a fixed and secure tenure if there is no provision in the Constitution to prevent" a person "who is likely to be under the thumb of the executive".

Elevation of an Election Commissioner to the post of CEC: This makes ECs vulnerable to government pressure. They might be always conscious of how their conduct is viewed by the government, which can exploit this fear.

Might damage the independence of the commission: Since all three members have equal voting rights and all decisions in the commission are taken by the majority, the government can even control an independent-minded CEC through the majority voting power of the two Election Commissioners.

Provision for the removal of Election Commissioners: Only the CEC is protected from being removed (except through impeachment). The Constitution enabled protection for the CEC as it was initially a one-man Commission.

Logically, this should have been extended to the other two Commissioners, who were added in 1993. But this is not done intentionally.

Why the judiciary may not be the best selector of election commissioners?

Read here: [Why the judiciary may not be the best selector of election commissioners](#)

What should be done?

Nowhere in the world does the government of the day unilaterally appoint the election commissioner. It is always by a collegium or even a full parliamentary scrutiny or interview. Hence, it is time for India to adopt such system.

General

Studies

Paper – 3

General Studies - 3

1. [Why an election in Jammu and Kashmir is urgently needed, for India and Pakistan](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Why an election in Jammu and Kashmir is urgently needed, for India and Pakistan**” published in **The Indian Express** on **20th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Role of state and no-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.

Relevance: Kashmir issue

News- The article explains the need for elections in Jammu & Kashmir for better peace prospects. Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s speech at the UN pleaded for neighbourhood peace last month. But army intelligence reportedly approved a heavily-funded plan to disrupt next year’s J&K elections.

What are the characteristics of the Pakistan state?

America has used Pakistan for **Cold War spying**, Afghan Mujahideen hospitality, and Nixon’s 1972 detente with Mao.

Pakistani politics have been sabotaged by Generals. Army is the main controlling power. General Zia used the religious **card** by unleashing the ISI, allowing the Tabhligi Jammatt to operate freely within the military, requiring comments on an officer’s religious sincerity in evaluation forms, and embracing the Ghazwa-E-Hind propagated by Jamaat-e-Islami. Since 1987, Pakistan is exporting terrorism.

Pakistan’s sovereignty is compromised by its relationship with China. China is an **all weather friend** of Pakistan. The relationship is called “**higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the Indian Ocean, and sweeter than honey**”.

What has been the traditional character of J&K society?

Religious tolerance has been the tradition of Kashmir. In Kashmir Shaivism dates back to 850. There is a large peaceful Shia population, there was a large peaceful Pandit population. Most Sunnis are moderate. Unlike Pakistan Ahmadiyyas, are not prosecuted. There were no gunshot deaths before 1987.

Why are elections necessary in J&K?

An election next year in J&K would result in new **electoral equations, ballot structures, and context**.

Election compromises, statehood restoration and new local politicians are the paths to peace. Entitled dynasty claims that J&K elections will fail because fear is holding back talented local candidates from forming new parties, forging coalitions, and forgetting the past. But there are many fearless academicians, civil servants and civil society members who don’t believe in this logic.

2. [Charting the economic journey ahead](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Charting the economic journey ahead**” published in **The Hindu** on **20th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy and growth

Relevance: Boosting the growth of economy

News- The article explains the trends of economic growth in India. It also explains the steps that are needed to be taken for high growth.

What is the trend of economic growth in the Pre-independence period?

India’s economic progress in the first half of the 20th century under British rule was dismal. According to one estimate, during the five decades, India’s annual growth rate was just 0.89%.

Per capita income grew at 0.06%.

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What is the trend in Post independence India?

Till 1970s- In the early period, India's strategy of development comprised four elements. These elements are raising the **savings and investment rate; dominance of state intervention; import substitution, and domestic manufacture of capital goods.**

India's average growth till the end of the 1970s remained modest. It was 3.6%. The per capita income growth rate was 1.4%.

However, on certain **health and social parameters**, such as the literacy rate and life expectancy, there were noticeable improvements. Initially, India had to rely on the heavy imports of foodgrains. But, there was a breakthrough in agriculture after the **Green Revolution.**

The **industrial base** also widened. India became capable of producing a wide variety of goods including steel and machinery.

1970s to liberalisation reforms- The Indian economy did grow at 5.6% in the 1980s. But it was accompanied by a sharp deterioration in the **fiscal and current account deficits.** The Indian economy faced its worst crisis in 1991-92.

After liberalisation- Between 1992-93 and 2000-01, GDP at factor cost grew annually by 6.20%. Between 2001-02 and 2012-13, it grew by 7.4%.

The best performance was between 2005-06 and 2010-11 when GDP grew by 8.8%. This is the highest growth experienced by India over a sustained period of five to six years.

During this period, the investment rate reached a peak of 39.1% 2007-08. There was a corresponding increase in the savings rate. The **current account deficit** remained low at an average of 1.9%.

The growth story suffered a setback after 2011-12. The growth rate fell to 4.5% in 2012-13. The growth rate since then has seen ups and downs. It touched the 3.7% level in 2019-20.

India today is the fifth largest economy. However, in relation to per capita income, it is a different story. In 2020, India's rank was 142 out of 197 countries.

What is the way forward to economic growth?

Increasing growth rate- There is a need to raise the **growth rate.** Calculations show that if India achieves a 7% rate of growth continuously over the next two decades and more, it will make a substantial change to the level of the economy. India may almost touch the status of a developed economy.

India needs to raise the **Gross Fixed Capital Formation rate** from the current level of 28% of GDP to 33% of GDP for 7% growth rate. India maintains the **incremental capital output ratio** at 4. It is a reflection of the **efficiency of capital.** India can comfortably achieve a 7% rate of growth.

Raising the **investment rate** depends on a number of factors. A **proper investment climate** must be created and sustained. While **public investment** should also rise. The major component of investment is **private investment.** It depends on a stable financial and fiscal system. The importance of **price stability** in this context cannot be ignored.

Other areas- India's development strategy must be multidimensional. It needs a strong export sector. A strong manufacturing sector should be promoted. The organised segment of this sector must also increase.

India must also strengthen the system of **social safety nets.** **Growth without equity** is not sustainable.

An **open economy** with some limitations is still the best route to follow.

What factors need to be considered?

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The rapid pace of **globalisation** will slow down for a variety of reasons. Some countries which were champions of globalisation are making a retreat. The Russia-Ukraine war has exposed the problems related to the supply chain.

The **external environment** is not going to be conducive. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reports a secular decline in growth in developed countries. **Environmental considerations** may also act as a damper on growth.

3. [Incremental win – COP-27 commits to compensation fund, but leaves important questions for later](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

“COP27: A lost opportunity” published in the **Indian Express** on **21st November 2022**.

“Incremental win – COP-27 commits to compensation fund, but leaves important questions for later” published in **The Hindu** on **21st November 2022**.

“Weather Shifts In Climate Talks” published in **The Times of India** on **21st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS – 3: Climate Change.

Relevance: About Loss and Damages (L&D) fund.

News: The UNFCCC 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) members agreed to expand the COP's agenda to include the demand to compensate countries that suffer climate change-related loss and damages.

About the creation of a Loss and Damages (L&D) fund

The initiative to Loss and Damages (L&D) was first initiated by the island nation of Vanuatu and the Alliance of Small Island States.

This is because the mitigation and adaptation do not address the concerns of countries with the highest vulnerability to climate change. But recent impacts such as floods in Pakistan led to the amplification of the demands for climate reparations.

The US and the EU resisted this sighting **a)** Existing funds should be diverted for the reparations, **b)** The EU demands big emitting developing countries should be included as potential donors, not as recipients.

But the developing countries saw this as a tactic to create a rift amongst themselves and criticised it. In the end, they agreed to generate a fund.

What is the structure of the Loss and Damages (L&D) fund?

L&D refers to impacts of climate change that cannot be avoided either by mitigation (cutting greenhouse gas emissions) or adaptation (modifying practices to buffer against climate change impacts).

Coverage: The fund will only **support countries most vulnerable to climate change**. Hence, it might not include India.

L&D also include **not only economic damage** to property **but also loss of livelihoods, and the destruction of biodiversity** and sites that have cultural importance. This broadens the scope for affected nations to claim compensation.

Contributors: The estimated L&D is already over \$500 billion. But, COP 27 only commit to generating a fund. The amount of contributions by nations will be determined in future COP negotiations. The contribution also includes the private sector and philanthropies.

So, the L&D fund **might take years before it can meaningfully operate**.

Significance: From now on, a certain “liability” will be put on big polluters and they will be under a moral, if not legal, obligation to support vulnerable countries.

Read more: [“In our LiFEtime” Campaign launched by India at COP 27, Sharm El-Sheikh](#)

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What are the important proposals left in COP27?

- The COP 27 agreement does mention that \$4 trillion will be required every year to meet the renewable energy targets till 2030. This again highlights that the rich countries are nowhere close to delivering on their commitment to providing \$100 billion every year.
- The progress on action to keep temperatures from rising beyond 1.5°C of pre-industrial levels was also limited.
- All the studies indicate that controlling global warming requires action on all fossil fuels, not just coal. India initiated talks, and it was supported by nearly 80 countries, including the US and EU. But Russia and Saudi Arabia vehemently opposed the inclusion of oil and gas, and therefore it was not included in the final decision.

Read more: [Middle East Green Initiative Summit 2022 at COP 27 Egypt](#)

What are the other significant developments in COP – 27?

Just Energy Transition Partnership (JET-P): In COP-27, a \$20 billion deal was struck between Indonesia and G7 countries at the G20 meeting in Bali to phase down coal use in Indonesia in a just manner.

Note: A similar deal worth \$8.5 billion was signed between South Africa and G7 last year.

Question on wealthy developing countries claims: China is the largest current emitter and second-largest historical emitter of GHGs. But, China prefers to be called a developing country in climate negotiations. This approach was followed by newly wealthy countries like Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Singapore.

This was questioned by many countries. At COP27, developed countries got the support of many small island states and LDCs. So, from now on, countries like China will find it challenging to avoid greater responsibility for the climate crisis.

4. [Development of Great Nicobar: strategic imperative and ecological concerns](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Development of Great Nicobar: strategic imperative and ecological concerns**” published in **The Indian Express** on **22nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Infrastructure**

News: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has given environmental clearance for the development of a project on the Great Nicobar Island. The project is to be implemented in three phases over the next 30 years.

What is the project?

A “**greenfield city**” has been proposed, including an International Container Transshipment Terminal (**ICTT**), a greenfield **international airport**, a **power plant**, and a **township** for the personnel who will implement the project.

The proposed port (ICTT) will allow Great Nicobar to participate in the regional and global **maritime economy** by becoming a major part in cargo transshipment. The port will be controlled by the **Indian Navy**.

The airport will have **dual military-civilian** functions and will be useful for tourism.

Roads, public transport, water supply and waste management facilities, and several hotels have been planned for **tourists**. The project will also help in creating **direct and indirect jobs** on the island.

However, the proposed project will lead to cutting of trees and acquiring the forest area.

What is the purpose of the project?

Tourism: The project will help in the growth of the tourism industry in the Great Nicobar Island. Further, the location of the island is important for **economic and strategic reasons**.

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Hub for Cargo Ships: Great Nicobar is equidistant from Colombo to the southwest and Port Klang and Singapore to the southeast, and is close to the East-West international shipping corridor. The proposed ICTT can become a hub for cargo ships travelling on this route.

National Security: Great Nicobar is also important for national security purposes and consolidation of the Indian Ocean Region. The increase in the presence of Chinese ships in the region of Bay of Bengal and in the Indo-Pacific is also a major concern.

What are the concerns with the project?

Great Nicobar is an **ecologically important area** and the development of the project will lead to deforestation affecting the flora and fauna of the region.

It will also lead to increased runoff and deposits of the sediments in the ocean, which will impact the coral reefs including loss of mangroves on the island.

What has the government done to address this concern?

The Government has successfully **translocated a coral reef** from the Gulf of Mannar to the Gulf of Kutch. The **Zoological Survey of India** is also assessing the amount of reef required to be relocated for the project.

The government has said that a conservation plan for the **leatherback turtle** is also under consideration.

As per the government, the project site is **outside the eco-sensitive zones of Campbell Bay** and Galathea National Park and the project will acquire only a small portion of the island.

Moreover, **15 percent of the development area itself will be green cover and open spaces**. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the project as it is important for national security and strategically.

5. [Private-sector participation in space: Space for start-ups](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Space for start-ups**” published in the **Business Standard** on **22nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Awareness in the field of space

Relevance: About the private-sector participation in space.

News: The successful launch of Vikram-S, India’s first privately built rocket from start-up Skyroot, has focused on the opening up of space to private enterprises. Once the technology stabilises, the firm expects to launch two rockets a month.

About Vikram-S

Read here: [Vikram-S: India’s first private launch vehicle all set for maiden flight](#)

What is the potential of the Indian private sector in the space sector and the advantages of rapid launch capabilities?

Read here: [Importance of the private sector in manufacturing quick launch capabilities](#)

The global commercial space market is worth \$360 billion and expected to grow to at least \$500 billion by 2030. Both government agencies and private-sector firms are intent on launching satellites to service demands across areas ranging from internet broadband to entertainment delivery, climate monitoring, and multiple geo-location-based services.

How private-sector participation in space will enhance the capability of ISRO?

India’s space market share is just about \$7 billion, which is tiny, given the impressive capacity developed by ISRO. But the private participation will **a)** Help to translate ISRO’s demonstrated capabilities into business opportunities, **b)** Boost India’s market share to \$50 billion, or roughly 10%, by 2030, **c)** Help ISRO to focus on R&D and farm out the job of manufacturing components

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in accordance with specifications to the private sector, **d)** Ensure technology transfers from the agency to private players, and **e)** Allows private players to use Isro facilities for launches and tests as Skyroot did.

All this will enable private enterprises to move up the value chain from being component suppliers to players in the aerospace sector. On the other hand, ISRO could concentrate on more demanding tasks such as building bigger rockets and satellites with more capacity and more sophisticated capabilities.

What are the steps taken by the government to increase private-sector participation in space?

ISRO will soon induct a batch of five Polar Satellite Launch Vehicles (PSLVs) which are being built by a consortium of Hindustan Aeronautics and Larsen & Toubro. This marks the first instance where an entire rocket has been built outside the agency.

Hughes communication is in collaboration to deliver commercial broadband using ISRO satellites.

How did NASA benefit from private-sector participation in space?

NASA now tenders out all its manufacturers and issues tenders for innovative designs according to its specifications. For example, **a)** the reusable Falcon 9 rockets and the [Starlink satellite service](#) of SpaceX arose out of this policy, **b)** All the designs for [NASA's Artemis Mission](#) is getting obtained through private R&D working to NASA specifications.

On the other hand, NASA does some of its own designs and releases many patents. So, the adoption of a similar policy could turn India into an aerospace powerhouse.

6. [Low crop yield in India: WHAT FARMING NEEDS: A GIANT TECH LEAP](#)

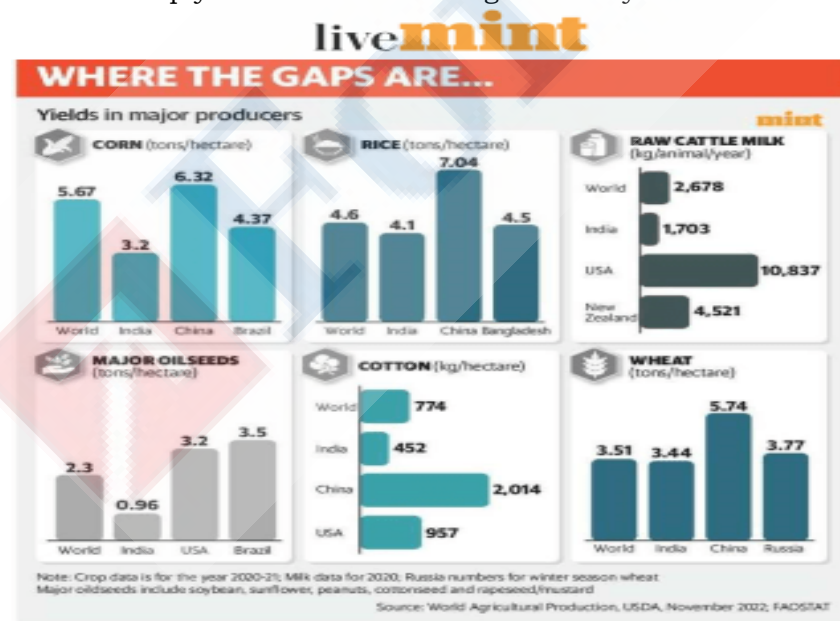
Source: The post is based on the article **“WHAT FARMING NEEDS: A GIANT TECH LEAP”** published in the **Livemint** on **22nd November 2022**.

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

Relevance: About low crop yield in India.

News: Low crop yield in India is a grave concern for Indian Agriculture.

How low crop yield in India stands against the yield of various countries?



Source: Livemint

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Soy yields in India are three-four times lower compared to the US and Argentina

Mustard yields are almost half compared to canola grown in Canada (mustard and canola belong to the same Brassica genus).

India is among the top producers of **cotton** in the world but yields are less than a fourth when compared to China.

Average **rice yields** in India are 57% of China and lower than even Bangladesh and Vietnam.

India is the largest producer of **milk** in the world but cattle milk yields (per animal per year) are 60% of China and less than a fifth of the US.

Why are crop yields so abysmally low in India?

This is because,

1) Low investments in public research: Total agriculture research spending in India grew from \$0.5 billion in 1981 to \$4 billion in 2016 (in purchasing power parity terms). During this period, spending in China grew from \$0.2 billion to \$7.7 billion,

2) A weak IPR regime discourages the private sector to invest and innovate, 3) Small farmers are unable to invest in crop management practices and technologies which can improve yields, and

4) Under the Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers Rights Act, 2001, farmers are allowed to reuse, exchange and sell seed of any variety. This restricts the private sector only to hybrid seed varieties.

5) In India, farmers have been growing the same seed variety for two decades. For instance, Indian farmers are forced to plant soybean seeds which were released for cultivation more than 15 years ago.

6) Outdated technologies: For instance, In cotton, India is the only large producer growing hybrids. While the rest of the world is growing open-pollinated varieties.

Read more: [We must break 'lock-ins' of water usage in agriculture](#)

What are the potential impacts of low crop yield in India?

a) Impact farmer incomes, b) Low yield will lead to inefficient and unsustainable use of soils, nutrients, water and land.

c) Farmers resort to illegal seeds: As seed technology is outdated, to save on labour costs of clearing weeds and increasing yields farmers resort to planting non-approved seed varieties. For instance, nearly a fifth of India's cotton area is now planted with illegal herbicide-tolerant GM cotton seeds.

Why India needs to work on its low crop yield?

1) According to the FAO, the world will need 50% more food by 2050 to feed the increasing global population along with a lower carbon footprint, 2) India's arable land is shrinking, and 3) As climate shocks become frequent, agriculture will emerge as a strategic sector for India and the entire world.

The only option left for India is to achieve agriculture sector growth by improving productivity.

Read more: [India's Agriculture Exports: Status and Challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

What should be done to improve low crop yield in India?

-The focus should be to increase output not just per unit of land but also with respect to water and fertilizer use.

-Upgrade farmers regularly with **improved seed varieties.**

-Central bodies and others have to be strengthened with resources, so they have the capacity to deliver to the changing needs.

-India should **develop science-based crop management practices** armed with **data analytics.** For instance, the variable rate technology (VRT) in US helps farmers to track soil health in real-time.

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Overall India has to focus on precision agriculture along with sustainable practices like zero-till and mulching to improve its low yield.

7. [Private-sector participation in space: Space for start-ups](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “[Space for start-ups](#)” published in the **Business Standard** on **22nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Awareness in the field of space

Relevance: About the private-sector participation in space.

News: The successful launch of Vikram-S, India’s first privately built rocket from start-up Skyroot, has focused on the opening up of space to private enterprises. Once the technology stabilises, the firm expects to launch two rockets a month.

About Vikram-S

Read here: [Vikram-S: India’s first private launch vehicle all set for maiden flight](#)

What is the potential of the Indian private sector in the space sector and the advantages of rapid launch capabilities?

Read here: [Importance of the private sector in manufacturing quick launch capabilities](#)

The global commercial space market is worth \$360 billion and expected to grow to at least \$500 billion by 2030. Both government agencies and private-sector firms are intent on launching satellites to service demands across areas ranging from internet broadband to entertainment delivery, climate monitoring, and multiple geo-location-based services.

How private-sector participation in space will enhance the capability of ISRO?

India’s space market share is just about \$7 billion, which is tiny, given the impressive capacity developed by ISRO. But the private participation will **a)** Help to translate ISRO’s demonstrated capabilities into business opportunities, **b)** Boost India’s market share to \$50 billion, or roughly 10%, by 2030, **c)** Help ISRO to focus on R&D and farm out the job of manufacturing components in accordance with specifications to the private sector, **d)** Ensure technology transfers from the agency to private players, and **e)** Allows private players to use Isro facilities for launches and tests as Skyroot did.

All this will enable private enterprises to move up the value chain from being component suppliers to players in the aerospace sector. On the other hand, ISRO could concentrate on more demanding tasks such as building bigger rockets and satellites with more capacity and more sophisticated capabilities.

What are the steps taken by the government to increase private-sector participation in space?

ISRO will soon induct a batch of five Polar Satellite Launch Vehicles (PSLVs) which are being built by a consortium of Hindustan Aeronautics and Larsen & Toubro. This marks the first instance where an entire rocket has been built outside the agency.

Hughes communication is in collaboration to deliver commercial broadband using ISRO satellites.

How did NASA benefit from private-sector participation in space?

NASA now tenders out all its manufacturers and issues tenders for innovative designs according to its specifications. For example, **a)** the reusable Falcon 9 rockets and the [Starlink satellite service](#) of SpaceX arose out of this policy, **b)** All the designs for [NASA’s Artemis Mission](#) is getting obtained through private R&D working to NASA specifications.

On the other hand, NASA does some of its own designs and releases many patents. So, the adoption of a similar policy could turn India into an aerospace powerhouse.

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8. [The geoheritage value of Ram Setu](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The geoheritage value of Ram Setu**” published in **The Hindu** on **22nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS – 3: Environmental Conservation.

Relevance: About Ram Setu and Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project (SSCP).

News: The Supreme Court gave the Centre four weeks’ time to file a response clarifying its stand on a plea seeking national heritage status for the ‘Ram Setu’.

What is Ram Setu?

Read here: [Ram Setu – A bridge across history, mythology and controversy](#)

In 2003 researchers at the Space Applications Centre in Ahmedabad using satellite remote-sensing imagery concluded that Ram Setu is not man-made, “but comprises 103 small patch reefs lying in a linear pattern with reef crest, sand cays and intermittent deep channels”.

What is the story behind the formation of Ram Setu?

During a global glaciation period that began around 2.6 million years ago and ended 11,700 years ago, the Indian coast, including parts of the Sethusamudram, may have been raised above the water.

And in time, the platforms may have been used by migrants to cross oceans. The Ramayana refers to a putative land bridge in this region.

The post-glaciation period witnessed a steady rise in sea levels around the world leading to the submergence of the bridge.

About Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project (SSCP)

It can be traced back to the British, who proposed creating a channel to link the Palk Strait with the Gulf of Mannar. The project was inaugurated in 2005. However, the project has been opposed on various grounds.

The CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute ruled out any serious environmental risk and certified the feasibility of the project. The SSCP, if completed, is expected to considerably reduce the navigation time between the east and west coasts of India.

What are the concerns associated with the SSCP?

Environmental concerns

Impacts of Waves: Computer models suggest that the central, eastern and northeastern parts of Palk Bay may be impacted by waves of higher energy. This means that these areas will receive more sediment, rendering them more turbid.

Impact of Cyclone: The area is also vulnerable to cyclonic storms. A cyclone in 1964 was so powerful that it wiped out the town of Dhanushkodi. So, finding safe places for dumping dredged material without harming terrestrial or marine ecosystems is a big challenge.

Emissions from ships: Emissions from ships will pollute the air and water. Any accident to a ship carrying oil or coal will lead to an ecological disaster.

Might be a final blow to the marine biosphere: The coral reef platforms between Thoothukudi and Rameswaram in the Gulf of Mannar were notified as a marine biosphere reserve in 1989. The reserve has more than 36,000 species of flora and fauna.

This area is already threatened by discharge from thermal plants, brine run-off from salt pans, and illegal mining of corals. The SSCP, if it becomes a reality, might be the final blow to this sensitive environment and to the livelihoods of the people.

Religious grounds

Religious groups have been opposing the project as they believe that the structure is mentioned in the Ramayana and have immense religious significance.

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What needs to be done?

Geodiversity consists of varied landforms and features representative of dynamic natural processes. The natural heritage of a country includes its geological heritage. The value of abiotic factors like geology, soils and landforms is also recognised for their roles in supporting habitats for biodiversity.

The Ram Setu carries the unique geological imprints of an eventful past. Therefore, it needs to be preserved not just as a national heritage monument, but also as a geoheritage structure as defined from a scientific perspective.

9. [Smooth flow – On Inland Waterways in India](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Smooth flow” published in **Business Standard** on **23rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Infrastructure

Relevance: inland waterways in India

News: The government of Uttar Pradesh has recently decided to use inland waterways to move export-bound cargo to international seaports.

It will integrate the Varanasi-Haldia inland waterway with the existing roads and highways network and help in developing a multimodal transport system in the country.

What is the present situation of inland waterways in India?

India has a huge inland waterways network which can be used for the movement of goods and passengers.

The **National Waterways Act, 2016** has identified around 111 navigable water courses and declared them “national inland waterways”.

However, **only 25 of them have been developed into operable water channels** and out of these only 13 are being used.

Inland waterways in India are **mostly unutilised** for commercial purposes despite the growing need in the economy.

India lags behind the **US, China and the European Union**, where more than 20 percent of merchandise transportation is done through waterways.

However, India passed the **Inland Vessels Act** last year which is expected to leverage inland waterways in India.

What are the benefits of inland waterways?

Inland water transportation is a **cheaper, convenient and environment friendly** mode of transporting cargo goods.

A **World Bank study** has found that water transportation is about 30 per cent cheaper than railways and 60 percent less expensive than roadways.

Carbon emission is also less compared to other road transports. However, there are also few concerns associated with it.

What are the concerns?

- a) Water courses need to be regularly cleaned to clear silt deposits, weeds and other obstructions,
- b) the loading and unloading points need to be augmented including terminal facilities for ships, and
- c) adequate water flows would need to be maintained in these streams at all times.

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10. Climate change – on COP 27

Source– The post is based on the article “**At COP27, one hit and many misses**” and published in **The Indian Express** and “**deja vu over the story of a calamity foretold**” published in the **mint** on **23rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment degradation

News- The article explains the major developments at COP27.

What were the expectations from COP27?

COP27 would respond to the growing urgency for greater **emission cuts**.

It was expected that every country would be asked to strengthen their respective climate actions every year from now to 2030. As of now, the countries have to upgrade their climate actions every five years.

The fossil fuel use would be phased down.

There was hope related to inclusion of a stronger measures for pursuing the 1.5 degree Celsius target.

There should be more emphasis on **adaptation**. It was hoped that COP27 would make some progress on identifying the adaptation goals.

Another expectation was **funding for adaptation purposes**. Developing countries have been demanding that at least half of climate finance should be directed towards adaptation projects.

What are the major decisions at COP27?

There was a decision to set up a **loss and damage fund**.

There was agreement on wording of the **implementation plan**.

It was decided to continue the discussions on a work programme set up last year to urgently scale up mitigation action. COP27 decided that two global dialogues would be held each year as part of this work programme.

It quantified for the first time the **financial needs** for climate action. It said about USD 4 trillion had to be invested in the renewable energy sector every year till 2030 if the 2050 net zero target was to be achieved. Additionally, at least USD 4-6 trillion was required every year for global transformation to a **low-carbon economy**. About USD 5.9 trillion was needed by the developing countries in the pre-2030 period, just to implement their climate action plans.

The developed countries have said they will ensure the USD 100 billion flow from 2023.

An important initiative on adaptation came from the UN Secretary General. He unveiled plans of the WMO **to set up early warning systems** in areas that do not have them. About one-third of the world, including about 60% of Africa, is not equipped with early warning and climate information systems.

What were the disappointments at COP27?

On most other parameters, COP27 proved to be an underachiever.

With current efforts to **reduce emissions**, the world is headed to a temperature rise of about 3 degree Celsius from pre-industrial times by the end of this century.

There was opposition from developing countries, especially gulf countries, to phase down fossil fuels.

The Inclusion of a stronger mention of the goal of pursuing the 1.5 degree Celsius target was not agreed upon.

The **issue of adaptation** was not given sufficient attention. Some countries, including the United States, did promise some money. But it wasn't more than a trickle.

the developed countries have not yet delivered on their promise to mobilise USD 100 billion every year. It should have happened in 2020. All that the COP27 final agreement did about this was to express serious concern.

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The **loss and damage clause** raise some concerns. It leaves a lot to the imagination and good sense of rich countries. COP 27 ended without finalising the size of the funding pool, how and from where money will come from and modus for disbursing it.

Implementation plan dodged the real issues.

What is the case of India?

India has sought **climate equity** on behalf of developing countries.

At COP27 in Glasgow, the final agreement accepted India's request that the text does not mention **phase-out** of coal but modify it to **phase-down**.

At COP27, India's demand that phase-down should include all fossil fuels such as oil and gas was met with opposition from hydrocarbon rich producers and consumers.

India has been criticised by western media for its **principled stand**.

11. [Deglobalisation poses a climate threat that demands attention](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Deglobalisation poses a climate threat that demands attention**” published in the **Hindu** on **23rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment degradation

News- The article explains the impacts of deglobalisation on efforts to fight climate change.

What are the impacts of deglobalisation on fighting against climate change?

Mitigation– Climate agreements will be easy to conclude if the world is not **fragmented economically**. It will be easy to **transfer technology** in exchange for emission commitment.

Free movement of people will make it easy to **monitor climate actions**.

Deglobalisation will hinder the production and innovation needed to replace **carbon-intensive production processes with climate-friendly ones**. Consider battery production for renewable energy for mitigation. Key inputs for the battery are in short supply. It needs free movement of resources to sustain the production of batteries.

Adaptation– It will be harder in a **deglobolised world**. New crops and technologies for adaptation will require more innovation, investment and financing. If flow of these things is impeded because of closed borders, developing countries will face difficulties in accessing them.

The surest way for developing countries to achieve more growth is export of goods and services.

Protectionist measures by developed countries will impede such growth. Hence, lack of funds will limit adaptation in the developing world.

Global diversification will bring **more resilience**. The supply chain will have multiple suppliers. It will be easy to shift production from a climate-hit supplier to elsewhere.

Migration- If mitigation and adaptation fail, more people will be forced to migrate. Closed borders will make climate refugees more vulnerable.

Deglobalisation will hamper efforts for global agreement on **climate refugees**.

What is the way forward?

International community should negotiate a **Geneva convention style pact**. It will create safe spheres of continued global interaction that are protected from sanctions and bans in most circumstances.

We should set stringent conditions for denying countries access to **global payment infrastructure** and for applying sanctions.

Effective climate actions require **continued globalisation**.

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12. [Review needed – Govt should address consumer complaints, not monitor product reviews](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Review needed – Govt should address consumer complaints, not monitor product reviews**” published in the **Business Standard** on **24th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS – 3 – changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Relevance: About monitoring online consumer reviews.

News: The Department of Consumer Affairs has unveiled the new standard – Indian Standard (IS) 19000:2022 on “Online Consumer Reviews” and Ratings. The framework aims to safeguard and protect consumer interest from fake and deceptive reviews in e-commerce.

What are the key features of the framework for monitoring online consumer reviews?

Must Read: [Centre launches framework for safeguarding and protecting consumer interest from fake and deceptive reviews in e-commerce](#)

What are the advantages of the framework for monitoring online consumer reviews?

Ensure neutral review: A retail channel or product manufacturer can add fake reviews praising the channel, or product, to influence consumers favourably. Equally, a rival channel can put out fake reviews criticising a product or channel to generate a negative impression. The framework will curb such reviews.

Encourages creation of Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC): Most e-commerce platforms operating in India are marketplaces offering an array of brands of various companies, and these are sold and orders serviced via different retail channels. Many e-marketing concerns offer services to generate positive reviews, alongside giving search engine optimisation and similar services.

So, neutral reviews will give valuable feedback to potential consumers by offering them the information required to choose between competing products, and between competing fulfilment channels.

What are the challenges associated with monitoring online consumer reviews?

The online framework is difficult to enforce because,

-The framework involves the government machinery moderating an activity that should ideally be left to the market.

-If reviews are shut down by the framework, both customers and platforms will lose a valuable channel for feedback.

-It is not really possible for a framework to judge if a reviewer is honest or not. The old principle of “buyer beware” should apply in such cases.

What should be done to safeguard and protect consumer interests?

Role of market forces: Market forces will sort out the fake from the genuine on their platforms. They will do this by allowing many reviews and simultaneously improving the ability to weed out the fakes are more useful than trying to over-regulate reviews.

Role of government: There are many laws protecting consumer rights and guarding people against false advertising. Consumers can seek redress under these laws and in consumer court. So, the regulatory focus should be on ensuring fast redressal of consumer complaints instead of monitoring them.

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13. [Be Punchy On Munchy – On Front of Packet Labelling \(FOPL\)](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Be Punchy On Munchy” published in *The Times of India* on 25th November 2022.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Food Processing

Relevance: benefits and concerns associated with Front of Packet Labelling

News: Front of Packet Labelling (FOPL) will become mandatory for the Indian snack industry after four years by FSSAI.

What is FOPL?

FOPL is a warning given to consumers to indicate which products contain excessive amounts of sugars, total fats, saturated fats, trans fats, and sodium.

What will be the benefits of FOPL?

It will **inform consumers** about the unhealthy ingredients involved in the snacks as snacks are mostly the causes of various diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, etc.

This will force the industry to follow to safer levels of sugar, salt and fat content. Further, FSSAI is opting for **star rating** – five stars for the healthiest food and half a star for the unhealthiest.

However, higher ratings would not be beneficial if sugar, salt or fat content are also high with healthy products.

What are the concerns?

Consumers would have benefitted from knowing **Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)** from a particular food but FSSAI has kept it optional. RDA refers to the average daily level of intake sufficient to meet the nutrient requirements.

Further, RDA claims of the packaged industry needs rigorous laboratory testing but FSSAI's baseline reference value for food risk factors is at 21 gms per 100 gms serving of sugar in solid foods.

It is **very high** considering **WHO recommendation** of keeping daily sugar intake to below 25 gms ideally.

What can be the course of action?

Products should be taxed according to the contents of the sugar, salt and fat they have.

For example, products with higher content should be taxed higher while those having low content should be taxed lower. This will help in discouraging junk foods.

Kerala has already come up with a “**fat tax**” on burgers and pizzas in 2016. Further, FOPL and regular tax hikes on cigarettes have helped disencentivise smoking.

Therefore, the government should consider putting tax like these by keeping concerns of its citizens first.

14. [Pricing power – After doing course correction, TRAI needs to free tariffs](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “Pricing power – After doing course correction, TRAI needs to free tariffs” published in the *Business Standard* on 25th November 2022.

Syllabus: GS – 3 – Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Relevance: About the recent amendment to the new tariff order (NTO) 2.0.

News: Recently, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) decided to amend the new tariff order (NTO) 2.0 to restore the price cap for a television channel to Rs 19 from Rs 12 earlier.

About the Bouquets and recent amendment to the new tariff order (NTO) 2.0

Bouquets are a business model for broadcasters to package some less popular channels with TRP (television rating point) churners. Typically, broadcasters get more than 90% of their subscription revenues from bouquets.

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In 2020, the regulator set a price cap of Rs 12 per channel in a bouquet under NTO 2.0. But the broadcasters and direct-to-home (DTH) broadcasters termed the new pricing as prohibitive. This resulted in the regime being put on hold several times. But recently the TRAI restored the price to Rs 19 from Rs 12 earlier.

Further, TRAI also capped the channel bundle discounts at 45% and the NTO 2.0 becomes effective in February 2023.

What are the benefits of the recent amendment to the NTO 2.0?

a) Over-regulation in tariffs forces firms to disproportionately depend on advertising revenues. Hence, the recent decision will help TV broadcasters to balance advertising and subscription revenue, **b)** Help traditional TV broadcasters in their competition with over-the-top (OTT) platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime.

Read more: [The right price: on TRAI's latest recommendations](#)

What are the challenges with the recent amendment to the NTO 2.0?

Capping bundle discounts is not consumer friendly: Earlier broadcasters argued that limiting the discounts on bundles would force them to hike the prices of smaller channels. . Since the cap on discounts remains, TRAI has not achieved the task of making the new tariff structure truly consumer friendly.

TRAI should not cap the prices: TRAI must stay away from regulating channel prices or broadcasting platform tariffs in keeping with competitive market dynamics. Platform owners and broadcasters have the right to do mutually negotiated agreements.

Read more: [TRAI to roll out caller ID system to rival Truecaller in 3 weeks](#)

To check any unfair practices, TRAI must act and also direct broadcasters to be transparent about their offers and tariffs.

15. [COP27 and the ambiguity about responsibility](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**COP27 and the ambiguity about responsibility**” published in **The Hindu** on **26th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environmental degradation

Relevance: Climate change

News- The article explains the issues related to the climate finance and Loss and Damage provisions.

What is Loss and Damage agenda for developing countries?

The main **L and D agendas** for developing countries since the Paris Agreement have been changed to the existing narrative of averting L and D to addressing losses that have already occurred. It has now changed to start holding developed countries **morally responsible and financially liable** for the same.

They argue that losses from these events cannot be adapted to. Developed countries should inherit the **resultant responsibility and liability**.

What has been the traditional understanding of Loss and Damage?

L and D in ratified UN text talks about **prevention and pre-disaster preparation**. It conflates **L and D with adaptation**. This is in the interest of developed countries that do not want any new responsibilities.

What are the issues with Loss and Damage provisions introduced at COP27?

The new L and D fund introduced at COP27 seems a **narrative failure**. It only makes a distinction between **adaptation and L and D**. The text finally frames L and D as **post-event “rehabilitation, recovery, and reconstruction”**.

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It excludes mention of **historic responsibility** and the principle of **Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)**. There is no clear indication that the fund will be paid for by developed countries.

The decision to explore a range of solutions means a slow shift of the L and D burden onto the private sector, and perhaps even to richer developing countries such as China.

What is the case of climate finance?

In 2009, developed countries had promised developing countries \$100 billion in **climate finance** annually by 2020. It still remains unmet. Although it is a fraction of what developing countries need, it is an important symbol of trust.

Much deliberation around finance has focused on assessing progress towards this goal. The developed countries now aim to meet this goal by 2023.

There is need for discussions around a new, enhanced developed country target that is meant to replace this \$100 billion commitment by 2025. It will be important **trust-building exercises** encouraging greater cooperation towards climate action.

Carbon markets have emerged as more prominent vehicles for channelling private finance. Under **Article 6 of the Paris Agreement**, two types of markets will allow countries and companies to trade in emissions reductions.

Many questions regarding the design of these markets were addressed at COP26. But there are still concerns about whether these markets would be **transparent**, lead to actual emissions reductions, and risk reductions being counted twice.

Developing countries want to focus on the **public finance** that developed countries should provide. But the finance conversation is becoming **multi-stranded** and spreading to arenas outside **formal negotiating channels**.

What were important development related to climate finance at COP27?

Developing countries have been keen to maintain focus on developed country obligations. Consequently, there was no discussion on **Article 2.1c of the Paris Agreement**, which seeks to make all finance flows compatible with low-carbon development.

COP27 also saw momentum build towards encouraging finance through other channels.

For the first time, the COP27 decision text included a call for reforming the **global financial system**, particularly **multilateral development banks**. It calls for making them more supportive of climate action.

It also calls for MDBs to reduce the costs of borrowing for climate projects, increase finance for **adaptation**, and better align their operations with the **Paris Agreement**.

16. Why India's push for millets is yet to gain widespread traction

Source: The post is based on an article "**Why India's push for millets is yet to gain widespread traction**" published in **The Indian Express** on **26th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Agriculture

Relevance: importance of millets

News: The year 2023 will be celebrated as the International Year of Millets. The external affairs minister S. Jaishankar has put emphasis on popularizing millets.

What are millets?

Millets is used to describe small-grained cereals like sorghum (jowar), pearl millet (bajra), foxtail millet (kangni/ Italian millet), little millet (kutki), kodo millet, finger millet (ragi/ mandua), etc.

Ancient crop: Millets are among the **first crops** to be domesticated. There is evidence for consumption of millets by the **Indus valley people**. The varieties of millets grown across the world were first cultivated in India.

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Distribution: West Africa, China, and Japan are home to indigenous varieties of the crop. Millets are now grown in more than 130 countries and are the traditional food for more than half a billion people in Asia and Africa.

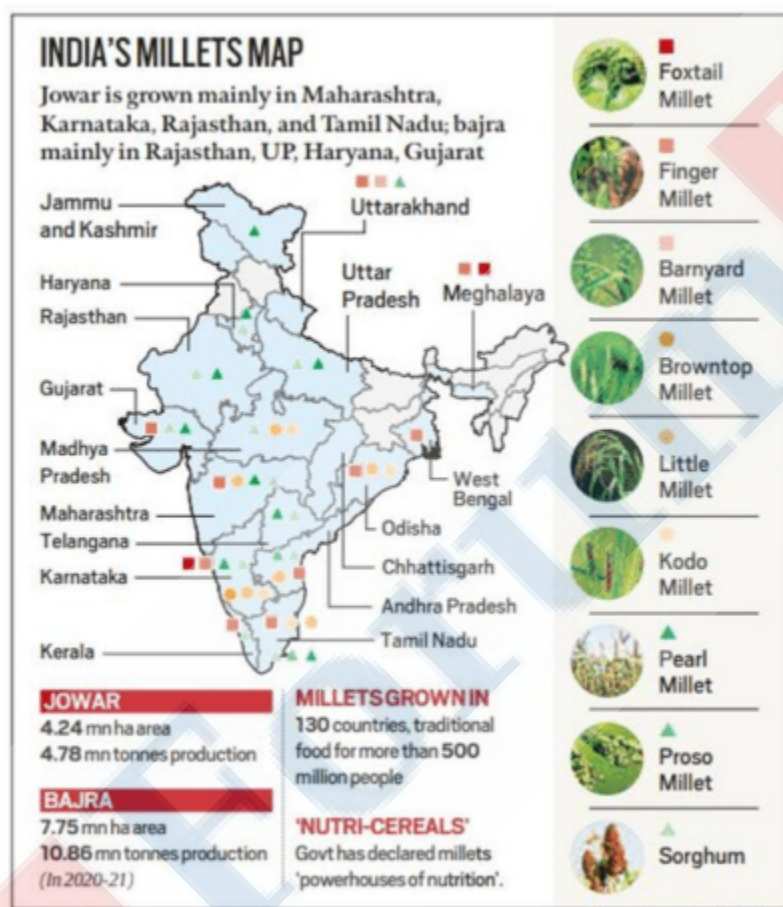
Growth: They require much less water than rice and wheat and are mainly grown in rainfed areas.

Millets produced across the world

Jowar: Sorghum (jowar) is **the biggest millet crop**. The major producers of jowar are the United States, China, Australia, India, Argentina, Nigeria, and Sudan.

Bajra: It is another major millet crop; India and some African countries are major producers.

Millets produced in India



Source: Agriculture Ministry

Millets are mainly a **kharif crop in India**. Three millet crops — bajra, jowar, and ragi — accounted for about 7 per cent of the gross cropped area in the country during 2018-19.

Jowar: It is produced in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, and Madhya Pradesh. **Maharashtra** is the leading producer.

Bajra: it is produced in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka. **Rajasthan** is the leading producer.

What are the benefits of millets?

They have high nutritional value. The Agriculture Ministry has also declared millets as “**Nutri Cereals**”. Small millets are more nutritious compared to fine cereals. They contain higher protein, fat and fiber content.

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Are Millets included under PDS and MSP provided by the government?

The **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013** does not mention millets but coarse grains are included in the definition of “food grains” under Section 2(5) of the NFSA.

However, the quantity of coarse grains procured and distributed under the NFSA has been negligible.

Therefore, the government has decided to include millets in the PDS to improve the nutritional status of pre-school children and women of reproductive age.

The government declares a Minimum Support Price (**MSP**) for jowar, bajra, and ragi only.

What is the consumption pattern of millets in India?

As per the latest **NSSO** household consumption expenditure survey less than 10 percent of rural and urban households consumes millets. The urban areas consumed less compared to rural areas in India.

Millets are mainly consumed in Gujarat (jowar and bajra), Karnataka (jowar and ragi), Maharashtra (jowar and bajra), Rajasthan (bajra), and Uttarakhand (ragi).

What is the geo-political significance of the proposal made by India?

Millet is grown mainly in **low-income and developing** countries in Asia and Africa.

India has put itself as the leader of the group by proposing the resolution at UNGA to celebrate 2023 as the International Year of Millets like International Solar Alliance initiative.

Therefore, this proposal will help India to lead the world in spreading awareness for millets.

17. [Climate justice means rich nations helping migrants](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Climate justice means rich nations helping migrants**” published in **The Times of India** on **26th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment

Relevance: impact of climate change.

News: The article discusses the impact of climate change.

What is the impact of climate change?

Climate change causes **climate refugees**, i.e., people tend to move from one place to another due to the increasing climate disasters. **South Asia and the US** are examples of such refugees.

Small island states will also see refugees as their entire country is expected to be submerged in the sea due to the rising sea levels.

The problem becomes severe when people move across borders due to climate change. This is referred to as the **protection gap**. This will act as a humanitarian challenge as there are **no legal frameworks** to protect climate refugees.

What are the current laws?

The **Geneva Convention on Refugees** applies only to political applicants and climate refugees are not included in it.

The **Nansen Initiative** is a voluntary non-binding framework. It has been adopted by some states but applies only to cross-border movements associated with disasters. It does not include displacement caused by global warming.

What will be the concerns for climate refugees?

Climate refugees moving to another country will face hurdles of crossing borders, security, healthcare and other basic amenities.

Further, the countries they are moving to have their own problems and it would be difficult for those countries to look after those refugees.

Some people will not be able to move due to extreme poverty, disability, gender, cultural norms, etc. They will be a **trapped population** and the most affected people due to climate change.

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Therefore, there is a need for the world to look into the issue and those responsible must pay for it.

Who can pay for climate change?

Industrialised countries and fossil fuel companies are the greatest emitters and they have a larger responsibility to help climate refugees. The **loss and damage mechanism** adopted at CoP 27 is one of the efforts to address the issue.

Therefore, those who generated the problem should contribute to a fund and compensate to help climate refugees and an international framework is needed to protect them.

18. The future of Indian economy: Should it play the power game or values game?

Source– The post is based on the article “**The future of Indian economy: Should it play the power game or values game?**” published in the **Business Standard** on **26th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy

Relevance: Economic policy

News- The article explains the dilemmas faced by Indian policymakers while deciding the right policies for economic growth.

What are the questions faced by Indian policymakers?

Effects on India’s attractiveness when the latest draft of “**personal data protection**” Bill gives unchecked powers to the state to frame rules according to its whim?

Impacts on a country’s reputation as a business destination when domestic courts are used to stymie **international arbitration awards**?

growing presence of **business oligarchs** tied to the establishment ruling out a **level playing field**.

Arbitrary action by state, like keeping people in jail for years together without bringing cases against them to court?

How are these questions being dismissed in today’s world?

China has achieved decades of rapid growth and development as a **one-party state**. It is not providing freedom to citizens. Businesses are also not treated equally.

Middle powers are increasingly disregarding the **values of a liberal democracy** as being a **European construct**. They prefer **nationalism and cultural-identity politics**.

Globalisation is yielding to **inward-looking policies** in countries that were advocates of **open markets**.

What needs to be done by Indian policymakers?

India has to settle the question of **government-business relationship** and **state-citizen equation**. It must ask why thousands of wealthy Indians are emigrating in ever larger numbers to places that include Singapore and Dubai. What do they find missing in India?

India must face up to one fact. It is not China. The **dynamism and size** of China’s domestic market, combined with its unique advantages as a production base, made it impossible for investors to stay away.

In comparison, India has competitors who present themselves as **investment alternatives**. India has a long way to go. It needs to play nice more than China did.

India must decide what kind of country it wants to be. It want to be admired for its **soft power** and market, or an arbitrary state that can do what it wills with both individuals and businesses.

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19. Bright Right Now-For growth, quality of human resources is key

Source: The post is based on the article “**Bright Right Now-For growth, quality of human resources is key**” published in the **Indian Express** on **26th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS – 3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Relevance: About improving India’s Human resources.

News: Recently, China has embarked on another round of Covid shutdowns in some large urban centres to suppress a wave of infections. According to IMF, the economic fallout of endless curbs in the world’s second-largest economy (China) will ripple out into 2023.

Along with China, the US and Europe are also struggling. Hence, the global economy is estimated to grow by 2.7% in 2023.

How India can take advantage of the situation?

India expected to grow at 6.1% will be a global bright spot. Economic might does provide the country leverage to realise other goals for collective welfare. For instance, it will help India to push for better terms in the ongoing free trade talks.

Why India must improve its human resource?

a) According to the government’s urban jobs report, the unemployment rate was 7.2% even in most dynamic areas, **b)** Only 46% of the eligible population in India was in the workforce in 2021 compared to a global average of 59%.

How India can improve its human resources further?

The government should not lose sight of structural weakness in the Indian economy. Further, India needs to improve its long-term needs in the job market.