



9 PM

Compilation

November 2022

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General Studies Paper – 1

General Studies - 1

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

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

Syllabus: GS1- Urbanisation. GS2- Local bodies

Relevance– Urban governance

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

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

What is the importance of asset creation in urban areas?

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

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

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

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

Procurement process and enforcement– The procurement process is weak.

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

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

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

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

Training and feedback are either absent or irregular.

What is the way forward?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS 1- Population and associated issues.

Relevance: Rising global population and concerns associated with it.

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

What are the different views on the rising global population?

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

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

What are the projections for global population growth?

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

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

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

What are the concerns for India?

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

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

South Sudan and Kosovo are examples of it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS1- Modern Indian history

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

What was the contribution of India in two world wars?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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4. [How we can make the digital space safer for all, particularly women](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**How we can make the digital space safer for all, particularly women**” published in The Indian Express on **15th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1- Society

News– The article explains the need to focus on safety tools and features across digital platforms

What are the reasons for increasing vulnerability of women in digital space?

India has one of the **youngest youth demographics** in the world and among the most active online. **Increased online interactions** lead to more content which is shared among people. Sometimes, these interactions also make them vulnerable to harm. Women are often particularly vulnerable.

Private pictures of young women are leaked online. Sometimes it is from a hacked account, other times because of a soured relationship.

It should be no surprise that young men and women are exploring new ways to express their sexuality through sharing intimate images. These new social norms have created **new forms of abuse** where women are usually the victims.

What are the reactions to such abuses?

Crimes that disproportionately impact women devolve into **mass panic**. This reaction ends up denying women their freedom and agency by their **so-called “protectors”**. They advise women to go offline, to be ashamed of expressing themselves.

What are the efforts by various stakeholders for online safety of women?

Leading academics are spearheading research around the topic to discuss the evolution of technology-facilitated abuse.

New IT rules have shown concern regarding the safety and security of users, particularly women and children.

With the overhaul of the IT Act, there is an opportunity to discuss in detail the nature of **technology-facilitated abuse**. This could be the start of an era of **evidence-based discussion**.

What is the way forward?

Industry, also, has a role to play. If platform providers could be more responsive to the concerns and experiences of women then, it can help mitigate such issues.

Platforms need to **design choices** that help women stay in control of who they engage with. They should leverage **open source technology** that detects and blurs lewd images so that women don't need to see unsolicited pictures.

We need to focus on **safety tools and features** across the spectrum of websites and apps.

Societal cooperation is needed. **Public discourse** around technology-facilitated abuse has to be elevated

5. [8 billion & falling: India, soon to be the world's most populous country, has a narrow window to encash its demographic dividend](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**8 billion & falling: India, soon to be the world's most populous country, has a narrow window to encash its demographic dividend**” published in **The Times of India** on **16th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 1- Population

Relevance: concerns associated with rising population

News: Global population has reached 8 billion. The world's population has more than doubled over the last six decades, even when developing countries tried to control their population expansion.

What are the concerns with the rise in population for the world?

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Globally, the population is rising but the fact is that there has been **demographic decline** with a **low fertility rate**. It is also expected that **population graying** will be dominant in this century.

What does rising population implies for India?

India is set to become the world's most populous country in the next year.

However, with the increase in population, the **fertility rate** in India has also declined and has dropped below the replacement level. Therefore, the challenge lies with India in using its demographic dividend.

What is the current situation of India and what is the way forward?

The share of the **working age population** peaked at 66% in 2012 globally whereas the working age population in India stood at 70% in 2020. This shows that India's performance compared to the world is not up to the mark.

Research also indicates that in India the economic benefit from the demographic transition has been lower than other Asian countries.

Further, the proportion of the overall working age population in India was at 46% in 2021 while the global average was 59%.

The situation is poorer when it comes to the **employment of women** in India. **World Bank's** data shows that women employment in India is at only 19% compared to a global average of 46%.

Therefore, India needs to employ more women, improve its overall human capital quality by skilling them and come up with the right policy. This will help India to utilize its demographic dividend efficiently.

6. [The inspiration for New India: The unsung martyrs of Mangarh](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**The inspiration for New India: The unsung martyrs of Mangarh**" published in the **Indian Express** on **17th November**.

Syllabus: GS 1 – The Freedom Struggle — its various stages and important contributors/contributions from different parts of the country.

Relevance: About the Mangarh Massacre and relevance of tribal movements.

News: On November 17, 1913, Mangarh Massacre or Adivasi Jallianwala have occurred.

What is Mangarh Massacre, and who is Govind Guru?

Read here: [Mangarh Massacre: Rajasthan's Jallianwala Bagh: A lost story](#)

Govind Guru demanded that the colonial state should reduce the revenue rate during famines and stop encroaching on the religious freedom of tribal communities and harming their culture. How government is showcasing tribal movements?

-**Mangarh Dham** will be developed as a joint project of the governments of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. It will be a national memorial showcasing tribal legacy and their rich cultural heritage.

-The government is already setting up **tribal museums in 10 states** — Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, MP, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and Kerala — to raise awareness about the sacrifices made by tribals during the freedom struggle.

What is the relevance of tribal movements in the country?

After 75 years of Independence, Prime Minister gave a call for **Amrit Kaal's "Panch Pran"**. This involves removing traces of the colonial mindset, taking pride in our roots, inculcating unity and a sense of duty and improving the well-being of the nation. The role of tribal communities during the freedom struggle and nation-building inspires this endeavour.

The environment-friendly lifestyle of tribal communities and their zeal to protect nature offer valuable lessons to people from the elite class and developed countries.

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How did tribal movements help India to achieve social justice?

India's growth story was incomplete when the tribals were left behind. Droupadi Murmu taking over as the President of India is a landmark in the country's history. At present, the Union Council of Ministers has eight tribal ministers.

The pro-poor welfare policies, people-centric measures, Eklavya Model residential schools, scholarship schemes for students and health schemes of the government have imparted a new meaning to the idea of social justice.

7. [The Chinese are planning a series of Himalayan dams of such worrying scale that they must be halted](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The Chinese are planning a series of Himalayan dams of such worrying scale that they must be halted**” published in **The Times of India** on **17th November**.

Syllabus: GS 1 – Geographical features and their location changes in critical geographical features.

Relevance: About the features of the Himalayas.

News: John Key has written about the mountain range since the 1960s. Recently, he has written a book titled ‘Himalaya: Exploring the Roof of the World’.

What are the major highlights of his book on the Himalayas?

-In Tibetan mythology, the great peaks are persons, or rather they are deities. They constitute a society of gods who commune, fight and even mate among themselves.

Himalayan mountain pilgrimage: From Nanga Parbat in the West to Mount Kailas and Tsari in Tibet, Hindus, Buddhists and even Muslims go around the sacred peaks seeking intercession, merit and guidance.

Local communities know how to coexist: The technologies locals favour are best suited to their physical circumstances, like micro hydro projects and the frozen water towers being trialled in Ladakh.

They pioneered **glaciculture** in the Karakoram of Gilgit-Baltistan. Under it, farmers dependent on glacier melt have learnt how to seed new glaciers by artificial insemination.

Chinese dams need to be stopped: In Pemako in SE Tibet, the Chinese are planning a series of dams which will divert the waters of the Tsangpo-Brahmaputra from Assam to northern China. These can produce three times the electrical output of Yangtse's Three Gorges Dam.

Similar scale dams are being built on the Indus near Chilas where “an average of 300 earthquakes in a single month” is reported. However, vital to “development”, these projects have to be stopped to protect the environment.

8. [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.

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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.

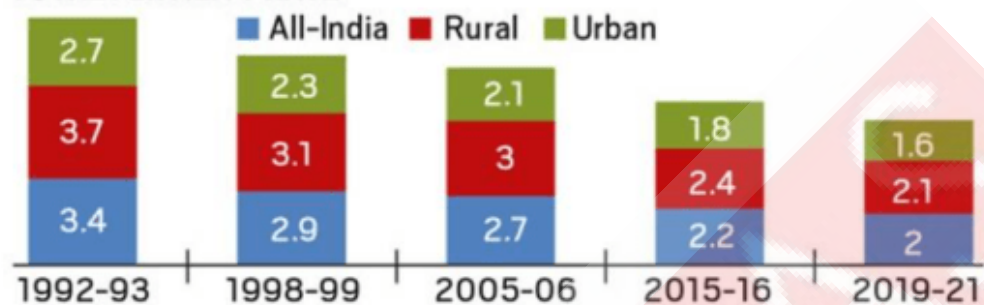
The share of the **working age population** is expected to peak in the mid-2030s. Therefore, India has an opportunity in the coming years to utilise its **demographic dividend** like China did from the late 1980s until up to 2015.

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

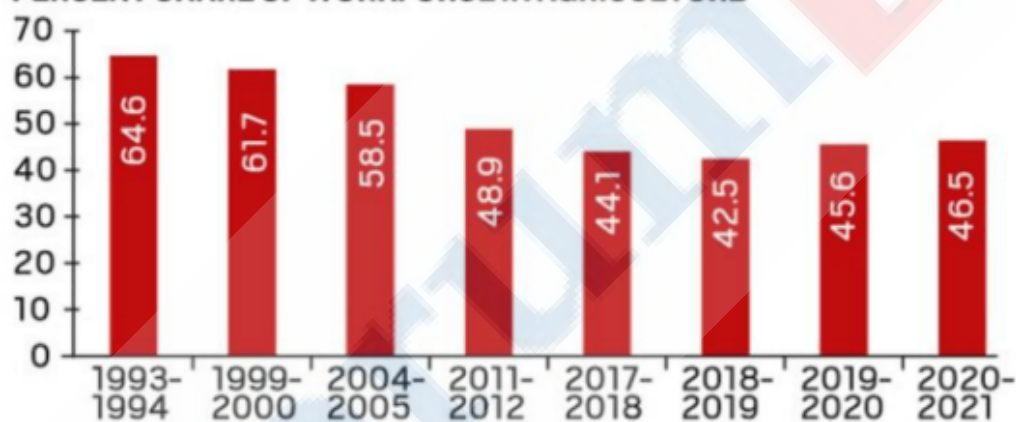
TOTAL FERTILITY RATE



Source: National Family Health Surveys

CHART-3

PERCENT SHARE OF WORKFORCE IN AGRICULTURE



Source: Employment & Unemployment and Periodic Labour Force Surveys

9. [It's time to discuss depopulation](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Its time to discuss depopulation**” published in **The Hindu** on **28th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1 and GS2 Population and associated Issues

Relevance– Human Resource

News– The article explains the increasing population in India.

What are Statistical data of Population in India as per recent report?

By current **United Nations estimates**, India’s population will begin to decline only in 2063 It will be just shy of 1.7 billion by that time

Fertility in India is falling along expected lines as a direct result of rising incomes and greater female access to health and education. India’s **total fertility rate** is now below the **replacement rate of fertility**.

What are the challenges associated with depopulation in India?

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First, the mismatch is rising gap between **sex ratio** as families with a first son is less likely to have a second child.

Second, the literacy rate is going to play an important role in deciding depopulation.

Third, the sharp **anti-Muslim tone in the conversation** has remained even though fertility between Hindus and Muslims is converging.

What is the way forward?

The focus of one should be upon the various dimensions of population like harnessing the potential of **demographic dividend**.

There is a need for much focus on **betterment of living standard of living** by providing skills to the youth and bridging the gap between the workforce.

10. [Still a nightmare for domestic violence survivors](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Still a nightmare for domestic violence survivors**” published in **The Hindu** on **29th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1- Society

Relevance: Women related issues

News- The article explains the challenges associated with accessing services with respect to domestic violence.

What are the facts associated with Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a punishable offence under **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 (PWDVA)**. It is a violation of human rights.

The latest round of the **National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21)** reveals that 32% of ever-married women aged 18-49 years have ever experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence committed by their husbands.

Despite almost a third of women being subject to domestic violence, the National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) reports that only 14% of women have ever sought help.

What are the issues related with Domestic Violence faced by Women?

Despite the law existing on paper, women are still largely **unable to access the law** in practice. Its promise and provisions are unevenly implemented, unavailable and out of reach for most Indian women.

The research in Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu reveals that Women were hopeful that things would change, that they could change their husband's behaviour.

Women believed that they would become ‘**a problem**’ or **a source of ‘tension**’ for their families, and bringing them shame and dishonour, irrespective of the survivor's level of education, caste, or class.

For **migrant women, transpeople** or those with several sisters, or ill, older or deceased parents, it was felt even more acutely that the perpetrator's violence was their **individual responsibility to manage**.

Parents, in a majority of cases, insisted on their daughter preserving the family environment which they should do by adjusting to their husband's and his family's needs better. In a minority of cases, the daughter's welfare was prioritised over the well-being of the ‘the family’ and steps were taken to help mediate or exit the relationship.

NFHS-5 data reports that women are more likely than men to justify a scenario in which it is acceptable for a husband to beat or hit his wife.

With **few safe houses** across India, Many women have nowhere else to go.

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Access to legal justice through the courts was a material possibility only for women with independent wealth and connections or those supported by specialist non-governmental organisations.

What are the issues regarding role of state?

Across the States, we heard that the police were more likely to **send women back to violent households** to reconcile with the perpetrator.

Several States are yet to implement **Protection officers**. And where they are in post, they are under resourced, under-skilled and overworked.

Women know all too well that the state serves **patriarchal and heteronormative interests** first. The state is failing women.

11. [On the entry of women in masjids](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“On the entry of women in masjids”** published in **The Hindu** on **30th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS1- Social empowerment. GS2- Mechanisms and laws for protection and betterment of vulnerable sections

Relevance– Issues related to women

News– The article explains the issues related to prohibition on entry of women inside Jama Masjid premises.

Following a meeting with the Lieutenant-Governor, the mosque authorities withdrew the ban.

What is the Islamic law on women’s entry?

Among Islamic scholars, there is less disagreement on a woman’s right to offer prayers inside a masjid. Most Islamic scholars agree that a prayer can be offered at home but can only be established in a group. Hence, there is the importance of going to a mosque.

Most also agree that women have been exempted, not prohibited from going to the mosque. The **Quran** at no place prohibits women from going to mosques for prayers. Wherever the Quran talks of establishing prayer, it talks in gender **neutral terms**.

In Mecca and Medina, both men and women pray. Both places have separate halls earmarked for men and women. Also, across West Asia there is no ban on women coming to the masjid for prayers.

The denial of access to mosques for women worshippers is a largely **subcontinental phenomenon**. In India, only a handful of mosques maintained or owned by Jamaat-e-Islami and the Ahl-e-Hadith sect have provisions for women worshippers.

Have there been similar bans before?

In 2011, Haji Ali Dargah prohibited women from going beyond it. They started a campaign, **‘Haji Ali for All’**, winning over more women in the process. Led by the **Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan**, the women approached the Bombay High Court. It ruled in their favour in 2016.

What is the legal issue?

According to the Constitution, there is complete **equality** between men and women. In the Haji Ali Dargah case too, the High Court quoted **Articles 15, 16 and 25** of the Constitution to grant women the desired access to the dargah.

There are petitions filed before the Supreme Court wherein access has been sought for women in all mosques across the country. The apex court has clubbed them with the **Sabarimala case**.

General Studies Paper – 2

General Studies - 2

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

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

Syllabus: GS 2 – International relations

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

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

What are the goals of NSS?

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

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

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

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

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

What are the agendas put under NSS?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Governance**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice –

Relevance: Problems with GHI 2022

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

What are the problems with GHI?

Problems with Indicators

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

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

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

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

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

Problems of food shortages

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

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

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

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

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

What can be the course of action?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS2- Mechanism and laws related to vulnerable sections

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

What is the legal position?

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

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

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

What are the issues involved?

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

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

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

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

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

What is the way forward?

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS2- International relations. GS3- Energy

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

What are some facts related to the current energy crisis?

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

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

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

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

The epicenter of the crisis has been Europe.

What will be the implication of this crisis?

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

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

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

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

Countries will have to prioritize energy security over other goals.

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

What is the scenario of India?

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

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

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

How reservation Indian is given?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What are the problems with EWS quota?

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the way forward?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

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

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

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

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

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

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

However, there are different arguments regarding the Act.

What are the different arguments regarding the Act?

Arguments against the Act

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

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

Arguments for the Act

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

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

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

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

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

What are the challenges ahead?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS 2 – Government Policies

Relevance: amendment in the IT Rules, 2021

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

What are the IT Rules, 2021?

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

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

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

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

What are the additional obligations placed on the SMIs?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What are the newly-introduced Grievance Appellate Committees?

The government has instituted Grievance Appellate Committees (GAC).

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

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

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

What are the concerns associated with GAC?

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

9. [The integrated circuit wars](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What are the reasons behind the sanctions?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice

Relevance: concerns with health system in rural India

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: Israel economy and lessons for India

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

How has Israel focused on its growth?

Pandemic: Israel rolled out Covid vaccines along with early booster dose to mitigate the effects of pandemic on its economy. Israel was open during the Omicron wave and it achieved a 5.2% GDP growth that year.

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

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

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

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

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

13. At SCO meet, Jaishankar targets BRI

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

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: India's response in SCO meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the stand of India on BRI?

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS2- Federalism

Relevance– Position of Governor

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

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

What does the constitution say about the powers of governor?

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

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

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

What has been the position of the judiciary?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How should the governor use discretionary powers?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS2- Health GS- Science and Technology

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

What are the issues with the KFD vaccine?

The KFD vaccine has faced both **regulatory and quality problems** for over two decades.

CDSCO has not given permission to the vaccine manufacturer, the Bengaluru based IAHVB since at least 2002.

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

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

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

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

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

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

It detected the carrier of the virus.

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

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

What is the legal process for vaccine approval?

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

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

What are some facts about KFD?

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

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

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

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

Relevance: Explaining how poverty fell faster after 2011.

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

About India’s poverty estimation through NFHS

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

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

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

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

Source: Indian Express

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18. [Poppy love in Afghanistan](#)

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

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

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

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

What are the highlights of the report say?

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

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

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

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

When did poppy cultivation start in Afghanistan?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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How has opium helped Afghanistan?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



19. [Higher education needs relief from its resource crunch](#)

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

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Education**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How has the grants given to universities changed?

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

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

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

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

Why universities face problems even with the increase in grants?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How were five-year plans beneficial for universities?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Relevance: Voting system.

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

What is the present voting system for overseas citizens?

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

What are the issues with the present system?

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

What is the stand of ECI?

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

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

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

Why is allowing postal ballots a good move?

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: About the use of nuclear weapons.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is National Judicial Appointments Commission?

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

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

Why India needs a system like NJAC?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Relevance: About the state-level fiscal responsibility.

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

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

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

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

What is the importance of fiscal devolution?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS2- Significant provisions of Indian constitution

Relevance– Secularism and related issues

News- The article explains the Uniform Civil Code.

What is Uniform Civil Code?

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

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

What do the debates of constituent assembly say about UCC?

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

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

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

What are various arguments around UCC?

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

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

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

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

What is the stand of the Supreme Court?

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

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

What has the law commission said?

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

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

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

What is the stand of the government?

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS2- Indian economy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What can be the further course of action?

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

UPI involves payment service providers of payers and payees, the remitter and beneficiary banks as well as NPCI. The market for merchant acquisition is usually more competitive and can be left unregulated. If necessary the interchange fee between the two payment service providers can be

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regulated. If both markets are sufficiently competitive, regulation should focus upon establishing a floor charge.

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

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

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

26. EWS verdict underscores that judiciary has been a reluctant supporter of caste-based reservation

Source: The post is based on the following articles

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

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

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

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

Relevance: About the validity of 103rd constitutional amendment.

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

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

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

How courts viewed the reservation in various instances?

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

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

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

About Courts vs Constitutional amendments

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

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

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

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

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

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

According to judges,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the course of the Ukraine crisis so far?

1) The shifting politics of the war: Russia’s special military operation that was to produce a quick victory in Ukraine has turned into a terrible misadventure. Russia has suffered huge military losses on the ground in manpower and equipment. **2) Russia’s threat underline its weakness:** Russia currently focuses on destroying the Ukrainian cities and the occasional threat to use nuclear weapons underline Russia’s weakness in the Ukraine war rather than its strength. **3) Backfire of sanctions on western countries:** The western countries imposed massive sanctions on Russia after it launched a war against Ukraine to bring the Russian economy to its knees. But in reality, the sanctions have major effects on Western societies. For instance, Europe was right in the middle of the gravest conflict since the Second World War. So, there is growing political support in Europe for a quick resolution of the conflict, and **4) Liberalised stand of the US:** The US is beginning to recalibrate its current approach to the Ukraine crisis. For instance, recently, the US called for greater flexibility in Ukraine’s approach to negotiations with Russia. The US said that Ukraine’s hardline might intensify the “Ukraine fatigue” in the West and fracture the anti-Western coalition against Russia.

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

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

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

28. The frontliners of the first 1,000-day window of life – on addressing child and maternal health

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

Syllabus: GS2- Issue relating to poverty and hunger

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

Why is addressing malnutrition important?

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

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

What are some facts related to POSHAN Abhiyan?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the importance of frontline workers?

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

In many geographies, they are the only access point to basic nutrition and other health services.

They are critical in promoting healthy practices, providing **on-ground support**, and **improving awareness**.

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS2- India and its neighbourhood relations

Relevance– India-Pakistan bilateral relations

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

What is the new normal in India-Pakistan relations?

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

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

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

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

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

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

What has been the traditional character of this relationship?

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

What development took place in the relationship after 2014?

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

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

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

The Uri attack in December 2016 and surgical strike by India, practically froze the relationship. The February 2019 terror attack in Pulwama, and the BJP government's decisions made in August 2019 on Kashmir led to complete stalemate.

What are the reasons behind this new state of relationship?

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

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

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

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

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

What will be the future of this strategy?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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India achieved equity in food through the **National Food Security Act, 2013**. It was supported by **targeted public distribution system**, the **mid-day meal scheme** and the **Integrated Child Development Services**. Today, India's food safety nets collectively reach over a billion people. Since Independence, India initiated policy measures, **land reforms**, **public investments**, **institutional infrastructure**, **new regulatory systems**, **public support**, and intervention in agri-markets and prices and **agri-research and extension**.

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

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

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

What are the global efforts to ensure food security?

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

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

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

What is the way forward to ensure food security?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Relevance: About social justice in India.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

From Gandhi to Deen Dayal Upadhyaya and from the principles of Sarvodaya to Antyodaya, Indian leaders always ensured the enfranchisement of the sarvahara (proletariat).

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

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

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

Relevance: About the recent court ruling on EPF Pension.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS2- Important international institutions

Relevance- Global development agenda

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

What should be the agenda of the G20 summit?

Development challenges- The developmental agenda must receive first attention.

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

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

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

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

Clean energy- Clean energy related challenges should be discussed at G20. **Green hydrogen** can replace fossil fuels on an industrial scale. A viable international framework for development and international trade in GH2, together with green ammonia and green shipping is the key.

The G20 could work toward an expanded and robust civilian nuclear energy cooperation framework, including for small modular reactors.

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

What is the case for India's leadership?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance– Global terrorism

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

What are challenges related to terrorism?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the need of the day?

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

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

What will be the future of terrorism?

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS 2- Governance

Relevance: need for co-regulation intermediary law

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the way ahead?

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS 2- Governance

Relevance: lapses in the criminal justice system

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

Why did SC acquit the prisoners?

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

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

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

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

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

What is the current position of acquittal cases in India?

NLU Delhi's Project 39A reveals 33 prisoners on death row were acquitted nationwide in 2021. This is a huge number as such acquittal raises doubt on the procedures followed by courts, wastes time of the accused and creates injustice to the victims.

Therefore, a proper investigation and hearing should be done to bring justice and maintain the trust of citizens in the judiciary and police.

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

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

Syllabus: GS2- Regional grouping

Relevance- EU-India trade and economic ties

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

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

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

What will be the impacts of these standards on India?

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

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

How can Indian companies prepare to deal with these standards?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance– India and Russia relationship in context of Ukrainian conflict

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

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

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

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

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

What is happening in the Ukrainian conflict?

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

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

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

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

What is India's position in this conflict?

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

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

Why is resolving the dispute not easy?

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

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

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

There are few basic conditions for success.

What is the way forward to resolve the conflict?

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

India equities may not be sufficient but its voice matters.

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

40. [Enforcing the ban on the two-finger test](#)

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

Syllabus: GS 2- Governance

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

What was said by the SC?

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

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

When was two-finger test for rape survivors started?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What can be the course of action?

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS 2- International Relations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What can be the course of action?

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

42. [Reservation criteria: The EWS judgment and the shadow of Pandora](#)

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

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

Relevance: About India's reservation criteria.

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

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

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

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

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

How India's affirmative action programme defined reservation criteria?

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

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

What are the Supreme Court observation on reservation criteria?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance: Russia- Ukraine conflict

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

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

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

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

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

Which events show the scope for mediation role by India?

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

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

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

What is the importance of strong bilateral ties with Russia?

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

India has strategic stakes in defence ties with Russia.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What are the roles and responsibilities of a Governor?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What should be the way forward for the Governor?

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

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

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

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

Source: The post is based on the following articles

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

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

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

Relevance: About mandatorily broadcasting content.

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

What are the key provisions of the guidelines?

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

Why mandatorily broadcasting content is justified?

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

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

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

What are the concerns associated with mandatorily broadcasting content?

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

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

News channels could claim the first right to protest: The air-time devoted to this exercise can easily exceed 30 minutes. So, news channels might protest the mandatory move. So, the government has to drop its diktat of mandatorily broadcasting content.

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

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

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

Relevance: Higher education

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

What are some facts associated with ranking of Indian universities?

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

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

What are issues related to autonomy of universities in India?

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

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

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

What shows the importance of autonomy?

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

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

What National Education Policy, 2020 says about autonomy?

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

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

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

But it depends on implementation of policy.

47. [Research first: On the UGC move on research papers by Ph.D. scholars](#)

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

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

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

What is the rationale behind this move?

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

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

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

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

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

What are the concerns related to this step of UGC?

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

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

What is the way forward?

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

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

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

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

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

Relevance: About India's reservation criteria.

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

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

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

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

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

Can the state provide reservations and alter the reservation criteria?

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

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

What will be the impact of the recent judgement?

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

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

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

Source: The post is based on the article **"India & EU: Standard deviations"** published in the **Business Standard** on **12th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

Relevance: About the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) rules.

News: Recently, the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) has said that Indian clearing corporations will not be recognised as such in Europe because "no cooperation arrangements" could be signed between ESMA and the Indian regulators. The ESMA regulations could kick in from April 2023, unless the parties to the negotiations agree to extend the deadline. What are the reasons behind the ESMA rules?

Negotiations have been ongoing since 2017 to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) under which ESMA can inspect the six clearing corporations that operate under RBI and SEBI licences. ESMA also demands six clearing corporations pay a licence fee of €50,000 each per year, to join the ESMA certified panel.

Under the proposed ESMA rules, any investor based in Europe will not be able to use India's clearing house mechanism to invest in government bonds. Instead, the investor will have to deploy his/her own capital as a counterparty to guarantee the trade, making it a costly exercise. What was the view of Indian regulators on ESMA decision?

The RBI and SEBI officials blame ESMA for insisting on clauses that supposedly dilute Indian sovereign rights on domestic financial markets. This is because both Japan and the US have obtained the rights under which these checks will take place only with prior authorisation from the RBI or SEBI.

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What are the potential impacts of ESMA rules?

a) This can be considered a precursor of similar controversies in other sectors as Europe tries to tighten standards across all types of markets, such as carbon credit, green hydrogen and data.

b) While the ESMA step affects all financial markets, the primary impact will be on government bonds. The decision encouraged FTSE Russell and other global fund managers to drop plans to include Indian government and public sector bond papers in their index funds.

Indian entities such as Clearing Corporation of India, Indian Clearing Corporation Limited and NSE Clearing Limited are considered puny – the difference in size is almost 10 times.

What are the other areas in which India is unwilling to comply with European standards?

European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): India does not recognise it and insists it will set its own data protection standards under a law to be passed by Parliament. The Minister of electronics and IT has said that this is because India “has a thriving ecosystem of innovators”.

Management of crypto assets: The EU this year has brought issuers and crypto asset service providers under a regulatory framework for the first time. But India has refused to accept the domain of private crypto and considers labelling them is equivalent to the lottery.

Global corporation tax: India levies a 2% DST on revenues generated from digital services offered in India. So, India opposed the so-called Pillar One that entails the removal of the Digital Services Taxes.

European Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: It is essentially a carbon tax coming into force in 2023. It will first apply to any imports of steel, cement, aluminium, and fertilisers from third countries into the EU. India’s G20 Sherpa has described the upcoming carbon tax as the biggest challenge for Indian exporters.

Euro New Car Assessment Programme: Recently the European Commission proposed new standards to reduce air pollution from new motor vehicles.

But, India has pushed the road transport and highways ministry to develop comparable Indian standards instead of following the European ones.

How this will impact India-EU free trade agreement?

EU trade agreements have **provisions for mutual recognition of standards**. Europe argues that these new international standards give its industry and businesses the advantage to establish worldwide partnerships and sell their products or services globally.

On the other hand, India views these as **non-tariff barriers**. As those standards offer Europe an advantage to overcome the disadvantage of low costs elsewhere.

50. [More judges please: Till collegium’s there GoI must clear names fast](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**More judges please: Till collegium’s there GoI must clear names fast**” published in **The Times of India** on **12th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary.

Relevance: About the delay in judicial appointments.

News: The Supreme Court issued notice to the Union law secretary over the delay in accepting the collegium-cleared judge appointments.

What are the concerns of the Judiciary and Government on Judicial appointments?

Recently, the Union law minister has criticised the collegium system.

The judges criticise the Centre for neither appointing nor communicating its reservations on the names reiterated by the collegium. The court observed that the collegium ensures judicial independence.

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The collegium system can do with more transparency and diversity in appointments. But, neither has GoI attempted to revive the [National Judicial Appointments Commission](#) since 2015, nor has SC taken meaningful, proactive steps towards fostering transparency or diversity.

Read more: [The Court and the problem with its collegium](#)

What should be done to ensure proper Judicial appointments in time?

a) There must be no inordinate delays in appointing judges cleared by the body – GoI should object only in rare cases and do so quickly, **b)** The Centre should to enact an NJAC. But until then, both the collegium and GoI must adhere to set timelines in clearing Judicial appointments. There are seven vacancies in SC and 335 in HCs. Each vacancy filled could have shrunk their combined pendency burden of 60 lakh cases by hundreds of cases every month. So, the court and government should understand that the delays are hurting ordinary litigants.

51. [A court of the future: There is need to finetune mechanisms of accountability within judiciary](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**A court of the future: There is need to finetune mechanisms of accountability within judiciary**” published in the **Indian Express** on **12th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary.

Relevance: About accountability within the judiciary.

News: The Supreme Court need some course corrections to ensure accountability within the judiciary.

Why does the SC need accountability within the judiciary?

This is because **a)** The Supreme Court sits in final judgment over decisions not only of the high courts in the states and UTs but also over a hundred tribunals functioning throughout India, **b)** The verdicts of the Supreme Court, including constitutional amendments, is binding on all other courts and authorities in the country (Article 141), and **c)** There is virtually no area of legislative or executive activity which is beyond the highest court’s scrutiny.

Read more: [The Court and the problem with its collegium](#)

How can the Supreme Court ensure accountability within the judiciary?

The judiciary as an institution needs to preserve its independence. To do that the court must strive to maintain the confidence of the public in the established courts.

Enacting a law like the American model: In the United States, under the Judicial Councils Act, 1980, the independence of the judiciary has been undertaken by the judges. The Act protects the higher judiciary from some of its own members who have gone wrong.

The Act confers powers on bodies comprised of judges to take such action against a federal judge “as is appropriate, short of removal.” Indian citizens need the reassurance of a system of judicial accountability. This can be done by separate legislation along the lines of the US model.

Create a case management blue print: Innumerable reports of Law Commissions focussed on all aspects of judicial governance. But due to a lack of a case management plan, high courts are having the largest number of roadblocks and delays.

In the **Salem Advocate Bar Association case**, the justices had requested the high courts to implement a detailed case management blueprint. The top court has to come up with such a blueprint.

Ensure proper judicial governance:

-The Supreme Court must be entrusted with direct responsibility for the functioning of the high courts. Only then **a)** The SC be an effective apex court, **b)** The Supreme Court can be made answerable for judicial governance for the entire country.

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-All judges who are constitutionally entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the rights of citizens must also be seen to be persons of righteousness. So, they must make annual financial disclosure statements publicly like the judges in the US.

Be a role model institute: Judges must set an example for ministers, central and state, for members of Parliament and of state legislatures, and for all high officials of government.

52. [Why China's dominance of electric vehicle supply chain must be countered](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Why China's Dominance of electric vehicle supply chain must be countered**” published in The Indian Express on **14th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance: Groundwater conservation related

News– The article explains that it is too risky and expensive for India to be dependent on imports across the energy transition board, particularly EVs.

What are the concerns in energy transition?

There are issues related to the **supply chain** for electric vehicles.

The **assertive behaviour** by China across the Taiwan Straits acts may create challenges. The risk may be even more acute because of a troubled relationship with China.

Supply chain is highly concentrated in China.

What are some facts related to China's dominance in various stages involved in the supply chain of Electric Vehicles.

According to a recent report by the International Energy Association, every part of the EV supply chain is **highly concentrated, mostly in China**.

As the **first stage** of the supply chain are the key minerals required for batteries, namely **lithium, nickel, cobalt and graphite**.

China has an 80 per cent share of global mining output in graphite. In cobalt, the politically highly unstable Democratic Republic of Congo mines two-thirds of the global supply and Chinese companies control a big share of that country's mining.

The **second stage of the supply chain** is the **processing of ore** into metal.

Globally, over 60% of lithium processing, over 70% of cobalt processing, 80% of graphite processing and about 40% of nickel processing takes place in China.

The **third stage** is **cell components** where China produces two-thirds of global anodes and three-fourths of cathodes. The only other producing countries of note are South Korea and Japan. After that come battery cells, where China has a 70% share.

Finally, in EVs themselves, China has a share of around 50 per cent in global production. Europe is a distant second with 25 per cent. India does not feature as a player of note.

What are facts related to investment in energy transition across the world?

China is now the biggest spender on climate and energy transition. According to a **report by Bloomberg's New Energy Fund (NEF), in 2021**, total global investment in climate transition is \$750 billion. China alone spent \$266 billion.

The US was a distant second with **\$114 billion**.

India was at **7th place with \$14 billion invested**.

Almost 40% of Chinese and US spending was on EVs. In the case of India, more than 95 per cent of India's spending is on renewable energy. In Europe, about 75-80 per cent of the spending is on EVs, which is why it leads the US in this sector.

In India, despite intent, EVs have not received sufficient investment.

What is the way forward?

A two-pronged strategy is needed.

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First, on the minerals and materials. India has been slow at acquiring overseas mines of these critical minerals.

The government focus is upon PSUs. **An alternate option** is to liberalise exploration policies domestically, benchmark them with global best practices and invite global investors to find and mine in India.

It is important to have **supply alliances** with countries ex-China, as has been done with Australia. There is a need for much investment in the higher end of the supply chain.

A public-private partnership is vital. The vibrant startup ecosystem must be leveraged because it is more likely to be innovative than legacy firms.

53. [Mutual benefit: On India-U.S. cooperation on trade](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Mutual benefit: On India-U.S. cooperation on trade**” published in **The Hindu** on **15th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance: India-US relations

News- The article explains the Indo-US trade and economic ties.

Why does the US and India want strong trade and economic ties?

The US and India both have shared interest in strengthening the **global supply chain**. Trade has been used as a **geopolitical weapon** by some states.

There has been dominance of some states in the supply chain of certain products. For example, China is dominating solar panel.

What are challenges in Indo-US trade ties?

The Trump administration decided to withdraw **duty-free access** to Indian exporters under the **Generalised System of Preferences**. The U.S. is still to reinstate the GSP benefit and exporters on both sides still face challenges.

The International Trade Administration of the U.S. notes in its investment climate summary on India that new **protectionist measures** restricted the expansion in bilateral trade and investment. These measures include strict enforcement and potential expansion of **data localisation measures**, increased tariffs and **Indian-specific standards** not aligned with international standards.

The US decided to put India back on the US treasury “**monitoring list**” over its currency practices in 2020.

54. [Question of intent: Why Supreme Court didn't find Rajiv Gandhi assassination case convicts guilty of terror](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Question of intent: Why Supreme Court didn't find Rajiv Gandhi assassination case convicts guilty of terror**” published in **The Indian Express** on **15th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2- Governance

Relevance: SC judgment in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case

News: The Supreme Court (SC) has recently released all the seven convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

This has created controversies. Therefore, there is a need to look at the **SC's 1999 judgment** in which it said that the killing by the LTTE was not a terrorist act.

What was the judgment of SC in 1999?

The matter came to the SC in 1998 after the **TADA court** sentenced all 26 accused to death. Judges looking at the case had different views and gave separate judgements.

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However, all three judges were of the view that crime only attracted relevant sections of the **IPC-murder (302) and conspiracy (120-B)**. Provision of TADA could not be applied.

Section 3(1) of TADA says that anyone who commits act using explosives that could cause death or damage with intent to

- **overawe the government** or
- **to strike terror in any section of the people** or
- **to alienate any section of the people** or
- **to affect the harmony amongst different sections of the people,**

commits a terrorist act.

The court said that the intent under this section was important and the current case does not signify that assassination was done with any of these four intents.

The court quoted the speech of the **LTTE leader** which said that they were not against India or the Indian people. They were only against the former leadership in India who was against the **Tamil liberation struggle** and the LTTE.

Therefore, the court ruled that the intent under Section 3(1) of TADA is not applicable in this case.

The court also ruled out **Section 4 of TADA** that says killing a person bound by oath under the Constitution to uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India or any public servant was deemed a disruptive activity.

The court ruled that this section was also not applicable as Parliament was dissolved months earlier to the assassination and Rajiv Gandhi was not a person bound by oath as an MP.

Therefore, the court ruled that the convicts did not have any intention to overawe the government or strike terror to the people of India. Thus, only IPC sections of murder and conspiracy can be applied to the seven convicts who were guilty.

[55. The foundation of tribal uplift policies is education: Union minister of tribal affairs writes on the occasion of Janjatiya Gaurav Divas](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The foundation of tribal uplift policies is education: Union minister of tribal affairs writes on the occasion of Janjatiya Gaurav Divas**” published in **The Times of India** on **15th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2- Social Justice

Relevance: tribals conditions in India

News: The Government has declared to celebrate the birth anniversary of **Bhagwan Birsa Munda as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas** on 15th November every year.

This decision will help in strengthening the tribal legacy, heritage, culture and achievements of India.

What is the present situation of tribals in India?

India is home to about **25% of the world's ethnic population**, making it a country with a diversified cultural heritage and a large number of youthful tribal people.

These tribes are utilising the opportunity in the field of education, sports and they are also winning Padma Awards along with international recognition.

Further, the appointment of the **nation's first tribal President** (President Droupadi Murmu) shows that there is huge potential for the nation's Scheduled Tribes.

The government is also committed and adopted a **people-centric approach** towards the betterment of the tribal people in India.

The PM's call for **Reform, Perform, Transform** has served as the guiding principle to ensure the last-mile distribution of benefits and to improve the nation's overall development.

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The most important tool for development is **holistic education** as advocated by our PM.

Why is education necessary and what are ways adopted by the government for the betterment of tribals?

Education is necessary to bring transformation in the tribals, in bringing reforms and in having a successful future.

Education is necessary in tribals especially in young girls as **left-wing extremism** has made it challenging to establish educational infrastructure in the affected areas.

Further, the goal of the government is to address these problems at the block level, provide tribal students with quality education through **Eklavya Model Residential Schools** and to take advantage of the scholarship programmes.

The tribal development programmes focus on empowering tribal people digitally and upskilling them to produce and sell their manufactured goods. NGOs and other organisations are also taking efforts in the advancement of the tribal people.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs under the **Vision for India@2047** has prioritised sustainable livelihoods, income generation, education, health and the promotion of varied ethnic cultures of tribal people. This has helped tribals to get integrated in the society. This ministry is also attempting to preserve several tribal languages.

56. [G20 Summit: What's at stake?](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

“Making G20 relevant: The body works best when it makes an enabling global economic environment its focus. India should take note” published in **The Times of India** on **15th November 2022**.

“G20 Summit: What's at stake?” published in the **Indian Express** on **15th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS – 2: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Relevance: About the performance of G20 in the past and present.

News: A two-day G 20 summit meeting will commence in Bali, Indonesia. This is the 17th annual summit. At the end of this meeting, India will assume charge of the G20 presidency.

Why India's G20 presidency is significant?

Read here: [Heading the G20 and New Delhi's choices](#)

How effective was the performance of G20 in the past?

It was formed in 1999 in the wake of the Asian financial crisis. Its major achievements include, **Role in Financial crisis:** The G20 was most effective in 2008 and 2009. As its coordinated policymaking mitigated the economic fallout of the financial crisis. Further, G20 also laid the platform for subsequent agreements on sharing tax data to curb tax evasion.

Expansion of G20's ambit: Since 2008, the core goal of improving the economic policy environment has expanded to tackling climate change and terrorism, among other things.

Dismantled protectionism: It was perhaps the single most important reason that more than 1 billion people globally escaped extreme poverty in the three decades before Covid.

Read more: [Preparing for the presidency – On Assuming G20 Presidency](#)

Why did the performance of G20 reduce at present?

Global growth and the promise of globalisation of G20 have received a severe setback ever since the pandemic. This is because,

Output losses due to Covid: Most of the G20 constituent countries have suffered significant output losses since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic For instance, India would have lost almost 14% of its total output — the highest loss among all G20 countries.

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Russia's invasion of Ukraine and sanctions against Russia by West has not only created massive geopolitical uncertainty but also spiked global inflation due to supply chain bottlenecks and curbs

Impact of Central Bank's decision: To control high inflation, central banks across countries have raised interest rates. This in turn has dampened economic activity. For example, the US and the UK are set to face a recession.

A slowdown in China: China, one of the major engines for global growth, is witnessing a sharp slowdown as it struggles with a real estate crisis.

Geopolitical rifts: Such as **a)** Tensions between the US and China, the two biggest economies in the world, **b)** The decline in trade between the UK and the euro area in the wake of the Brexit decision.

Must read: [G20 grouping and its relevance – Explained, pointwise](#)

What should be done to improve the performance of G20?

Requires joint action: G20 countries can grow faster if they grow together. For growing together, they require peace. So, in the present summit, the leaders have to **a)** Find common ground such as multilateral action on climate, debt, taxation, and pandemic preparedness, etc., **b)** Secure peace in Ukraine and prevent further fragmentation, and **c)** Rule out the differences in the policy landscape.

Contain raging inflation: According to the IMF, “the overarching priority for policymakers in most economies is to ensure price stability while bringing down debt levels and protecting the most vulnerable”.

So, the G20 countries have to **a)** Contain inflation, **b)** Find ways to help the vulnerable without increasing the debt levels, **c)** Ensure proper monitoring of external risks.

57. [Forced transmission-New guidelines for satellite channels leave wide scope for interpretation](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Forced transmission-New guidelines for satellite channels leave wide scope for interpretation**” published in the **Business Standard** on **15th 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 concerns associated with mandatorily broadcasting content.

News: Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the “Guidelines for Uplinking and Downlinking of Television Channels in India, 2022”. Under this, the channels would have to mandatorily broadcast content on themes of national importance and socially relevant issues for at least 30 minutes every day.

What are the key provisions of the guidelines?

Read here: [Centre devises new guidelines for TV channels; broadcast of socially relevant topics compulsory](#)

What are the concerns associated with mandatorily broadcasting content?

The issue with the notion of “public property”: The government considers that airwave resources are theoretically owned by the people of India. But, access to them does not come for free.

Broadcasters pay a licence fee (plus a processing fee for live events). Hence, this transfers ownership for the duration of the contract and confers some degree of independence on the broadcaster.

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Government has a better alternative: Private broadcasters might not be willing to sacrifice half an hour's revenue every day to cover "themes of national importance" when the government has a large broadcaster (Doordarshan) at its disposal to do just this.

Doordarshan has both terrestrial and satellite feeds, plus regional channels that cover pretty much the whole population of India. So, Doordarshan has a far better reach than any private satellite channel.

Challenge in monitoring: The government has said it will monitor channels to ensure they are broadcasting content on themes of national importance. At present, India has around 800-odd channels. So, government monitoring might result in a certain degree of cherry-picking.

Guidelines open for interpretation: These guidelines are opaque and open for interpretation since "national importance and social relevance" and "national interest" can easily lie in the eyes of the beholder.

Further, the guidelines add that "channels shall comply" with these recommendations. Such assertions are unlikely to ease operational conditions.

Read more: [Content slot: On guidelines for television channels](#)

58. [Undermining federalism, eroding States' autonomy](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "**Undermining federalism, eroding States' autonomy**" published in **The Hindu** on **16th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issues and challenges pertaining to federal structure

Relevance: Cooperative federalism

News- The article explains the challenges to **cooperative federalism** in the present government. When the NDA government came into power in 2014, there was hope that India would move towards cooperative federalism. NITI Aayog replaced the Planning Commission of India with the main objective of promoting cooperative federalism.

But no steps have been taken to promote **cooperative federalism** by NITI Aayog.

Which instances show that the Union government has not followed the spirit of cooperative federalism?

Finance Commission recommendations- The Fifteenth Finance Commission, in its first report, had recommended a special grant to three States amounting to ₹6,764 crore. It was to ensure that the **tax devolution** in 2020-21 in absolute terms should not be less than the amount of devolution received by these States in 2019-20. This recommendation was not accepted by the Union Government.

A similar approach has been followed by the Union Government with regard to grants to States recommended by the Finance Commission for the period 2021-26.

This clearly demonstrates that the Union Government has undermined the stature of the institution of the Finance Commission and **cooperative federalism**.

Off-budget borrowings- The decision to treat **off-Budget borrowings** from 2021-22 onwards serviced from the State budgets as States' borrowings and adjusting them against borrowing limits under **FRBM** in 2022-23 and following years. It is against all norms.

The Government of India has indicated that such a decision is in accordance with the recommendation of the Finance Commission. In fact, there is no recommendation to this effect by the Fifteenth Finance Commission.

The borrowings by corporations against State guarantees are mostly used for **capital investment**. The Centre has also been raising off-Budget borrowings but mainly for meeting **revenue expenditure**. The **CAG Report** on the Compliance of FRBM Act for 2017-18 and 2018-

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19 pointed out as many as eight instances of meeting revenue expenditure through Extra Budgetary Resources.

Cesses and surcharges– The NDA government has been resorting to the levy of cesses and surcharges. These are not shareable with the States under the Constitution.

The share of cesses and surcharges in the gross tax revenue of the Centre increased from 13.5% in 2014-15 to 20% in the Budget estimates for 2022-23.

Centrally sponsored schemes– Many committees of government have recommended the need to curtail the number of centrally sponsored schemes.

The Government of India has grouped them under certain broad umbrella heads. In 2015, the Centre increased the States' share in a number of CSS. It has burdened the States. They have lost their autonomy in this process.

Encroaching state powers– The Centre has enacted three farm laws though agriculture is a subject listed in the **State List under the Constitution**. Though these Acts have been repealed, their enactment is against the **spirit of the Constitution**. States were not even consulted while introducing these Bills.

59. On religious conversion, Supreme Court must set the bar high, remain mindful of danger of spectre-mongering on a fraught issue

Source: The post is based on an article “**On religious conversion, Supreme Court must set the bar high, remain mindful of danger of spectre-mongering on a fraught issue**” published in **The Indian Express** on 16th November 2022.

Syllabus: GS 2- Governance

Relevance: concerns associated with forceful religious conversions

News: The Supreme Court has said that forced religious conversions are very dangerous and may affect the security of the nation as well as the freedom of religion and conscience of the citizens.

It has directed the centre to step in and inform measures that can be taken by the Union government to stop such conversions.

How are religious conversions being carried out?

Missionary activities in tribal areas and **inter-religious marriages** are the two major factors of the conversions.

In the case of inter-religious marriages, the law now requires that the bride and groom should seek permission before marriage from the district magistrate.

If the case is of forceful conversion, the burden lies on the groom and his family and they have to disprove the charges to the authorities.

What are the present laws regarding religious conversions?

Article 25 of the Constitution says “all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion”.

Even though, almost 10 states have brought **anti-conversion laws**. They claim that legal safeguards including IPC provisions have failed to stop religious conversions through coercion, intimidation, etc.

However, using these means is not a solution and action against forceful conversion should be taken in such a way that it does not interfere with fundamental freedoms.

What are the concerns associated with religious conversions?

Religious conversions, especially forceful, have political implications and they are used as weapons by political parties in India which ultimately harms the society. Therefore, a judicial and wise intervention is required to address the issue.

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60. [Ukraine imbroglio can give the Global South a chance to claim a place at the high table of global diplomacy](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Ukraine imbroglio can give the Global South a chance to claim a place at the high table of global diplomacy**” published in **The Indian Express** on **16th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance: Russia and Ukraine war

News- The article explains the events and reasons for prolonged conflict between Russia and Ukraine. It also explains the position of India and scope for the global south to have negotiated a solution of the conflict.

What are some facts related to war?

War between Russia and Ukraine is still going on. There are no prospects for **global diplomacy** to end the war.

There seems less chance of victory of one side over another or **negotiated solution**.

On eastern front, Ukraine has succeeded in pushing Russia back. But, **new fronts** are opening at sea, in air, cyber space and in random bombardment of targets far away from the actual fighting.

The Security Council stays paralysed. Its Resolutions on the Ukraine war are vetoed by major powers.

What are the objectives of both parties in the war?

Objectives of the belligerents keep evolving as the war unfolds. The initial objective of Russia was to neutralise Ukraine and make it a buffer between NATO and its own territory, and protect the interests of the Russian minorities of Ukraine. It has now evolved into **territorial annexation**. Ukrainian objectives are total defeat of Russia, war reparations to be paid by it and regime change in Moscow.

The two objectives are totally **incompatible**.

Why has war in Ukraine become protracted?

The reasons for prolonged war are **strategic depth** of the belligerents, **diffuse targets**, **incompatible war objectives**, and the induction of third parties with a stake in keeping hostilities alive.

The additional factor that is responsible for prolonging conflict is the **nuclear option**, available to both sides. This has created a **balance of terror**.

What are the impacts of war?

Vast sums of tax-payers money are being diverted into the **military-industrial complex** and proxy war of NATO.

There is a steep rise in prices of essential commodities. Inflation has hit all across the globe but its impact is asymmetric. The poor suffer relatively more.

It has created **refugee problem**. There are 6 million Ukrainian refugees spread over Europe.

What is the Indian position on war?

The Indian position has been consistent. It is asking for an immediate **cessation of hostilities** and the start of negotiations. India has reiterated the country's commitment to **global governance**. It has struck a **delicate balance** between the belligerents.

Modi message to Russian President Vladimir Putin that “**now is not the era for war**” and his call for immediate cessation of hostilities at the G20 reiterate the Indian position.

India's neutrality in western capitals is perceived as a pursuit of its narrow **self-interest rather than a serious global policy option**.

What is the scope for the global south to end the conflict?

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The protracted war in Ukraine has provided the Global South an opportunity to claim a place at the high table of **global diplomacy**.

An initiative by the South, possibly led by Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, working jointly with Turkey, and with the implicit support of India and China, can offer to broker a deal. It can be operated through the United Nations General Assembly.

61. [What the burden of the heavy school bag reveals](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**What the burden of the heavy school bag reveals**” published in **The Indian Express** on **17th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issues related to development and management of education

Relevance: Reforms educational system

News- The article explains the issue related to the educational system.

What is the situation of schools after the pandemic?

Things have changed a lot in schools after the pandemic. Sanitisers and masks have become a part of a child’s life.

They also carry heavy bags which causes **mental and physical burden**.

It puts unnecessary **pressure on a child’s health**.

What are the concerns associated with this issue?

The thinking of all the schools and teachers continues to remain that maximum education can be obtained only by carrying more books.

Instead of finding new ways of teaching and learning, schools and teachers are paying more attention to **technical and materialistic things** like apps, books and bags.

The **National Council for Teacher Training (NCTE)**, under the central government, has the task of setting the minimum qualifications for teachers, preparing curriculum and facilitating the opening of new colleges for teacher training. But, the work of selecting and recruiting the teachers lies with the state government.

The reason why our education system is not improving even after many efforts is because education falls on the **concurrent list**.

What is the way forward?

People need to understand that the **teaching method is more important** than books or other tools.

If the classroom environment is to be made interesting, then children should be taught in small groups.

The Right to Education Bill had called for **reducing the classroom size**. But it implies that the number of classes will have to be increased which will require more teachers.

We also require **more qualified teachers** who can not only understand the child’s state of mind but who can also implement the curriculum accordingly.

“**Learning without burden**” under the chairmanship of Yashpal in 1993 suggested changes in the syllabus to reduce the weight of bags. It also suggested how to make **learning joyful** and give less emphasis on books and bags for children.

The new **National Curriculum Framework (foundational stage)** talks beyond the classrooms. It focuses more on pedagogy than content and encourages activities. It acknowledges the importance of the teacher, students and other stakeholders.

62. [This unseating of vice chancellors is faulty](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**This unseating of vice chancellors is faulty**” published in **The Hindu** on **17th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 – Polity

Relevance: Centre-state relations

News- The article explains the issue related to appointment of vice chancellors of University.

What is this issue all about?

In **Gambhirdan K. Gadhvi vs The State Of Gujarat**, from Sardar Patel University, Gujarat, the Supreme Court quashed the appointment of the incumbent Vice Chancellor on the ground that the search committee did not form a panel for the appointment of VC. Therefore, it was not in accordance with the UGC Regulations of 2018.

In **Professor (Dr) Sreejith P.S vs Dr. Rajasree M.S.**, the appointment of the Vice Chancellor of the A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Technological University, Thiruvananthapuram, was challenged on the ground that the search committee recommended only one name. This is also against the UGC Regulations.

What is the core issue with SC judgement?

In both these cases, the issue framed by the Supreme Court is about whether the appointment of VCs should be made as per the **UGC Regulations** or the **provisions of the State University Act**.

Under the Indian Constitution both the Union and the State can legislate on a matter under the Concurrent list. **A VC is appointed by the Chancellor under the relevant University Act.**

But the Supreme Court has brought in **Article 254** of the Constitution to rule that if provisions of the State law are repugnant to the provisions of the Union law, the State law will become void.

Why is this conclusion faulty?

First, repugnancy under Article 254 relates to a State law and a substantive law made by Parliament. It thus excludes rules, regulations which are made by subordinate authorities, in this case the UGC. However, the substantive law is made by the superior authority, namely Parliament.

Second, the rules and regulations made by the subordinate authority, though laid in Parliament, do not go through the same process as a law. The Constitution cannot be assumed to equate the Act with the rules.

Third, The inclusive definition of law given in **Article 13(2)** is applicable only to that Article. It means the term law does not include the rules, regulations, etc. for the purpose of Article 254.

Fourth, the regulations made by a subordinate authority of the Union overriding a law made by a State legislature will amount to a violation of federal principles.

Finally, the UGC Regulations on the appointment of VCs are outside the scope of the main provisions of the UGC Act as none of its provisions refers to the appointment of VCs.

What is the way forward?

Article 254 needs to be **analysed in depth** before reaching such conclusions. Such an analysis would make it clear that a State law can be repugnant only to the central Act, and not the regulations and rules made there under.

Since this issue is bound with the **right of States** to manage university education, more serious thought needs to be given to it.

The Supreme Court held in **S. Satyapal Reddy vs Govt. Of A.P. (1994)** that the court has to make every attempt to reconcile the provisions of the apparently conflicting laws and the court would endeavour to give harmonious construction.

When this is done in most of the cases, there would be no need to strike down a State law on the ground of repugnancy.

63. [Why the Old Pension Scheme is both bad economics and bad politics](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Why the Old Pension Scheme is both bad economics and bad politics**” published in **The Indian Express** on **17th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2- Governance

News: The government in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh has reverted to the Old Pension Scheme. Punjab is also expected to follow the same but there are concerns associated with it.

What was the Old Pension Scheme (OPS)?

OPS **fixed pensions** of the central and state government employees at 50 percent to the last drawn basic pay. The amount of the pensions also increased with the hike in dearness allowances announced by the government for serving employees.

However, a **New Pension System** came into effect for those joining government service from January 1, 2004 which promised an assured or ‘defined’ benefit to the retiree. It was described as a ‘Defined Benefit Scheme’.

What were the concerns with the OPS?

Lack of proper funds: The pension liability remained unfunded and there were no mechanisms through which money could be raised and given to the pensioner.

Unsustainable: OPS was unsustainable because the liability of pension kept on increasing every year due to the increase in dearness allowances (DA) and increase in life expectancy rates.

Burden on states: OPS took away a quarter of the tax revenues of the state. Further, if salaries of state government employees are added to the bill, states hardly get anything from their own tax receipts.

Burden on the taxpayers: Taxpayers face the burden of ever-increasing pensions. The current generation faces a burden of older employees as well as they are also paying for newer employees under NPS.

What was planned to address this situation?

Old Age Social and Income Security (OASIS) commission: It was set up in 1998 with the objective of targeting unorganized sector workers who had no old age income security. The committee found that less than 11% of the estimated total working population had some post-retirement income security.

It recommended investment in three types of funds — **safe** (allowing up to 10 per cent investment in equity), **balanced** (up to 30 per cent in equity), and **growth** (up to 50 per cent in equity). This investment could be further invested in **corporate bonds or government securities**.

It also recommended that individuals could have **unique retirement accounts** and they would be required to invest at least Rs 500 a year into that account.

Out of those money at least Rs 2 lakh would be used to **purchase an annuity** after the retirement. The income from the annuity will then be used to provide **a fixed monthly income** to the retired employee.

HLEG: It was a **high-level expert group** set up to look into the situation for government employees. It suggested a defined contribution scheme for government employees.

In the **first tier**, it recommended a **10 percent contribution** by the employer and the employee. The accumulated funds would be used to pay pension in annuity form.

In the **second tier**, the employer’s contribution would be matching with the contribution of the employees but limited to 5 per cent. However, no limit was specified for the employee. This contribution could be later withdrawn or converted into annuity.

What was the origin of the New Pension Scheme (NPS)?

The **OASIS report** became the basis for the NPS. It was made applicable for all new recruits joining government service from January 1, 2004.

The defined contribution under NPS was 10 percent of the basic salary and DA by the employee and a matching contribution by the government. However, the government increased its contribution to 14 percent of the basic salary and DA in 2019.

NPS gave the opportunity to the employees to choose from a range of schemes from **low risk to high risk**. The return from the investment in these schemes depends on the **number of years and choice of the scheme**.

NPS has become effective and its assets under management have also increased. Therefore, moving to OPS from NPS will again acts as a burden on the exchequer and its impact should be taken into account while reverting back.

64. [Making cities smart and sustainable](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Making cities smart and sustainable**” published in **Business Standard** on **17th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2- Governance

News: Urban cities are now converting into smart cities but there is a need to look at sustainable development.

What are the requirements for a sustainable smart city?

Urban design: A proper urban designing or urban planning is needed to make cities smart and sustainable.

It should provide **socio-economic opportunities** for its expanding labor force along with **quality of life**, and a **safer and more secure environment**.

It should also provide an **environmentally friendly infrastructure** and unique identity for each city along with greater adaptability to changing climatic, economic, and social factors.

Use of ICT: A smart city combines information and communication technology (ICT) with numerous physical devices linked to an Internet of Things (IoT) network that provide **effectiveness in local operations and services**.

It also helps municipalities to engage with people, keep an eye on the happenings of the city, improve the quality of services and improve **citizen-government interaction**.

Gathering data: It is beneficial for a smart city to gather data and information that could be further used to improve the **processes, operations and governance systems** of the city like monitoring and managing power plants, water supply, etc.

The concept of smart cities in India, under the **Smart Cities Mission**, is based on six fundamental principles –

1. putting the community at the core of planning and implementation,
2. optimal use of resources that generates more outcomes using fewer resources,
3. cooperative and competitive federalism,
4. adopting innovative methods for sustainable solutions,
5. using technology as a means to achieving goals and financial convergence.

However, there are also challenges with the smart city.

What are the challenges?

Rapid Urbanization: Currently, 54 percent of the world’s population lives in cities, and it is predicted to rise to 66 percent by 2050.

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According to the **World Bank**, smart cities make the process of urbanization more inclusive through the integration of migrants, bringing together the formal and informal sectors, and providing services for both the rich and the poor.

Therefore, smart cities will attract people for settlements which would cause urbanization and put pressure on resources.

What is the way forward?

First, smart cities need to be sustainable smart cities with environmental, social, economic, and cultural dimensions.

Second, it must also integrate the newest technology with governance and enhance innovative socio-technical, socio-economic, and sociocultural aspects of growth.

65. [New UGC rules will ensure more of our brightest students can get into PhD programmes at an early age](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**New UGC rules will ensure more of our brightest students can get into PhD programmes at an early age**” published in **The Indian Express** on **18th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issue related to development and management of education

Relevance: Higher education

News- The article explains the new UGC rules for PhD programmes.

What are the new regulations of UGC related to PhD?

As per **NEP 2020**, the **four-year undergraduate programme** offers an **honours degree**, with the last year dedicated to research or an **honours degree** with a primary focus on coursework. The **new regulations** will permit students from both categories to join PhD degree programmes offered by higher educational institutions

Anyone who has completed a four-year bachelor’s degree programme in any discipline with a minimum of 75 per cent marks in aggregate or its equivalent grade is eligible for a PhD programme. UGC prescribes only the **minimum qualifications** for admission to a PhD programme. Universities can raise the bar to ensure that only the deserving are admitted to PhD programmes.

What is the rationale behind this move of UGC?

It is not true that PhDs who have bypassed the PG degree will have inadequate knowledge of the core discipline, which will lead to degrading teaching or research standards. There are many such examples from top institutes such as IITs, Purdue, and MIT.

Our admission processes are by **elimination rather than selection** due to intense competition. It generates a huge pool of highly talented students who could not get into top HEIs as part of the university system. Once we provide the opportunity for these students to move into a PhD programme after their UG degree, they will have the chance to be outstanding teachers or researchers.

There is an erroneous belief that UGC has done this to produce more PhDs. The goal of UGC in permitting students after a UG degree into PhD programmes is **not numbers but quality**.

The **four-year bachelor’s degree programme** introduced in our university system is designed to equip the students with **complex problem-solving, critical thinking, creative thinking and communication skills**. This training will lead to **rigorous specialisation** in a chosen disciplinary or interdisciplinary major and minor subject area.

A research study on the Nobel Prizes in chemistry, physiology, or medicine between 1901 and 2003 indicates that the majority of the winners who discovered their prize-winning results were aged between 31 and 40. Our **creativity** declines with ageing in most of us.

66. [The uplink-downlink puzzle](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The uplink-downlink puzzle**” published in **Business Standard** on **18th November 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2- Governance**

Relevance: **concerns associated with New Guidelines for TV channels**

News: The government has recently come with the guidelines for uplinking and downlinking of satellite television channels in India.

What do the guidelines say?

It states that a broadcaster who uplinks a channel from India and then downlinks it for broadcast here will have to broadcast for 30 minutes in a day on **themes of national interest and social relevance**.

The guidelines include news and non-news channels for broadcasting themes of national interest.

It has also done away with approval for every live event and also allows limited liability partnerships (LLPs) companies for uplinking foreign channels from Indian teleports.

What has been the stand of government regarding these guidelines?

The government used the SC judgment of 1995 which said that “**airwaves are public property**” to justify its stand.

However, the judgment only specifies the “**public trust doctrine**” which makes the state as a trustee of public resources and directs the State functionary to be transparent in dealing with public resources.

Therefore, using this doctrine for private TV channels is a **misinterpretation** of the judgment. Moreover, there are concerns associated with the current guidelines.

What are the concerns?

India wants to become a **hub like Singapore** but its process is not as easy as Singapore offers. **For example**, applications for registration have been made online but the process is not online end-to-end.

The process has been made for easing of permissions but Indian board control and trademark registration is required. It also does not provide ease of operation for foreign companies like Singapore does.

Due to these regulatory compliances **only 22 channels use India** as an uplink hub against a few thousand from Singapore.

According to MIB data, over 772 channels are uplinked out of India but these are downlinked and broadcasted within India.

What was the need of these guidelines?

Cable/DTH is facing **tough competition** as viewers are moving away from it to OTT platforms, free-to-air television and free OTT.

Further, online streaming platforms such YouTube, Instagram and others have seen a rise in viewers. Google and Meta take away roughly **70 percent of all digital advertising** due to their large number of viewers.

The pandemic also put pressure on ad revenues of the TV channels and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India’s (Trai’s) pricing mechanism for channels has put pressure on pay revenues.

These issues have led to the merger of TV channels such as Disney-Star, Zee-Sony.

Therefore, this policy addresses these concerns by providing **ease of compliances, ease of doing business and making India a teleports hub**.

67. [Opaque political financing could cost democracy dear](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Opaque political financing could cost democracy dear**” published in **The Hindu** on **18th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2-Polity

Relevance: Electoral Bonds

News- The article explains the issue related to political financing.

What is the issue all about?

The discourse around political finance in India usually revolves around the issue of corruption. Introduction of electoral bonds is either presented as a pious instrument for ‘**cleansing**’ politics or as a mechanism for **legitimizing** ‘**institutionalised corruption**’.

It precludes any focus on the structural relationship between the nature of political funding and the shape of our political system. Corruption is merely one symptom of this structural relationship, rather than being a driving factor.

What is the role of political financing in political competition?

One, the **degree of transparency** of political funding informs the efficacy of institutional safeguards. For example, the inherent opacity of electoral bonds renders the power of the Election Commission of India (ECI) irrelevant in terms of ensuring a level-playing field between the ruling and the Opposition parties.

Second, the extent to which **political funding is centralised** within a party determines whether power in the party is drawn from organisational structures or exercised in a personalistic manner. For example, membership-funded parties such as the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the Bahujan Samaj Party of an earlier era were highly organised parties where leaders wielded power in a responsive, programmatic manner.

Third, the political financing regime also shapes the **role of ideas in grounding political competition**. But, when political finance is anchored to a narrow concentration of economic capital, the ideological basis of political competition tends to become severely corroded.

What are the impacts of electoral bonds on political competition?

One, the design of electoral bonds, perhaps more than any other instrument of political finance, leans to the advantage of the ruling party.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2019-20 got over 75% of the total electoral bonds sold, as opposed to the meagre 9% share of the Congress, according to ECI data.

Second, electoral bonds centralise political funding towards the national units of political parties, further entrenching the leverage of national leadership over the State and local units.

As a reply to a Right To Information (RTI) query revealed, out of the ₹5,851 crore of electoral bonds sold in 2018-19, 80% of the bonds were redeemed in Delhi.

What is the way forward?

The new political financing regime should **build on the political pathologies** already prevalent in our system that is crumbling organisations, political centralisation, a business-politics compact fuelled by rent seeking and cronyism rather than creating them from scratch.

It is important that independent institutions such as the ECI and the Supreme Court of India step in to layer the seeming black hole of electoral bonds with a minimum level of **institutional safeguards**.

Otherwise this “reform” of political finance goes down in history as a significant marker in our story of democratic decline.

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68. [Weighing in on PMGKAY, the free grains scheme](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Weighing in on PMGKAY, the free grains scheme**” published in **The Hindu** on **18th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Welfare Schemes

Relevance: Implementation of schemes

News- The article explains the issue related to welfare schemes.

What are the provisions of PMGKAY?

It is aimed at providing an **additional allocation of foodgrains** (rice or wheat) from the central pool at **five kilograms** per person per month free of cost.

The PMGKAY benefits cardholders of the **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)** and **Priority Households (PHH)** categories, both falling under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**. This is over and above the regular monthly quota under the NFSA, i.e., 35 kg per month per family for AAY and 5 kg per month per person for PHH.

The PMGKAY covers even **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** beneficiaries.

What are the reasons for extending this scheme?

The extension of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), a scheme to distribute free foodgrains to the poor, for another three months, comes as a surprise for many reasons.

First, in the months prior to the latest extension made in late September 2022, there was much debate on the relevance of freebies.

Second, there were reports in June that the Expenditure Department at the Centre did not favour it, citing a funds crunch.

It also held the view that such a scheme was no longer needed “in non-pandemic times”.

However, this has to be viewed in the **context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict**, raging since February 2022, and its adverse impact on the world’s food and energy sectors.

Government’s reason was that it wanted to **support the poor and the vulnerable**, estimated to be 80 crore during the festive season.

Critics of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party point out that the scheme’s extension is with an eye on the Assembly elections in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat, respectively.

What are the achievements associated with this scheme?

Policymakers and experts concede that the scheme made a difference to **food security and public health** during the pandemic.

From the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Food and Public Distribution or the authors of an IMF-published working paper, “**Pandemic, Poverty, and Inequality: Evidence from India**” the scheme has received commendation.

What is the way forward?

The central authorities should **commission a study** and make its findings public.

To keep the budgetary allocation under control, **rules on quota** for rice or wheat can be changed suitably.

The central and State authorities need to ponder over the scheme’s continuance, given the chronic **problem of diversion** from the Public Distribution System (PDS).

The proposed study should be the basis for **updating the database** of foodgrain, drawing card holders, scrutinising the data critically and zeroing in on the needy.

The task should not be onerous, given the **widespread application of technological tools** in the PDS .

The culture of providing essential commodities free of cost at the drop of a hat has to go.

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The elimination of the problem of diversion of foodgrains has to be taken up with **renewed vigour** as farmers toil hard in the fields to produce the grains and many deserving persons remain outside the food security net.

69. [Why our obsession with ranking universities does more harm than good](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Why our obsession with ranking universities does more harm than good”** published in **The Indian Express** on **18th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issue related to development and management of education

Relevance: Higher education

News- The article explains the issue related to our continued obsession with ranking universities.

What are the issues related to ranking universities?

The universities that occupy no significant place in the list suffer from chronic anxiety. They are compelled to feel a sense of **“lagging behind”**. It leads to their stigmatisation by people.

We are preoccupied with the **“value-neutral”** scale of ranking. In this process, most of us will lose the **moral courage** to problematize this scale and reimagine the relationship between the university and the world.

Universities become **more concerned about showcasing their products** through the numbers, calculations, tables. These numbers include citations per paper, papers per faculty, proportion of international students, employer reputation, faculty-student ratio or international research network.

While the statisticians can quantify the papers per faculty, they are incapable of understanding the **relevance** of these papers, even if published in “international” journals. It is difficult to tell whether these tools are really contributing to the development of refreshingly **new ideas in natural and social sciences**, and simultaneously enhancing the **ethical conscience** of the world.

In this academic race for publications, citations and international networking, professors have mastered the technique of indulging themselves in the practice of **manufacturing papers**. They are capable of managing the cleverly developed circuits of networking for enhancing the citations.

What is the way forward?

Good universities need to equate knowledge **with awakened intelligence**. It should aim at uniting **engaged pedagogy** and meaningful research.

It must nurture **sensitive and compassionate learners**. These learners should sharpen their academic skills in the process of eradicating social evils like caste, patriarchy, racism and religious bigotry; and

It should **equate knowledge with wisdom**. The wisdom needs to redefine the meaning of research in science, technology, economics and sociology to strive for an egalitarian, ecologically sensitive and spiritually elevated world.

70. [India must resume its vanguard role in ridding the world of nuclear weapons](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“India must resume its vanguard role in ridding the world of nuclear weapons”** published in **The Indian Express** on **19th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance: Nuclear threat to world security

News- The article explains the ICJ ruling on nuclear weapons and international law on this subject. It also explains India’s position on this matter.

What are the main points of ICJ ruling on nuclear weapons in 1996?

It permitted a state to use nuclear weapons in self-defence when its survival was at stake.

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In the absence of a definitive law on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, the ICJ cannot conclude definitively whether the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be lawful or unlawful.

What is the current opinion of the world community about nuclear weapons?

Now, we do have an international law on this subject.

The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was passed in January 2021

It was passed by 122 members of the UN General Assembly, a clear majority.

It entered into force after its ratification by 50 member-States of the UN. The number of signatories has since risen to 91.

Any threat or use of nuclear weapons is now a clear violation of international law.

What has been India's position on nuclear weapons?

Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi were opposed to possession, threat and use of nuclear weapons.

Rajiv Gandhi presented to the UN in 1988 a detailed action plan on how to arrive in stages to a nuclear-weapons-free and nonviolent world order within a timeline of 22 years.

Pranab Mukherjee, as foreign minister, proposed in the UN in 2006 a summary of the main objectives of the action plan as a working paper

India appears to have disavowed both the action plan and the working paper after the NDA government came to power.

What is the way forward for India?

India should assume its vanguard role for elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is the only state with the capacity and stockpile of nuclear weapons to join the current tide of world opinion for prohibition of these weapons.

71. The Governor is under the Constitution, not above it

Source: The post is based on an article "**The Governor is under the Constitution, not above it**" published in **The Hindu** on **19th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2- Governance

Relevance: concerns associated with misuse of powers by the Governor

News: The misuse of power by the governor in some states has created a tussle with the state governments.

What does the Constitution of India say regarding the Governor?

Article 153 provides a Governor for each State.

Article 154 says that the executive power of the State shall be vested in the Governor and the powers shall be exercised by him directly or through officers' subordinate to him in accordance with Constitution.

Article 163 provides that there shall be a Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Governor except on the matter of his discretion.

What has the Supreme Court said regarding the discretionary powers of the Governor?

The issue of discretionary powers of the governor was taken by SC in **Shamsher Singh vs State of Punjab and Anr**. The following observations were made by SC –

The court ruled that wherever the Constitution **requires satisfaction** of the President or the Governor for the exercise of any power or function, the satisfaction is in the Constitutional sense under the Cabinet system of the Government.

It held that the discretionary power given to the Governor by the Constitution on which he/she can act on his own is only Article 356.

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Whereas in exercising all other discretionary powers, the Governor will act in harmony with his **Council of Ministers**. Moreover, the Governor should have a proper justification in using Article 356.

The court further said that the Constitution does not aim at providing a parallel administration. It said that **the basic philosophy in a democracy** is that the elected Ministers must accept responsibility for every executive act and that the Council of Ministers alone represents a responsible form of government in the States.

Moreover, the role of Governor was also debated in the Constituent Assembly.

What were the debates in the Constituent Assembly?

The **appointment methods** of the Governor were debated whether the Governor should be appointed by the President of India or should be elected.

However, the Constituent Assembly adopted the appointment of the Governor by the President fearing that election would create a **parallel State leadership**.

Prof. K.T. Shah, a member of the Constituent Assembly, while debating **Article 154** demanded that the Constitution must include the provisions that guides the Governor to use its power in accordance with the Constitution and the Law, i.e., on the advice of his Ministers.

Further, while debating Article 163 he said that it will be the responsibility of the Chief Minister who will **advise the Governor** about the appointment of his Minister or their removal if necessary.

He said that Article 163 is a very **limited clause**. It is not a general clause that gives the Governor power to disregard the advice of his ministers in any matter in which he finds not suitable.

K.M. Munshi said that it would be better to have a Governor nominated by the Centre, who is free from the passions and jealousies of local party politics.

B.R. Ambedkar said that the Governor will not have any such power that he will use on his own discretion or judgment but he is required to follow the advice of his ministry in all matters.

Therefore, it is clear from these debates that the Governor has no powers to interfere with the administration in day-to-day affairs including to refuse assent to Bills passed by the Assembly. He should act according to the powers given by the Constitution.

72. 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.

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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**.

73. 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.

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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 I**". 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.

74. [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.

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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.

75. [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.

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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.

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.

76. [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](#)

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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](#)

77. [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.

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](#)

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78. [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 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.

79. [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.

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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.

80. [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.

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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.

81. [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.

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.

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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.

82. [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 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.

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83. [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.

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.

84. [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.

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.

85. [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.

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.

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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.

86. [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.

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.

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87. [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**.

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.

88. [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?

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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.

89. [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.

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

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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.

90. [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.

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.

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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.

91. [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**.

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.

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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.

92. 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.

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.

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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."

93. [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

94. [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.

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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.

95. [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/>

96. [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.

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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-authorised**.

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 authorised**.

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.

97. [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.

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.

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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.

98. [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?

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

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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.

99. [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.

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.

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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.

100. [JUVENILE JUSTICE LAW](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "**JUVENILE JUSTICE LAW: PERSON WITH MATURITY MUST NOT GET BLANKET IMMUNITY FROM CRIMINAL PROCESS**" published in **The INDIAN EXPRESS** on **28th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection of vulnerable sections.

Relevance- Protection of juveniles

News- The article explains the observation made by the Supreme Court in its judgement on the infamous Kathua rape murder case.

What is Juvenile Justice Law?

The **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015** is an act to strengthen and amend the laws relating to the children who are alleged to be in conflict with law and the children who are in the need of care and protection.

In this act the role and powers of **Juvenile Justice Board and Children Welfare Board** are defined.

Under this act the **Central Adoption Resource Authority** is given statutory powers.

What are the main observations made by the Supreme Court in this regard?

1. The rising rate of **juvenile delinquency** in India is a matter of concern and requires immediate attention.
2. There is a **school of thought** existing in our country. It firmly believes that howsoever heinous the crime may be, be it single rape, gangrape, drug peddling, or murder but if the accused is a juvenile, he should be dealt with keeping in mind only one thing. It is the goal of reformation.

What is the Way forward?

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Juvenile Justice Laws should be made more easier for the victim, their parents and other social organizations to get the necessary support and ensure that their child returns to a normal life. This should be done in addition to addressing the **procedural loopholes** and ensuring rapid **delivery of justice**.

101. [Toward legalising same-sex marriage](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Toward legalising same-sex marriage**” published in **The Hindu** on **28th November 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Social Justice**

Relevance: **problems with LGBTQI+**

News: Two LGBT couples have filed petitions in the Supreme Court to allow recognition of same-sex marriage under the **Special Marriage Act, (SMA) 1954**.

The SMA provides a civil form of marriage for couples who cannot marry under their personal law and both the petitioners seek to recognise same-sex marriage in relation to SMA.

What are the arguments of petitioners?

SMA is beyond the purview of the Constitution as it discriminates between same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples.

Act denied same-sex couples both **legal rights** as well as the **social recognition and status**.

Recognition of same sex marriage is in continuation of the previous SC judgment – **Navtej Singh Johar judgment of 2018** (decriminalising homosexuality) and the **Puttaswamy judgment of 2017** (affirming the Right to Privacy as a fundamental right).

Section 4 of the SMA on one hand allows marriage between any two persons but on the other hand **Section 4(c) of the SMA** uses gender specific words like husband/wife. This limits the Act to opposite genders.

Therefore, both petitioners demanded that SMA should be made **gender neutral**.

One of the new petitioners highlighted SC judgment **of NALSA vs Union of India judgment (2014)**. The court in this judgment held that **non-binary individuals** were protected under the Constitution and fundamental rights such as equality, non-discrimination, life, freedom, etc. also applies to these individuals.

What is the stand of the government on the issue?

The centre last year has **opposed the same sex marriage**. It said that the same sex marriage is neither recognised nor accepted in any uncodified personal laws or any codified statutory laws. It further said that as per law, marriage was only permissible between a “biological man” and “biological woman”.

Which country in the world has legalised same sex marriage?

The Netherlands was the first country in 2001 to legalise same-sex marriage and many other countries followed it.

Today, around 32 countries have legalised same-sex marriages. Many of these countries have recognised same-sex civil unions.

Civil unions or partnerships provide legal recognition of unmarried couples of the same or opposite sex in order to grant them some of the rights that come with marriage such as inheritance, medical benefits, employee benefits to spouses, etc.

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102. [The President's caution on overcrowding of prisons is a wake-up call to the executive and judiciary](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The President's caution on overcrowding of prisons is a wake-up call to the executive and judiciary**” published in the **Indian Express** on **28th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Prison reforms

Relevance: About overcrowding of prisons.

News: Recently, the President called the government and the judiciary to address the issue of overcrowding of prisons. The President mentioned that India is “forced to make new prisons because prisons are overcrowded. This raises questions about India’s move towards progress as a society.

Note: *Recently, the law minister also suggested that only trial courts ought to decide to grant bail.* What is the present status of the overcrowding of prisons according to Prison Statistics?

Prison Statistics India is a report published by the Ministry of Home Affairs. According to its 2021 edition, **a)** Between 2016-2021, the number of convicts in jails decreased by 9.5% whereas the number of undertrial inmates increased by 45.8%, **b)** With three out of four prisoners being undertrials, the problem of overcrowding of prisons is essentially an undertrial issue, **c)** Around 80% of prisoners were confined for periods up to a year.

What needs to be done to address the overcrowding of prisons?

The government need to tackle the root cause instead of providing bail. Such as addressing the indiscriminate arrest of individuals.

Similarly, the government has to identify those who cannot afford bail and facilitate them with bail.

Read more: [About Prison reforms: What numbers don't tell us](#)

103. [Shifts unexplained – System of shuffling High Court judges without consent needs reconsideration](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Shifts unexplained – System of shuffling High Court judges without consent needs reconsideration**” published in **The Hindu** on **28th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary.

Relevance: About transferring the judges of High Courts.

News: A recent round of transfers — from Telangana, Madras and Andhra Pradesh High Courts — has stirred the debate on transferring the judges. There are also reports that the Gujarat High Court Chief Justice was unaware of the impending transfer of a judge from the Gujarat High Court.

What are the norms to be followed while transferring a high court judge?

According to the **Memorandum of Procedure**, **a) A judge's consent is not necessary** to effect a transfer, **b) All transfers ought to be in public interest**, that is, for better administration of justice throughout the country, **c) The personal factors** of the judge, including his preference of places, **should invariably be taken into account**.

What are the concerns associated with the transfer of judges?

The power of transfer has always been seen as a possible threat to judicial independence. For instance, even under the Collegium system, it is difficult to dissipate the impression that the threat of transfer hangs over every judge's head.

Read more: [Why does the SC collegium hold primacy over transfers?](#)

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What should be done to ensure impartiality in transferring a judge?

Transfers need not to be used as a punitive step. India needs to do a complete review of the provisions for the transfer of High Court judges.

Read more: [There's a need for transparency in transfer of judges](#)

104. [Pill Carefully Hospitals, doctors, chemists – they all need a stronger push towards rational use of antibiotics](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Pill Carefully Hospitals, doctors, chemists – they all need a stronger push towards rational use of antibiotics**” published in **The Times of India** on **28th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Relevance: About Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

News: Recently, ICMR attempted to reform advised doctors to avoid using antibiotics in conditions such as low-grade fever and viral bronchitis. It also plans to announce a stop date in advance to ensure that antibiotics are not given beyond the recommended duration.

What is Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and its causes and concerns?

Must read: [Antimicrobial Resistance \(AMR\): Causes, Concerns and Remedies – Explained, pointwise](#)

What is the reason behind ICMR's recent advice to reduce the use of antibiotics?

Multiple studies of ICMR have shown the costs of using antimicrobial prescriptions for syndrome management rather than based on a definitive diagnosis. For instance, last year, resistance to Imipenem increased from 14% in 2016 to 36% in 2021.

Note: *Imipenem is used to treat infections caused by bacteria E coli*

AMR is also being increased due to the food industry, contaminated soil and poor sanitation, doctors and hospitals have a direct role in the matter.

What should be done to reduce the use of antibiotics?

Instead of being at the pilot stage, **stewardship programmes should be started** across hospitals. This should focus on **transparently reporting** both prevalent and targeted levels of antibiotic use.

ICMR, CDSCO and state drug controllers all need to **step up the audits and updation** needed to depress antimicrobial resistance.

105. [MUMBAI MEASLES OUTBREAK DUE TO LOW VACCINATION COVERAGE](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**MUMBAI MEASLES OUTBREAK DUE TO LOW VACCINATION COVERAGE**” published in **The HINDU** on **29h November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2 and GS 3

Relevance– In the recent week at least 4 states have shown a sudden rise in the measles infection so it becomes an important issue to discuss.

News– The article explains how the chances of children getting measles infection gets reduced if they are properly vaccinated.

What is Measles Outbreak?

Measles is a highly contagious viral respiratory disease that can severely sicken young children. Generally, it affects the children but it can affect the other age population as well. However, it is highly dangerous for unvaccinated children.

What is the News?

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Recently, several measles cases have been reported in Mumbai and nearby districts. According to an ANI report, the BMC has reported that 78 new patients were admitted to the hospital on Monday.

What are the main Symptoms of Measles?

- High fever which starts 10-12 days after exposure to the virus
- Runny nose
- Sore throat and cough
- Conjunctivitis (red and watery eyes)
- Skin rash around the face and upper neck which spreads later
- Small white spots inside the cheeks

How to protect the Children from Measles?

The measles vaccine is one of the best ways to prevent this infection. It is usually given as a combined measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine to children between 12-15 months of age. The second dose is usually given between 4 to 6 years of age. Adults who have never received immunization can also consult their doctors to get the doses.

According to CDC, the two doses are 97% effective against the virus. In some countries, vaccination against chickenpox is also combined with the MMR vaccine.

What is the Way forward?

In my opinion Proper strategy to be followed up by the concerned authority in addition to vaccination of children should be adopted to avoid any outbreak.

We can also learn from our successful strategy that we adopted to contain the spread of COVID-19.

106. [WHY INDIA MUST STAND WITH PALESTINE](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Why India Must Stand with Palestine”** published in **The HINDU** on **29th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International Relations

Relevance– As rising confrontation of Israel and Palestine India must have a particular stand as both the nations were erstwhile colonial empire and now must stand against Islamophobia.

News– The article explains how the India’s shifting stand on Israel-Palestine reflects the changing contour of India’s foreign Policy.

What is Israel-Palestine Conflict?

The conflict has been ongoing for more than 100 years between Jews and Arabs over a piece of land between the Jordan river and Mediterranean river.

In 1947, the UN voted for Palestine to be split into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem becoming an international city. That plan was accepted by Jewish leaders but rejected by the Arab side and never implemented.

What is Present Scenario?

Israel still occupies the West Bank, and although it pulled out of Gaza the UN still regards that piece of land as part of occupied territory.

Israel claims the whole of Jerusalem as its capital, while the Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state. Tensions escalated in recent month over Israel’s actions concerning Al-Asqa mosque in East Jerusalem.

What is India’s stand on this Issue?

During the 1947 UN General Assembly Resolution), India submitted that independence for Palestine should be the primary purpose of any plan for the future of the country.

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India was also among the first countries that recognized the Palestinian state. In 1998, India co-sponsored the draft resolution on “the right of Palestinians to self-determination” in UNGA.

India has now taken cognizance of Human right violation done by Israel on Palestine

India supported installation of Palestinian flag at UN premises along with other observer states, like the flags of member states, in September 2015. There have been regular bilateral visits between India and Palestine.

India traditionally believes in the 2- State Solution and supports the establishment of a sovereign independent and the viable state of Palestine. India’s support for Palestine has not deterred its growing relationship with Israel. However, over the years, the Indian government has diluted its reaction to Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians.

What is the way Forward?

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between **India and** Israel, there has been increased cooperation in military and intelligence ventures. So, India must adopt a balanced approach to dealing with this complex issue.

107. [Unsure Payout – India’s health insurers get away with denying too many claims. Regulator must step in](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Unsure Payout – India’s health insurers get away with denying too many claims. Regulator must step in**” published in **The Times of India** on **29th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice

Relevance: problems with health insurance in India

News: India’s out-of-pocket expenditure is around 55% of total health expenditure which is more than the global average of 18%.

However, the experience of individual with health policies has been unsatisfactory even though it has been over two decades since the insurance market opened up.

What are the problems with health insurance in India?

Health insurance in India has three main problems – it covers **only hospitalisation, exclusions** as many people are excluded from getting the insurance, and **limits on covering the hospital bills**.

Many times, people are excluded from getting the insurance benefit due to different reasons and people bear the cost of paying medical expenses even though they have insurance for it.

For example, during the pandemic, many insured found that a significant amount of their hospital bills fell outside the purview of insurance.

Some fear of being cheated as the claims process is often handled by **third party administrators**. The **largest buyer of health insurance** is GoI and the state government for their different schemes.

Even though, a good number of people are not covered under their schemes and they remain vulnerable to health emergencies in the absence of a **first-rate insurance system**.

Therefore, **IRDAI** needs to find a way to enhance the quality of insurance policies by providing individual satisfaction.

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108. [My dream for India at 100: A chance at excellence for every athlete](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**My dream for India at 100: A chance at excellence for every athlete**” published in **The Indian Express** on **29h November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Government policies and interventions in various sectors

Relevance– Sports sector

News– The article explains the steps needed to be taken for development of sports.

What should be done by the government for the development of sports?

The aim should not be just medals, India needs to develop athletes who can perform at will.

India is 10 years behind every major country, in terms of **sports science**. It has only recently started looking at coaches’ training programmes, and own **data collection, analysis and research**. Now, the focus must be on **quality**.

In team sports like hockey and cricket, there should be **parity** between men and women.

We should **capitalise on traditional hubs** in boxing and wrestling, but must provide young people with more options. Sponsorship, infrastructure and sports programs at universities like in the US, are needed.

We need urban kids to play sports and aspire to be **elite athletes**.

More opportunities and facilities like travelling abroad, performing in a different set-up, and different food and language should be made available to all athletes irrespective of their backgrounds.

109. [Settling the language for cooperative federalism](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Settling the language for cooperative federalism**” published in **The Hindu** on **30 November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Challenges pertaining to federal structure

Relevance– Language issues

News– The article explains the issues of language in our federal setup

What does the constitution say about language issue?

Article 345 leaves it to the State to choose its language for official purposes. In actual practice, several States and Union Territories continue to use English. **Article 348** stipulates that all proceedings of the Supreme Court, every High Court and Bills in Parliament shall be in the English language.

The **Eighth Schedule** and the periodic additions to it spell out the diversity and complexity of the language landscape. The **Official Languages Act of 1963** and its Rules made in 1976 and amended in 1987, 2007 and 2011 also adds to this diversity.

Article 351 directs the state, in the development of Hindi, to draw upon other languages in the composite culture of India.

What are some facts about parliamentary committees on official language?

It consists of 30 members of Parliament, and is headed by the Home Minister. Its mandate is to review the progress made in the use of Hindi for **official purposes**.

It also makes recommendations to increase the use of Hindi in **official communications**. It submits its report to the President of India, who forwards its recommendations to the two Houses.

So far, only the recommendations of the reports up to the ninth in the year 2010 have been forwarded to the Houses of Parliament. The **10th and 11th reports** have been submitted to the President and are not in the public domain.

What are the issues with the recommendations of the 10th report of the parliamentary committee on official language?

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It highlighted some of its recommendations on language of instruction and examinations in technical courses. There are concerns about its **implications and practicality** in terms of the availability of standard books and course material. Lack of teachers qualified to communicate it adequately is also a big issue

A related matter is the **competence** in Hindi language of candidates undertaking examinations in it and competing in equal measure with those whose mother tongue it is.

There is apprehension that the imposition of Hindi is detrimental to students whose mother tongue is not Hindi. Its implications for **competitiveness** in the job market are evident.

The chapter on Official Language is **definitive** and limits itself to the language of the Union. It does not mention a national language. There is no mention of it in the section on **Directive Principles of State Policy** or **Fundamental Duties**.

110. [About Digital Personal Data Protection Bill: Finger On The Future](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

“Finger On The Future” published in **The Times of India** on **30th November 2022**.

“India’s law should be practical about breaches of data” published in the **Livemint** on **30th 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 Digital Personal Data Protection Bill.

News: The Union government has released the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill for public comment.

Why does India need a proper data protection policy?

India needs a proper data protection policy because,

a) India, with over 820 million internet users, soon to touch 1.2 billion, has become the world’s largest connected democracy, with the largest presence on the global internet, **b)** China has heavily censored the internet (or intranet). On the other hand, the internet in India, India is open, accessible and interconnected to the global digital network, just like Western democracies, **c)** With India assuming the presidency of G20 and also council chairmanship of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence, it is natural for India to take a leadership role in shaping the future of technology.

What are the advantages of the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022?

a) Compliance burden is proportional and minimal, **b)** The adjudicating authority, the Data Protection Board, is independent and has a specific role of adjudicating disputes and determining financial penalties in the event of breaches, **c)** All standards for the larger data ecosystem will be set by MeitY through its India Data Management office, and **d)** The Bill is aligned to the tests of legality, necessity and proportionality as laid out by the Supreme Court.

Must read: [Draft Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022: Benefits and Concerns – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the concerns associated with the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022?

-Unlike previous drafts and most data protection legislation around the world, the Bill makes **no mention of the time limit**. Such as how soon a notification should be made or any other remedial action that ought to be taken.

-The draft bill required to notify every affected data principal of the data breach. Not every data breach puts data at risk. Further, over-reporting will cause unnecessary panic initially and over time a serious data breach might be taken lightly by the public.

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How does the new Digital India Act make India's digital space comprehensive?

India has established a comprehensive future-ready framework for the digital economy and ecosystem consisting of IT Act & IT rules, cybersecurity directions, the National Data Governance Framework Policy, the Digital Data Protection Bill, and soon to be unveiled Digital India Act (as a successor to the 22-year-old IT Act). All this will make India's digital space comprehensive.

What are the challenges associated with creating a data protection policy?

Need swift policy response: Agile and dynamic tech developments require agile and responsive governance. But governments around the world have lagged in swift response in framing laws and regulations to the rapidly shifting and growing challenges of crime, harassment and political interference.

No standard definition of privacy in India: Since the 2017 Right to Privacy judgment, policymaking on the digital economy focuses on trust, growth and governance. But there is no standard definition of privacy in India.

Read more: [Revised Personal Data Protection Bill: One step forward, one step back](#)

What should be done to improve data protection?

Increase data protection: Most people use a single strong password that is used across a variety of services. Thus, a single data breach puts various services at risk. This can be prevented by **a)** Using a password manager can greatly reduce the cascading consequences of data breach incidents, **b)** Promote users to use two-factor authentication.

Report only potential breaches: Data fiduciaries should report only those incidents that are likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of natural persons. This is followed by the European General Data Protection Regulation.

111. [Has GST reduced inter-state disparities?](#)

Source- The post is based on the article **"Has GST reduced inter-state disparities?"** published in the **mint** on **1st December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian economy and mobilisation of resources

Relevance- Taxation structure of country

News- The article explains the performance of GST regime.

Two months, April and October in 2022 have seen the highest GST collection since its introduction in July 2017.

With introduction of GST, there was fear among states that it will lead to **lesser revenues**. The central government guaranteed a 14% growth in state revenue. It promised to make up for any shortfalls.

This compensation was only for five years till July 2017. It has ended this year.

What was the logic behind GST?

Convergence among states- No state can offer **tax breaks or tax incentives** to lure investments. It will ensure a level playing field among states.

It will replace local and state taxes. There will be a **national standard tax** on commodities. The result will be a national market for any good. It would be easier for companies to pick up underdeveloped areas for investment.

Reducing cost- A national tax would reduce **compliance and administrative cost**. Better enforcement and compliance means higher tax revenues.

Has it led to redistributing investments?

After the introduction of GST, Over half of proposed industrial investments are still accounted for by three states- Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Convergence of income has not happened.

Has it led to higher revenues?

A working paper by **National Institute of Public Finance and Policy** shows the shift in tax revenues pre and post GST.

The data shows that there is uniform decline across most states, rich or poor in tax to GDP ratio. The exceptions are states like Haryana, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

Central government has found other ways like taxes on Petroleum to cope up with the shortfall in revenues.

What is the way out for states?

There is a need for enforcing **better tax compliance**. States need to crack down on tax evasion, **Investment in technology** for faster payment of dues and making the entire GST system easier. States can expand revenues in the longer term by doing two things. They need to reduce **transaction costs** and other costs of doing business. They need to **expand consumption** in their states by expanding economic opportunities.

But expanding consumption runs against one of the adverse consequences of the GST regime. It presumes that per capita income and employment are increasing. But worst affected by GST has been the MSME sector. RBI data shows the impact of demonetisation on MSMEs.

112. [Party Congress over, understanding the China puzzle](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Party Congress over, understanding the China puzzle**” published in **The Hindu** on **1st December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests

Relevance– India and China relationship in global context

News– The article explains China strategy in context of the recently held 20th Party Congress of Communist Party of China.

What is the current global situation?

Chinese President Xi Jinping has told the Central Military Commission, “**to enhance troop training and combat preparedness**”. He also warned of “**dangerous storms ahead**” and about **external interference in Taiwan**. All this seemed to convince the West that China is preparing to go to war over Taiwan.

Japan is understood to have already decided to double its defence budget to 2% of its GDP.

Statements like “it was essential to uphold **international law and the multilateral system**, as **today's era must not be of war**” by western leaders have only increased such concerns. Stalemates in the recent **Biden-Xi talks** have added to existing concerns. Mr. Xi reiterated that Taiwan “was the first red line” that must not be crossed. Biden told Xi that the U.S. would enhance its security position in Asia.

What can be inferred by careful reading of the 20th Party Congress of Communist Party of China?

Under Mr. Xi, **ideology** drives policy most of the time. Also, It reinforces Mr. Xi's Marxist inspired belief that **'history is irreversibly on China's side'**.

There is a shift to **Marxist orthodoxy** in the political realm. It does mark a retreat from the Deng era of **'caution and risk aversion'**. References made to changes in the **'international balance of forces'** and that China has entered the **'leading ranks of the world'**.

China wants to prevent the **ideological decay** of the CCP by avoiding the kind of situation that led to the collapse of Soviet Communism and ensure that the West did not succeed in fomenting **'ideological divisions within China'**.

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The priority for Mr. Xi and the CCP at present is not embarking on new conflicts but on protecting the **ideological purity and integrity** of the Party. China has certain **clear red lines** which cannot be breached. If this happens, it would lead to a major conflict.

China is asserting that today it is more powerful than ever. There is nowhere any clear evidence that China is about to use this power to change the course of history. China may want to assess the situation and the circumstances before embarking on a conflict against strategic entities such as the **Quad and AUKUS**.

What does it mean for India?

There is a need for better understanding of China's real intentions. It includes avoiding past mistakes, such as those in the 1950s when the West seems to have overestimated China's capabilities. India also failed in the 1950s.

The deliberations in the Party Congress do not appear directed at India. Repeated claims by western sources about China's designs on countries in the **Indo-Pacific** should not provoke India into taking any hard steps.

Both situations and events tend to change rapidly. For instance, after a constant barrage of charges against China, Mr. Biden has implied that the situation has not changed for the worse, and that there is no **'new Cold War in the offing'**, involving the U.S. and China.

For India, **border incursions** are a continuing cause for concern. But, they should not be mistaken as precursors to war. A careful study of the border hotspots indicates that China's concerns are largely regarding **Aksai Chin**. Its importance for China lies in its proximity to China's Tibet and Xinjiang.

This does not mean that relations between China and India will remain smooth. Their conflict is more **civilisational than territorial** in nature. India's growing closeness to the U.S. and the West annoys China. It sees the U.S.-led West as its **principal antagonist**. Hence, China has excessive concerns about **strategic entities** such as the Quad.

Notwithstanding its claims about being stronger than ever before, China continues to nurse serious concerns about its **strategic vulnerabilities**.

113. [Re-design and deliver – Govt crop insurance scheme needs radical rethink](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **"Re-design and deliver – Govt crop insurance scheme needs radical rethink"** published in **Business Standard** on **1st December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance

Relevance: problems with PMFBY and ways to address it

News: The government has decided to bring changes in the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (**PMFBY**) in the view of increasing climate hazards on farming. This is a great step as the current PMFBY has many lacunae.

What are the issues with PMFBY?

Decline in numbers: This scheme has failed to meet the expectations of farmers and state governments. The number of states implementing the PMFBY has declined from 22 in 2018 to 19 in 2022 and cultivators opting for the insurance cover has dropped from 21.6 million to 15.38 million.

Issues of farmers/insurers: Farmers argue that the compensation paid by insurers is too low and comes too late to help them whereas the insurers argue that farm insurance is a low-profit business with high risk involved in it. Therefore, some insurance companies have also stopped offering farm insurance cover.

Cost of sharing subsidy: PMFBY is a Central-sector scheme but half its cost is required to be shared by the states, and implementation is in the hands of public-sector and private companies.

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States already face financial issues due to which they find it hard to pay their share of subsidy for PMFBY.

What can be the way forward?

Change in the scheme: PMFBY should be either made a wholly Central scheme with all expenses borne by the Union government or leaving it entirely to the states as agriculture is a state subject under the Constitution.

- This will give autonomy to states to either choose to pay compensation to farmers or offer situation-specific insurance models acceptable to the farmers.
- It will also help the state to look at the level of the risk involved in the agriculture of its state depending upon local agro-ecological conditions.

Addressing reimbursement flaws: Even though the norms and rules for making claims and disbursement of the insurance are clearly given in the PMFBY but it is not followed. Therefore, the issue of delayed settlement of claims and inadequate reimbursement of the losses also needs to be addressed.

So, there is a need to carry out **structural and procedural modifications** to the PMFBY to make it feasible for insurance firms and financially gainful for farmers.

114. [Towards a robust triumvirate – on appointment of Election Commissioner](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “Towards a robust triumvirate” published in **The Hindu** on **1st December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Salient features of Representation of People Act

Relevance– Electoral reforms

News– The article explains the issue of appointment of CEC and ECs. It also explains the issue of security of tenure for ECS.

A five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court is examining a bunch of petitions recommending reforms in the process of appointment of members of the Election Commission.

What are various recommendations for appointment of Election Commissioner?

The **Dinesh Goswami Committee** in 1990 suggested that the Chief Election Commissioner be appointed by the President in consultation with the Chief Justice of India and the Leader of the Opposition. It said this process should have statutory backing. It applied the same criteria to the appointments of Election Commissioners, along with consultation with the Chief Election Commissioner.

The **NCRWC** said that the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners should be appointed on the recommendation of a body comprising the Prime Minister, the LoP in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

The **255th Report of the Law Commission** said the appointment of all the Election Commissioners should be made by the President in consultation with a **three-member collegium** consisting of the Prime Minister, the LoP of the Lok Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India.

What are various facts related to security of tenure for Election Commissioners?

CEC can only be removed by impeachment. Election Commissioners do not enjoy this protection. SC in **Sheshan case** have conferred equal powers on the Election Commissioners as those enjoyed by the Chief Election Commissioner. It has even offered **majority power**, whereby any two can overrule even the Chief Election Commissioner. Yet, it did not afford the Election Commissioners the same constitutional protection from arbitrary removal.

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The **255th Report of the Law Commission** suggested measures to safeguard Election Commissioners from arbitrary removal, in a manner similar to what is accorded to the Chief Election Commissioner.

What Election Commissioners should be provided with security of tenure?

Without this, they may hesitate to act independently.

In the absence of **full constitutional security**, an Election Commissioner could feel they must keep on the right side of the Chief Election Commissioner. They might also feel they must favour the government.

With such misgivings, an Election Commissioner can never be sure whether they will automatically be elevated to the top post because nowhere has elevation been mentioned in any statute.

What is the way forward?

Chief Election Commissioner should be appointed by a **collegium**. This must apply equally to the Election Commissioners. The collegium should be wide based.

The Election Commission must now equally be protected from arbitrary removal by a constitutional amendment that would ensure a removal process that currently applies only to the Chief Election Commissioner.

115. [An Indian recipe to quell micronutrient malnutrition](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**An Indian recipe to quell micronutrient malnutrition**” published in **The Hindu** on **1st December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issue relating to poverty and hunger

Relevance– Malnutrition in India

News– The article explains the benefits of food fortification in checking malnutrition

What does the statistics say about malnutrition in India? As per **NFHS-5 data**, every second Indian woman is anaemic, every third child is stunted and malnourished, and every fifth child is wasted.

According to an **FAO Food Security Report for 2021**, India ranks 101 out of 116 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2021. It has a 15.3% undernourished population, the highest proportion of stunted children (30%), and wasted children (17.3%).

Global Nutrition Report 2021 says that stunting among children in India is significantly higher than the Asian average of 21.8%.

What are the benefits associated with food fortification?

Pilot projects on the distribution of fortified rice have been taken up in Maharashtra (Gadchiroli district) as part of a targeted Public Distribution programme for the masses. The programme has been a success in terms of preventing cases of anaemia from 58.9% to 29.5% within a span of two years.

It has prompted the central government to declare the scaling up of the distribution of fortified rice through the existing platform of social safety nets such as the PDS, ICDS and PM-POSHAN. In Gujarat, an eight-month long study on **multiple micronutrient** fortified rice intervention for school children, as part of the Midday Meal Scheme took place in 2018-19. It found increased haemoglobin concentration, reduction in anaemia prevalence, and more improved average **cognitive scores**.

What is the effectiveness of food fortification?

According to the World Health Organization, **Iron deficiency anaemia** is a major public health concern. It is responsible for 3.6% of **disability-adjusted life years or DALYs**.

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According to **NITI Aayog** a rice fortification budget of around ₹2,800 crore per year can save 35% of the total or 16.6 million DALYs per year with no known risk of toxicity. In India, the cost of one DALY lost due to iron deficiency anaemia is approximately 30000 Rs.

The health benefits accruing from food fortification have made 80 countries to frame laws for the fortification of cereal flour, and 130 countries with iodised salt. 13 countries have mandated rice fortification.

What is the way forward?

Food fortification is a **cost-effective complementary strategy** to address multiple micronutrient deficiencies. It can help in reducing **micronutrient deficiencies** and address overall health benefits.

The intervention should be carried out with **precaution**. Activists have expressed concern that excess iron overload from fortified rice has been dangerous for Jharkhand's tribal population suffering from sickle cell anaemia and thalassaemia.

116. [India's agenda during its G20 Presidency will be inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

“India's agenda during its G20 Presidency will be inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive” published in the **Indian Express** on **1st November 2022**.

“Today, India commences its G20 presidency” published in the **Business Standard** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS – 2: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Relevance: About India's G20 agenda.

News: Today, India commences its G20 Presidency.

The world remains trapped in the same zero-sum mindset even today. This is visible by **a)** Countries fighting over territory or resources, **b)** Supplies of essential goods are weaponised such as vaccines are hoarded by a few, when billions remain vulnerable.

What will be India's G20 agenda?

-India can present its experiences, learnings and models as possible templates for others, particularly the developing world.

-India will encourage an honest conversation among the most powerful countries — on mitigating risks posed by weapons of mass destruction and enhancing global security.

-India will seek to depoliticise the global supply of food, fertilisers and medical products, so that geopolitical tensions do not lead to humanitarian crises.

-India will encourage sustainable and environment-friendly lifestyles, based on India's tradition of trusteeship towards nature.

Overall, India's G20 agenda will be inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive.

Read more: [G20: Lessons from Bali summit and what it implies for India's presidency](#)

How India's G20 agenda will promote a universal sense of one-ness?

Unique theme: India sees all living beings, and even inanimate things, as composed of the same five basic elements (panch tatva of earth, water, fire, air and space). India's G20 Presidency will work to promote this universal sense of one-ness.

Hence, India decided “One Earth, One Family, One Future” to be the theme for the upcoming G20 meet. With this, India will focus on healing our “One Earth”, creating harmony within our “One Family” and giving hope for our “One Future”.

Indian democracy and economic growth: India is housing one-sixth of the human population. Along with its immense diversity of languages, religions, customs and beliefs, India is a microcosm of the world. Today, India is the fastest-growing large economy. Hence, India is better positioned to revamp the agenda of the G-20.

India's past achievement: India has leveraged technology to create open, inclusive, and interoperable digital public goods. These have delivered revolutionary progress in fields as varied as social protection, financial inclusion, and electronic payments.

India can be a voice of the unheard: India can help in shaping G20 priorities in consultation with both G20 partners and the Global South, whose voice often goes unheard.

For all these reasons, India's experiences can provide insights into possible global solutions.

Read here: [The G20 president's responsibility: Ensuring the delivery of the new loss and damage climate fund](#)

117. [Unseemly conflict – Government's diatribe does not resolve conflict over judicial appointments](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

"Unseemly conflict – Government's diatribe does not resolve conflict over judicial appointments" published in **The Hindu** on **1st November 2022**.

"Order, Order – NJAC better than collegium" published in **The Times of India** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS – 2: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary.

Relevance: About the conflicts on the functioning of the judiciary.

News: Recently, the government returned 20 names proposed by the Supreme Court collegium for judicial appointments. Among them, ten names were reiterated after being returned earlier. What are the major challenges hampering the functioning of the judiciary?

One, Union Law Minister is targeting the **Collegium system with its inherent challenges**. The collegium is a demonstrably poor system where the individual biases of judges can affect who gets selected or dropped and there's too much opacity in its ways of functioning.

The **second** is the Government's strategy of delaying appointments recommended by the Collegium is seen as a counterblast to its loss of primacy in the matter. For instance, a Supreme Court Bench questioned whether Government's inaction is a retaliation against the Court as it did not permit the implementation of the **National Judicial Appointments Commission**.

Third, the Government is also **violating the prevailing legal position** that a recommendation reiterated by the Collegium, after due consideration of its objections, is binding on it.

Read more: [Revive NJAC: The collegium system ultimately hurts the judiciary's credibility. Parliament's idea was better](#)

What are the implications of the conflicts on the functioning of the judiciary?

Withdrawal of eminent lawyers: The uncertainty over the fate of a recommendation for appointment is resulting in eminent lawyers withdrawing their consent or declining invitations to join the Bench. This is a tragic waste of judicial talent.

Favours government-chosen candidates: The Government ignoring the reiterations results in the Government having a particular candidate in the position. In future, they might support the government in judgements.

Widen the rift between the government and the judiciary: In counter-retaliation, the judiciary might hold a major verdict that may go against the Government. This will in turn be portrayed by the political leadership as stemming from the hostility of the judiciary.

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Above all, **litigants will face collateral damage** in the fight between judiciary and the government.

Read more: [A better NJAC: Politicians are right on the collegium. But can their solution rise above politics, that's the question](#)

What should be done to ensure the smooth functioning of the judiciary?

Every week there are high court judges retiring and vacancies are growing. Existing judges can dispose of more cases. But they cannot make amends for vacancies.

Only if the two sides are willing to address each other's concerns, the relations between the judiciary and the executive will be back on track. This can be done by

a) The Government clearing the pending recommendations, b) The judiciary must agree to a process of reforms in the way the Collegium functions. The judiciary should expand the range of consultation and widen the zone of consideration, **c) The Government must bring a new constitutional mechanism to make appointments** without undermining judicial authority. For instance, The Centre can unveil a new NJAC after consultation with political parties and SC, which is acceptable to all sides, **d) The judiciary must make public criteria used to select judges**, like assessments of judgments written or cases argued.

118. [Why tracking migration is important for nutrition schemes?](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Why tracking migration is important for nutrition schemes?**” published in **The Indian Express** on **2nd December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Poverty and hunger

Relevance– Issues related to malnutrition

News– The article explains the challenges faced by the government in reducing malnutrition due to high migration in some areas.

During a study, it was found that the number of children with acute malnutrition peaked in April. A **UNICEF study** in Nandurbar district in Maharashtra found the same thing. Both these districts have a high population of people who migrate in search of jobs.

What are the challenges created by migration for tackling malnutrition?

Multiple government schemes work on the assumption that people are going to stay in villages. This assumption does not work in high migration areas.

In **nutrition surveys**, the lack of migration data inflates the number of children being measured because new births keep adding to it. It leads to data that does not reflect the actual situation.

The pregnant women and children are not reflected in data used by administration for **government interventions** in areas where people are migrated.

The migrated children are also not properly **vaccinated**.

What is the way forward?

The government needs to understand the **interplay between nutrition, livelihood and poverty** for long-term interventions to reduce malnutrition.

A plan is needed that focuses on targeting the most vulnerable.

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119. [State elections and the troubling return of the old pension scheme](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**State elections and the troubling return of the old pension scheme**” published in the **Livemint** on **2nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2- Governance

Relevance: About reviving old pension scheme (OPS).

News: The poll promises in ongoing state elections are always debatable. The Himachal Pradesh election witnessed a promise of revival of the old pension scheme (OPS) for state government employees.

Before this, three state governments had already notified the PFRDA of their switch to the OPS: Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan and Jharkhand.

About the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) and National Pension Scheme

Must read: [Comparison of National Pension Scheme with Old Pension System – Explained, pointwise](#)

The OPS was a defined-benefit scheme with an entitlement defined (by the fifth pay commission) at 50% of the last salary drawn.

Due to its drawbacks, State governments shifted to a new pension scheme (NPS) without any coercion (except in West Bengal).

National Pension Scheme: The NPS is like pension systems elsewhere in the world. It is based on the amounts contributed by the employee and employer over the working life of the employee, and the market yield obtained on the consolidated pension fund. The NPS is regulated by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).

Note: *Pensions for defence personnel are paid by the central government. This is the sole exemption from NPS, and continues to be paid on the defined-benefit system.*

Why does the OPS is bad for state economics?

a) In addition to inflation indexation through dearness allowance adjustments, OPS wage was indexed to pay-scale revisions prescribed by successive pay commissions, **b)** The OPS benefits only retirees, on the other hand, it squeezes the state’s exchequer from which welfare benefits flow to the common person, **c)** By implementing the scheme at present, the state governments is likely to become insolvent by the time their defined benefits become due.

Read more: [OPS is bad for economics](#)

What should be done?

Municipalities and panchayats in India are subject to legislation passed at the state level. Instead of implementing OPS, the government should improve the state exchequer by transferring funds to municipalities to improve the condition of roads and sanitation, increase municipal school teacher salaries and public health services.

Read more: [Why the Old Pension Scheme is both bad economics and bad politics](#)

120. [Can China and India settle the conflict over the Line of Actual Control?](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Can China and India settle the conflict over the Line of Actual Control?**” published in **The Indian Express** on **3rd December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: India and China relations

News: China has objected to the military drill that is being conducted between India and the US.

What did China say and why does the current objection of China hold no importance?

China said that the current military drill Operation “**Yudh Abhyas**” that is being conducted 100 km from the LAC at Auli, is a violation of the 1993 and 1996 **India-China border agreements**.

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As per the agreement, there is a requirement that the two sides should not hold, or should give adequate notice of military exercises in “**mutually identified zones**”.

However, this agreement does not hold any importance as China has itself violated the agreement with its large-scale intrusions across the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh in April 2020. It has also violated other agreements signed in 2005, 2012 and 2013. All these laid down that boundary issues between the two countries will be resolved peacefully, and that neither side would use or threaten to use force.

Therefore, India no longer has the confidence that China wants to resolve the border issue.

What is the way forward?

First, India and China now need a new border agreement to settle the border issues through peaceful means. However, it is doubtful whether China wants it.

Second, India needs to build up its ties with the US and QUAD nations to counter Chinese presence in the South Asian region.

Third, India can also make an alliance with Pakistan that benefits India and attempts to establish a rivalry in the Indian Ocean region.

121. [As CJI constitutes an all-women bench, what's the status of women in law?](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**As CJI constitutes an all-women bench, what's the status of women in law?**” published in **Business Standard** on **3rd December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice

Relevance: position of women in judiciary

News: The proportion of women enrolling in LLB courses or in judiciary is very low which is an important issue that requires attention.

What is the status of women in the judiciary?

According to the data from **All India Survey on Higher Education** for 2019-20, **only 33 per cent** were women enrolled out of 400,000 LLB students.

Moreover, India has not had a woman as a Chief Justice since Independence. The proportion of women in the **Supreme Court is low at 12.5 per cent**.

Recently, the Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud has constituted an **all-women bench** which is only the third time in the history of SC where an all-women bench has been constituted.

The position of women is **better in lower judiciary** but their proportion falls as we move to higher judiciary.

As per the data, out of 19,288 judges employed in the subordinate courts, 6,765 (35 percent) were women and out of 6765, 55 percent women were employed as civil judges.

However, in **the high courts**, only 13.2 per cent women occupied the position of judge. Further, there are **state-wise disparities** in the appointment of women judges in the lower judiciary and the high courts.

As per the data, out of the 36 states and Union Territories, 17 had a smaller proportion of women in the lower judiciary than the national average.

States with lesser number of women employed in the subordinate courts are –Gujarat (19.5%), Jharkhand (23%), Bihar (24.2%).

States which are in a better position of women employed in the subordinate courts are –Telangana (52.8%), Andhra Pradesh (46.2%) and Punjab (45.8%).

The data reveals that five states did not have a single woman judge whereas seven states have less than 10 per cent women in the judiciary. **Only three states** (Sikkim, Telangana and Delhi) had over a fourth of women judges in the high court.

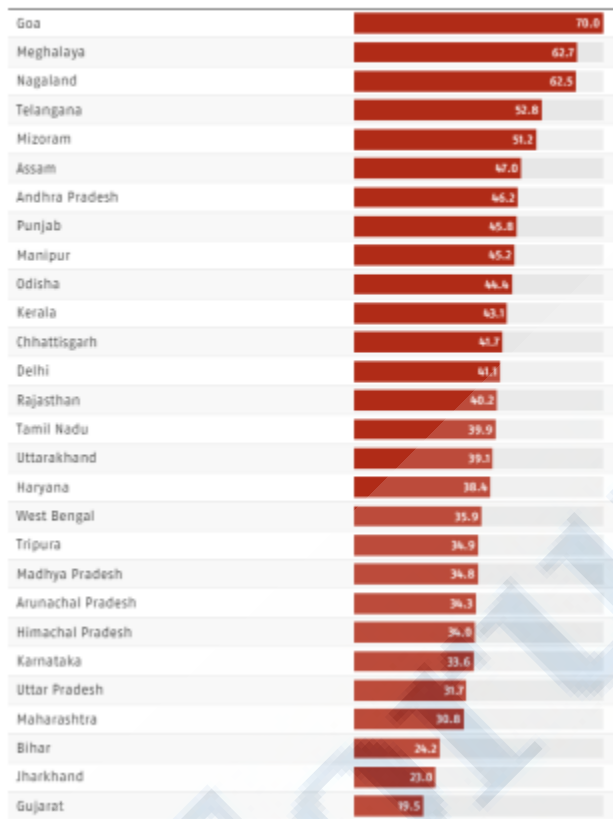
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Further, the number of women has increased in the high courts but their representation has hardly changed.

Therefore, these data highlight a grim picture of the women employed in the judiciary in India. So, there is a need to look into the issue and give proper representation and equal rights to women.

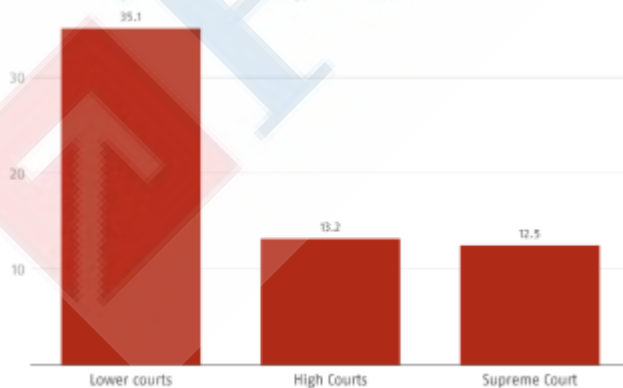
Gujarat and Jharkhand were worst performers among the states

(women, % of total working strength of judges in lower courts)



Source: Business Standard

(women, % of total working strength of judges)



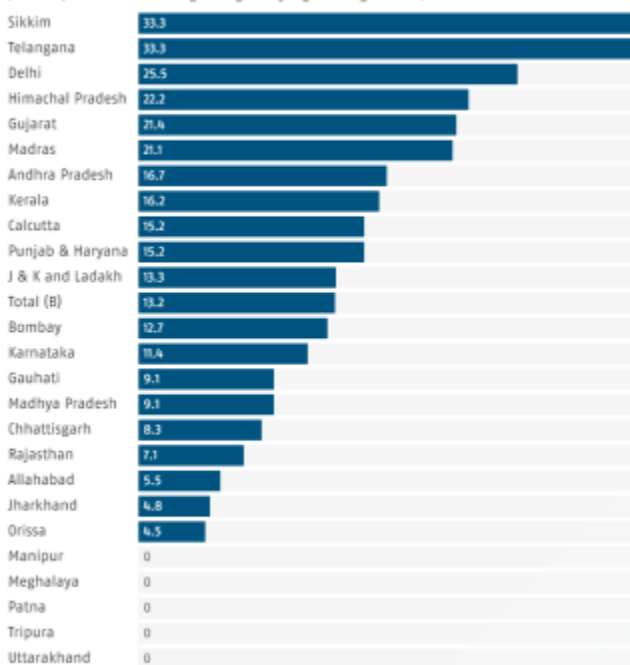
Source: Lok Sabha, BS Analysis

Source: Business Standard

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Five HCs did not have a single woman judge

(women, % of total working strength of judges in High Courts)



Source: Lok Sabha

Source: Business Standard

122. [Winning the world, softly](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Winning the world, softly**” published in **The Times of India** on **3rd December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance– Soft power of India

News– The article explains the soft power enjoyed by India in ancient times. It also explains the steps needed to enhance India’s soft power.

What shows the Indian arc of influence in ancient times?

Mahabharat’s Gandhari was from Gandhar now called Kandahar.

Iran derives its name from the term **Airyānēmaējā** or the land of the Aryans.

Angkor Wat, the world’s largest Vishnu temple, is not situated in India but in Cambodia.

Varuna was even adopted by the Greeks as Uranus.

Two Indian monks, **Kashyapa Matanga and Dharmaraksha**, carried the first Buddhist texts into China while Bodhidharma took martial arts to Shaolin.

Indonesia’s 20,000 Rupiah note prominently displays Ganeshji on it.

In Thailand, the **Chakri dynasty kings** still assume the title of King Ram and their royal emblem is Garuda.

In Malaysia, the **Hikayat Seri Rama** is performed with shadow puppets even today. It is the Malay adaptation of Ramayan.

What is the way forward to increase the soft power of our country?

Iyengar Awards: International Day of Yoga has been recognised by the UN. The most famous practitioner of yoga was BKS Iyengar. The government can create an Iyengar Awards as the Oscars of yoga.

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Buddhist tourism: Most of the significant Buddhist sites are in India and Nepal. There is a lack of **nodal agency** that ensures a coordinated approach from heritage site management to international connectivity. Religious tourism can be an instant brand enhancer.

Film industry: India produces 1,600 films annually. Government can provide **budgetary assistance** for Indian films to be marketed abroad once they have tasted success in India.

Health sector: India has some of the finest **alternative therapies** – ayurveda, pranayama, panchkarma, naturopathy. The practice of **meditation** is also becoming mainstream in stress management. Government needs to work on a **PPP basis** to create world-class alternative therapy centres abroad.

Sanskrit Inc: India should also be concerned that Sanskrit will soon be appropriated by countries like Germany where tens of chairs in Sanskrit are being established. It is time to develop an Indian centre that can preserve Indic knowledge and India's pre-eminence.

Indian cuisine: The world is enthusiastically embracing turmeric lattes, masala tea, pure ghee, vegetarianism and veganism. India needs to invest in a **travelling Indian food festival** that takes India's cuisine around the planet. **Strategic partners** like hotel chains and airlines can be involved.

Strengthening of ICCR: The country needs to **rejuvenate, rebrand and re-engineer** ICCR's 38 Indian Cultural Centres to play to our strengths. Both the quality and quantity of centres must improve.

123. [Connecting India's East with the Indo-Pacific](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Connecting India's East with the Indo-Pacific**” published in **The Hindu** on **3rd December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS2- Regional and global groupings affecting India interest

Relevance– Understanding the concept of Indo-pacific

News– The article explains the construct of the Indo-Pacific from the perspective of north-eastern India.

Since 2018, India's '**Look East**' and '**Act East**' policies have moved into the phase of **Indo-Pacific policy and strategy**. But the New Delhi interpretation of **Indo-Pacific** is different from the perceptions of this policy in Northeastern and eastern India.

How should the construct of the Indo-Pacific include the perspective of the north-east?

Security aspects– Security conditions have improved significantly in recent times. However, the core issues behind the **insurgency** have remained unresolved. The way forward was to address them substantially and accelerate the pace of development.

There exists a contrast in **security assessments** of the authorities and others.

The official perspective was that the phenomena of smuggling, drug trafficking, transnational border crime, insurgent activity, and the influx of refugees represented serious non-traditional threats. China was viewed as a '**constant player**' behind these nefarious activities.

Local communities have concerns over the insensitive handling of those engaged in lawful exchanges with the neighboring countries.

A balanced view indicates that considerable scope exists for more **effective and people-sensitive border management** in the future.

Developmental aspects– The Northeast is on the right path to economic development. There is a need for improvement in roads linking northeastern towns. **Job creation** for thousands of graduates produced by local universities is required.

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Manipur needs to be promoted as the hub of **medical tourism** for other Indian States and neighbours such as Myanmar. The State's research and development facilities to leverage the **region's biodiversity** should be expanded.

Accelerated development requires **increased investment** by Indian corporates and foreign investors as well as better management.

Why is there a need to focus upon the cultural aspect of Indo-pacific construct?

There is a need to move beyond **geopolitics and geo-economics**. Neighbours should focus on **"the geo-cultural dimension"** of the Indo-Pacific. Expanded **people-related cooperation** would lead to wider acceptance of the Indo-Pacific and **consolidation of the Quad**.

Shared culture, history and mutual social threads that tie the region with India are also an important component towards fostering **regional cooperation**".

How member states should consolidate the construct of Indo-pacific?

First, the growing significance of the Bay of Bengal region permeates the thinking of scholars. The concept of the Indo-Pacific seems distant. Therefore, member-states need to invest more in the **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation** to enhance its **effectiveness**.

Second, for implementing India's **Indo-Pacific strategy**, voices from Northeast and eastern India must be heard

General Studies Paper – 3

General Studies - 3

1. [Demand grows, but DNA tests fall under a grey area](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Demand grows, but DNA tests fall under a grey area**” published in **The Hindu** on **31th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Technology

News- The article explains the issues related with DNA tests. It also explains the position of higher courts on DNA tests.

What are the issues involved?

The demand for DNA tests are increasing by around 20% each year.

There is conflict between two issues. On the one hand, it encroaches on the **privacy of individuals** and there is danger of **self-incrimination**. On the other hand, it is needed to unearth the truth, claim of marital infidelity and proving paternity.

The Supreme Court recognized **bodily autonomy and privacy** as part of **the right to life under Article 21**.

Section 112 of the Indian Evidence Act presumes that a child born to a married woman is legitimate. The burden of proof is on the person claiming illegitimacy of the child. The use of DNA tests to deal with claims of infidelity competes with this section.

What have been the views of the cases?

The **Supreme Court** has recently held in a case concerning a woman protecting her identity that compelling an unwilling person to undergo a DNA test would be a violation of his/her personal liberty and right to privacy.

In **Bhabani Prasad Jena, 2010**; Supreme Court held that judges cannot order genetic tests as a “roving enquiry”.

In the **Banarsi Dass case, 2005**, it held that DNA must **balance the interests** of the parties. DNA tests should also not be ordered if there was other material evidence at hand to prove the case.

In its **Ashok Kumar judgment** last year, the court said judges, should examine “**proportionality of the legitimate aims**”, before ordering a genetic test.

High Courts also have taken divergent views. **Kerala High Court** delivered two contrasting verdicts. In a high-profile case last year, it allowed a genetic test to establish that a former Left student leader and her husband were the biological parents of a one-year-old baby. In another case, it dismissed a 77-year-old man’s plea for a DNA test to prove that his wife had been adulterous.

2. [United against terror – on United Nations Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee meeting](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**United against terror**” published in **The Hindu** on **31th October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security

News- The article explain the main highlights of recently held **United Nations Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee meeting** in Mumbai.

What are the challenges related to terrorism?

There is lack of **global cooperation** in fight against terrorism. Lack of international cooperation was evident in bringing justice to victims of the 26/11 Mumbai attack.

Pakistan has not prosecuted the preparators of the attack. The USA has refused to extradite David Headley and Tahawwur Rana. China continues to block designating LeT leaders on the UNSC 1267 terror list.

What was the focus of the summit?

The focus was on online radicalization and terror recruitment, terror financing through cryptocurrency, and virtual assets. The issues like unmanned aerial system use including drones for terror strikes, and transporting drugs and arms were also discussed.

The deliberations led to the “**Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes**”.

3. [Climate responsibility](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**What the new UN climate report reveals**” published in the **Business Standard** on **31st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Climate change

Relevance: About the Climate responsibility at COP 27.

News: Two issues may play an important role in the upcoming COP27 — **a)** Further commitment on global climate responsibility for loss and damage compensation and **b)** Some acceleration of commitments on mitigation actions.

How do the global countries stand on their climate responsibility?

Responsibility

The [Paris agreement](#) mentioned a “common but differentiated responsibility.” The word responsibility meant to **a) Responsibility as liability:** This is for the damage inflicted on others, **b) Responsibility as a duty:** Since climate change affects every country in the world, all have a duty to act.

Concerns associated with fixing responsibility: The Paris Agreement has **a)** Diluted the distinction between developed and developing countries was diluted and, **b)** Created a way for voluntary pledges instead of globally negotiated commitments, **c)** There is no standard set for the substantiality of voluntary pledges.

Loss and damage

This involves the impacts of climate change that are not avoided by mitigation, adaptation, and other measures such as disaster-risk management. It includes, for instance, extreme weather events like hurricanes and floods, the sea-level rise, etc.

Steps taken on loss and damage: This includes **Santiago Network on technical assistance** and an **agreement at COP26 in Glasgow to have a dialogue process** on the issue.

Concerns associated with the loss and damage principle: So far, the cost of financing with unavoidable loss and damage is not yet discussed. According to experts, the financing of loss and damage is even more important than support for mitigation and adaptation.

Must read: [Five years after Paris agreement](#)

Emission-reduction plans

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has estimated the carbon emissions from 2020 to global net zero(2050) should be limited to 500 billion tonnes for a 50:50 chance of staying below a temperature increase of 1.5 degree centigrade. This is done after taking into account the likely emission of greenhouse gases other than carbon dioxide.

Concerns associated with fulfilling Emission-reduction plans: The permissible average per capita per year emission over the 2020–2030 period is 1.8 tonnes of carbon dioxide. But the emissions of the USA will amount to five-seven tonnes, of China four-six tonnes, of the EU and the UK two-three tonnes.

Note: *India’s average per capita per year emissions will be 1.5-2.3 tonnes.*

Overall, the combination of responsibility as liability for loss and damage and responsibility as a duty to leave enough room for others will not be readily accepted by the major emitters.

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Read more: [COP26 a last chance to fulfil Paris agreement goals](#)

What climate responsibilities needs to be finalised on COP-27?

Agreement on loss and damage: Much of the loss and damage will take place in the future as well. So, there should be an agreement to assign financing responsibility for loss and damage with the actual payments provided when the actions to manage loss and damage are undertaken. There should also be a **separation of relief measures** for unpredicted adverse weather events **and steady funding** for measures to cope with threats like sea-level rise.

Emission-reduction plans: The pace of emission reduction depends on the announced targets for 2030, and beyond that, it will depend on the rate at which decarbonisation initiatives like renewable and nuclear energy, electrification of transport or its conversion into green hydrogen, and carbon capture and storage are implemented.

India can assert and ensure that it remains on the UNFCCC agenda and provides a basis for bringing together the vast majority of countries that are mainly victims rather than perpetrators of climate risks.

4. [About India's per capita growth: The First Among Twenty](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“The First Among Twenty”** published in **The Times of India** on **31st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy

Relevance: About India's per capita growth and its forecasts

News: Recently IMF-World Bank meetings have been concluded in Washington. The IMF WEO expects per capita growth in India to be higher than that of China for six years, from 2022 through 2027.

About India's per capita growth against China

Between 1980 and 2019, China's per capita income grew at 7.7% per annum, and India's at 4.1%. Between 1980 and 2014, India's per capita growth exceeded that of China on only two occasions: in 1989, when the excess was 1.1% and in 1990 when the excess was 0.9%.


After 2015, India ended this long “drought” and held excess per capita income growth for three successive years. India is now converging to the per capita income of China. According to the projections, the average per capita growth rate for India and China, 2022-27: India 5.4%, China 4.3%.

Read more: [External risk factors for the Indian economy: Global storm: Overseas risk is main policy challenge](#)

Why India's growth story has surprised many, and How has India performed against G20 economies?

India is a democracy, but China is not. Many experts have hinted that democracy is a constraining factor in carrying out economic reforms that could facilitate growth. But despite being a democracy, India has achieved this development.

G20 COUNTRY PERFORMANCE 2004-27

	CAGR in % per year				
	GDP (PPP)	Per capita GDP (PPP)	CPI	Exchange rate wrt USD	Population
2004-13					
India	7.3	5.9	7.8	2.8	1.4
China	9.6	9.1	3.1	-2.9	0.56
G20: EMs excl. India	6.5	5.6	4.9	-1	0.9
G20 : Advanced Economies	1.6	1	2	-1.8	0.6
All G20	3.9	3.1	3.6	-0.7	0.8
2014-21					
India	3.8	2.7	4.7	2.6	1.05
China	4.6	4.2	1.9	0.4	0.4
G20: EMs excl. India	1.96	0.97	5.9	7.9	1
G20 : Advanced Economies	1.6	1.1	1.5	1.6	0.45
All G20	2.4	1.8	2.9	2.8	0.6
2022-27					
India	6.3	5.4	4.6	2.6	0.9
China	4.25	4.35	2	-1.2	-0.1
G20: EMs excl. India	3.5	3.2	5.2	1.8	0.3
G20 : Advanced Economies	1.6	1.36	3.2	1.38	0.2
All G20	3	2.6	4.3	1.43	0.3

Source: IMF WEO October 2022; Notes: Share in Global PPP is used for weighting regional averages

Source: TOI

For instance, G20 countries provide a useful reference point for a comparative analysis of performance of India. The table provides historical data for five groups of countries: India, China, G20 emerging markets (minus India), G20 advanced economies, and G20 itself.

The IMF WEO data reveals **a)** For the first time ever, EMs and AE exchange rate depreciation has narrowed to near equality for the forecast of period 2022-27, **b)** Across a number of important economic performance criteria the balance has shifted to the EMs, and **c)** Within EMs, the baton of leadership has passed from China to India.

So, overall, India's economy is set to thoroughly outpace its fellow G20 members over the next five years

Read more: [Post-pandemic surprises and where the indian economy truly stands today](#)

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5. [How The Aviation Ecosystem Will Take Flight With C-295s](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**How The Aviation Ecosystem Will Take Flight With C-295s**” published in **The Times of India** on **31st October 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

Relevance: About the C-295 manufacturing facility and its benefits.

News: Recently, the Prime Minister has laid the foundation stone for the Tata consortium’s C-295 manufacturing facility.

What are the potential applications of C-295 aircraft?

The aircraft is contemporary in design, technology and systems and has widespread usage in 12 countries.

Military applications: It is already certified and operational in numerous roles like Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C), Electronic Intelligence (ELINT), maritime patrol, aerial refuelling, search and rescue (SAR), and even as a water bomber.

It has a load capacity of up to nine tonnes, it can carry up to 71 passengers or 44 paratroopers or 24 stretchers for medical evacuations

Civilian applications: Beyond military potential across the board, the aircraft is certified for civil applications.

The aircraft’s unique capability to connect destinations which are tough to service or reachable only through semi-prepared surfaces and short runways. This can help in both passenger and load-carrying tasks.

Read more: [Need for a New Aircraft Carrier for the Indian Navy – Explained, pointwise](#)

What is the significance of the C-295 manufacturing facility in India?

First of a kind initiative: This is **a)** The first large-scale project given directly to the private sector, **b)** C-295 transport aircraft manufacturing capability is being set up in the country for the first time, thereby bridging a critical gap in indigenous aircraft manufacturing.

Host of benefits to IAF: C-295’s versatility would provide IAF with an immensely powerful tactical transport capability. By the next decade, this fleet would become the backbone of the IAF’s entire tactical transport operations. Apart from the present 40 orders, additional requirements will also emerge from the IAF towards future acquisitions/replacements in this category.

Further, the navy and coast guard have already indicated interest towards their requirements.

Boon for the private and MSME sector: The project will involve the creation of production infrastructure with transfer of technology from Airbus. The resulting manufacturing supply chain will spread from Tata to a host of MSMEs.

As per the data released, about 125 MSMEs across the country will be involved in the supply chain. Overall, the initial order would result in substantial production set-up in the country.

The contract stipulates the setting up of a D-Level servicing facility by 2031, and this maintenance repair and overhaul (MRO) capability will itself be a boon for the private sector with a long-term commitment to efficient and cost-effective maintenance support for IAF.

How India can move ahead with the C-295 manufacturing facility?

1) India should utilise this capability and start targeting MROs of aircraft in friendly countries, **2)** India should try to get export orders from friendly countries, **3)** India should develop indigenous mission computers and own operational software to support indigenous products and R&D and permit rapid modernisation.

6. [The Supreme Court was right to stay Bombay HC order on G N Saibaba](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The Supreme Court was right to stay Bombay HC order on G N Saibaba**” published in **The Indian Express** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Security

News: The article discusses the misuse of technical irregularity provision of the criminal law in the context of G N Saibaba case.

What are the different terms used in the criminal law?

Acquit: In this, the court decides that a person is **not guilty** of the crime charged against him after a detailed and elaborate trial and hearing of the allegation and evidence presented by both sides.

Convict: in this, the court that a person is **guilty** of committing a crime after the investigation and presentation of charges against the person and after a detailed trial on all facts and evidence collected by both sides

Discharge: It is a result either of a **technical irregularity** in the process or the failure to establish any charge against the person after investigation. This technicality has been used by the accused in the current case.

What are the provisions under UAPA?

The UAPA has a provision that requires the prosecution to obtain permission of the government before filing of the chargesheet in order to proceed.

The permission was granted by the government but the accused raised a technicality issue regarding the same for the first time after conviction.

However, the permission granted in the UAPA is different from the permission provided to public servants in the anti-corruption laws.

Moreover, in both the cases, the law states that a technicality can never override an order of conviction passed after detailed examination of facts and an elaborate trial unless there is a failure of justice.

What were the decision taken by HC and SC?

HC **pardoned** Saibaba and the other accused only technicality of sanction which was not a good step. This situation would have released the terrorists found guilty after an elaborate trial. Therefore, the **Maharashtra Government** approached Supreme Court.

SC after looking at the history of the criminal law decided not provide any relief to the accused on the grounds of technicality. It also **suspended the operation** of the order of the High Court.

According to the SC, there has been no such incident in the history of the criminal law where an order of conviction recorded after a detailed trial has been set aside on the technical grounds of sanction for prosecution in UAPA offences.

How do others view the decision of the SC?

Some sections of the media portrayed the order as if the SC has stayed an acquittal order while other sections talk about personal liberties or human rights mostly to bring pressure on the judiciary.

However, court should not look at those views as justice prevails over the humanity.

Moreover, the charges against Saibaba and the other accused have been factually found by the competent court to in supporting the activities of terrorism of the Naxal.

Therefore, the issue of technicality does not arise after the conviction is done on merits.

What are the impacts of Naxalism?

Naxalism or terrorism has wide range impact including the nation’s integrity and on society.

It is an ideology that that has taken more Indian lives in the past two decades than any other form of terrorism.

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It tries to change the government created by the constitution and establish its own version of a communist state.

Therefore, steps taken by SC were apt and it prevented the bigger mishappening in the future by keeping the Naxals behind the bars.

7. [Morbi tragedy – on issues associated with urban governance](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Don’t just move on**” published in **The Times of India** and **Double engine failure**” in **The Indian Express** on **1st november 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Disaster management. GS1- Urbanisation and their problems

Relevance– Issue with management of disasters in urban areas

News- The article explains the reasons for the Morbi incident. It also explains the negligence on part of the state that caused the incident.

What is negligence on part of the state government?

The negligence by the local administration was responsible for the tragedy. Yet, no FIR has been registered against local administration.

Proceedings against the private contractors who repaired the bridge is not enough.

The Morbi incident is a symptom of the crisis that lies at the heart of **urban governance** in India.

What is the crisis of urban governance in India?

Urban institutions that oversee governance are in poor state.

There is a dispute over the size of the urban population. It influences the flow of resources and political importance given urban areas. The **World Bank agglomeration index** in 2010 estimated that 55% of India’s population lives in areas with “**urban-like features**”. This estimate far exceeds GoI’s estimate for urban population.

The 74th constitutional amendment was enacted three decades ago. But state governments are reluctant to give control over infrastructure to these bodies. It leads to **multiple chains of command, lack of accountability** and corruption.

Municipal revenue is not proportional to the size of urban economies. Municipal revenue remained stuck at 1% of GDP between 2007-08 and 2017-18. Municipal revenues in South Africa and Brazil are around 6% and 7% respectively.

Why is the state government responsible for the incident?

Under the **constitutional framework**, the state government should protect the life of every citizen. It is the duty of the state government to prevent incidents like Morbi. Governance is an important element in the constitutional framework. Without accountability, governance is merely a paper exercise.

Bridges and public ways are **state property**. State must keep them in perfect condition.

There were more people than capacity on the bridge. The administration did not provide enough manpower to prevent the incident.

There is **centralisation of power**. Gujarat is remotely controlled by the central government in Delhi. There is more than one point of supervision and control in the administration. Appointments of civil and police in the state are opaque and have political overtones. State machinery is busy in making arrangements for VVIPs visits.

What is the way forward?

Accountability needs to be fixed for the loss of more than 150 lives.

We need to **take inspiration** from leaders like Lal Bahadur Shastri who resigned because of a train accident.

Compensation and commission of inquiry is not enough. There is a need for good governance on part of the state government.

8. [Building the fast lane to logistics – on Multi Modal Logistics Parks](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Building the fast lane to logistics**” published in the **mint** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Infrastructure

Relevance– Issues related with logistics

News- The article explains the Multi Modal Logistics Park proposed by the central government.

What are challenges related to logistics in India?

The movement of goods is **expensive and inefficient**. Logistics cost around 14% of GDP. It is significantly higher than other countries.

Transporting goods by rail costs 45% less compared to roads. But three-fourth transportation of goods is through roads.

What are some facts related to MMLPs?

These are large land parcels with rail and rail connectivity. It is based on the **hub-and-spoke model**. Goods coming here are seamlessly transferred to trains and other modes of transportation.

Freight from the production zone arrives here. It is shifted to the logistical park nearest its consumption destination.

Mechanised warehousing and **cold chain facilities** are also available here. **Value added services** like custom clearance and last stage processing facilities are also provided.

These parks were first mooted by the railway ministry in 2009. Bharatmala Pariyojana revived the idea.

What process will be followed in building these MMLPs?

35 such parks are planned to be built under **PPP mode**. The first park is coming up in Chennai. National Highway logistics Management, a wholly owned special purpose vehicle of NHAI is the nodal agency for these parks.

MMLPs will be built in the DBFOT mode of PPP. Concessionaires are required to pay a percentage in gross revenue from the third year. National Highway logistical Management company will be mandated to provide infrastructure inside these parks.

Total investment in 35 MMLPs will be 52500 crore. It will be shared equally between government and private sectors. These will be built on 7000 acres of land.

These parks will handle 700 million metric tonnes of cargo at its peak capacity.

What are the benefits associated with MMLPs?

These parks will **reduce the logistics cost** from 14% to 10% of GDP.

It will lead to **improved train services**, use of modern equipment and electronic data exchange. The **movement of inland goods** via containers will be facilitated.

It will **reduce the freight movement** on city roads leading to lower cost and lesser pollution.

It is **in line with the new National Logistical Policy** which aims to create the cheapest mode of transport. Warehousing charges and handling cost will be lower. Economy of scale due to shared infrastructure and competition will reduce the transportation cost.

MMLPs will be built in the **DBFOT mode of PPP**. Concessionaires are required to pay a percentage in gross revenue from the third year. National Highway logistical Management company will be mandated to provide infrastructure inside these parks.

What are challenges to MMLPs?

First is the viability of private players to put their investment in logistical parks.

Another challenge is related to the multiplicity of government agencies involved in setting up MMLPs.

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Soaring food and land prices are other concerns. Availability of affordable land remains a big barrier.

9. [The gun and the pen – On UAPA](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The gun and the pen**” published in **The Hindu** on **1st november 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Role of non-state actors. GS 2- Fundamental rights

News- The article explains the observation by the PM in a conclave of state home ministers.

What are the main points of the PM ‘s speech at the conclave of state home ministers?

He called for elimination of all forms of Naxalism whether they are spreading violence through guns or gaining support and influencing youths through writings.

He emphasised on importance on Unlawful Activities Prevention Act to combat terrorism.

What are the issues raised by the speech?

Incitement to violence by mobilising support for armed insurgency is a grave offence. But if there is no proven connection between intellectual writings and violence, it is not logical to treat armed insurgency at par with intellectual writings in support of any ideology.

UAPA has been frequently and unfairly invoked in cases which have no linkages with terror. Umar Khalid in the Delhi riots case, and Jyoti Jagtap of the Kabir Kala Manch in the Elgar Parishad case are good examples of invoking UAPA and eliminating the need for showing concrete evidence to prove their involvement in incitement to violence.

UAPA is an impediment to **liberty** and subjected to **judicial interpretations**.

It leads to **manipulation of political discourse** in such a way that those who question the actions, methods and processes of the state that cause mass resentment are criminalised. The use of political catchwords like “**urban naxals**” should be seen in that context.

10. [GM Mustard: A win for science and the farmer](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**GM Mustard: A win for science and the farmer**” published in **Indian Express** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country

Relevance: About the benefits of GM food crops.

News: Recently, the government cleared the GM Mustard Hybrid DMH 11 for commercial cultivation.

Must read: [Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee approves commercial cultivation of genetically modified mustard yet again](#)

Why does the adoption of GM food crops are in the broader national interest?

Scientific innovations and their scaling is the best option to reduce over-exploitation of natural resources (soil, water, biodiversity), increase factor productivity, and helps to achieve sustainable development goals, especially ending poverty and hunger.

Wider adaptability: Genetically modified maize, soybean, cotton, tomato and canola are grown worldwide; the area currently under GM crops is about 200 m ha. Besides India, these have been grown for many years in the US, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Australia, Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and China.

Meet the existing deficit in India’s production: India is currently importing around 13 million tonnes at a cost of Rs 1.17 lakh crore to the exchequer. Of this, 2.0-2.5 mt soybean oil and 1.0-1.5 mt canola oil is already GM.

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It is scientifically proven that the consumption of refined oil does not allow any protein to enter the human system. Thus, the consumption of GM oil is completely safe from a health point of view. So permitting GM crops can meet the existing deficit in edible oils (about 55-60 per cent).

Read more: [Govt. allows GM soy meal import to support poultry industry](#)

What are the major benefits of GM Mustard?

Farmers report that the yields of mustard are low and have stagnated for a long time at around 1,260 kg/ha, much lower than the global average of 2,000 kg/ha. Yields of canola in Canada, China and Australia are almost three times higher than in India since they use GM hybrid technology. The government's decision to allow the production of GM Mustard can increase the yield and improve oil production.

Note: Australia has recently released herbicide-tolerant GM Indian mustard, using similar technology of DMH11.

What India needs to do to promote GM food crops?

India needs to **a)** Provide an enabling environment to test the available seed of Hybrid DMH 11 in the current rabi season, **b)** Encourage public-private partnerships to produce quality seeds to cover more area next year, **c)** Scientists at ICAR institutes must be encouraged to develop new GM Mustard hybrids on a mission mode, **d)** Allowing the production of GM Soybean and GM Maize will also be a positive step.

All this will increase both the productivity and profitability of these crops and doubling farmers' income

Read more: [GM crops – on approval to GM Mustard](#)

11. [Safety in public places mustn't be a lost cause](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Safety in public places mustn't be a lost cause**" published in **Live Mint** on **2nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Disaster Management

Relevance: reasons behind disasters in India

News: Over a hundred people lost their lives in the Morbi bridge collapse in Gujarat. This has raised concerns over the failure of governance.

What is the incident?

It is century old bridge that was reopened after seven months of repair without getting a safety clearance. The tourist visited there and they were more than the capacity of the bridge which made the bridge to collapse.

The incident has led the arrest of the people involved in maintaining the bridge and controlling the crowd.

However, such incidents are not new to India. There have been multiple such incidents in the past but the culprits have not been punished.

What are the problems with such disaster in India?

There is serious issue of proper **governance** and **accountability** in India.

The authorities in India take actions after the incident have caused and people responsible for such incidents are not even punished.

For example, the death of businessman Cyrus Mistry raised the issue of rear seat belts but the faulty highway design which was mostly the cause of accident did not led authorities to act against the main culprit.

Therefore, there is little accountability in India for such incidents and people responsible are rarely punished.

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Further, urban governance in India is poorer as it includes corruption and ineffective implementation of the policies. Politicians often join hands with builders to deliver sub-optimal infrastructure.

What can be the course of action?

India requires some efforts to improve its current inability in ensuring proper accountability. Some jurists have called for “**accountability jurisprudence**” so that those responsible (the state, followed by private contractors) are pushed to enforce basic safety norms. There must be a **systemic will** to implement laws and **carelessness** should be removed. Further, there is need to **spread awareness** regarding the responsibility a citizen has because it is not only the state that lacks, sometimes the irresponsible citizens can also endanger the life of others.

12. [Bridging India: Morbi is a reminder how crucial bridges are as joints in India’s vast terrestrial logistics network](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Bridging India: Morbi is a reminder how crucial bridges are as joints in India’s vast terrestrial logistics network**” published in **The Times of India** on **2nd november 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Infrastructure

Relevance– Importance of good infrastructure

News- The article explains the significance of bridges in the case of India.

What is the importance of bridges?

Bridges are the joints that link the road and rail network across challenging terrain. They are an indicator of **society’s capabilities**.

They are **celebrated as engineering marvels**. **Example** is 100-year-old Pamban rail bridge across the sea that links peninsular India to Rameswaram island

India currently moves about 4.6 billion tonnes of freight a year. Around 70% is transported by trucks and 18% by rail. India’s coast-to-landmass ratio is relatively low. The landmass is crisscrossed by multiple rivers prone to annual flooding. GoI estimates that about 12% of the area is prone to floods. It makes bridge building critical.

They are an important part of the rail network. In 2018, the rail track length of 67368 km included 1.47 lakh bridges. Many of them have been in existence for over a century.

What steps are being taken by the government to improve bridge management?

Technology will play an important role in extending the longevity of bridges. Stainless steel is being used in bridge construction in coastal areas. Railways have begun to use drones to inspect bridges. Use of drones is expected to improve oversight, particularly during the monsoon.

GoI announced the establishment of the Indian bridge management system to collect information on bridges. It will enhance the quality of maintenance.

13. [The weakest link in air pollution fight](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The weakest link in air pollution fight**” published in **The Hindu** on **2nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environmental pollution and degradation

Relevance– Regulatory structure to fight pollution

News- The article explains the institutional constraints faced by the State Pollution Control Board and Pollution Control Committees of UTs. It also explains the mandate of these institutions.

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What is the mandate of SPCBs? The SPCBs were initially constituted under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

Under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, the SPCB mandate was expanded to include **air quality management**. Subsequently, several new environmental regulations added to their roles and functions.

Their primary role is to **regulate emissions** from point sources such as industries and power plants. More recently, they have also been tasked with guiding cities in meeting targets under the National Clean Air Programme and spending Finance Commission grants for air quality improvements.

What are the institutional constraints faced by SPCBs?

Composition of board– The composition of SPCBs is a matter of serious concern. Over 50% of the Board members across the 10 SPCBs and PCC represent potential polluters: local authorities, industries, and public sector corporations. Their presence raises fundamental questions around **conflicts of interest**.

There is a lack of **multidimensional expertise** in the composition of boards. Scientists, medical practitioners, and academics constitute only 7% of the Board members.

Leadership issues– The chairperson and the member secretary do not enjoy a long, stable, and full-time tenure. In many States, persons in these two posts hold an additional charge in other government departments. For example, the shortest tenure for a chairperson has been 18 days in Chhattisgarh and 15 days for a member secretary in Haryana.

Human resources– SPCBs are **critically under-staffed**. At least 40% of all sanctioned posts are vacant across nine SPCBs and PCCs.

14. A leg-up for logistics

Source– The post is based on the article “A leg-up for logistics” published in the **Business Standard** on **2nd november 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Infrastructure

Relevance– Logistics

News- The article explains the logistical related issues. It also explains the **National Logistics Policy**.

How is the performance of India in logistics?

A 2018 **logistics performance index** prepared by the World Bank put India at rank 44. China is ranked at 26th position.

India's logistics costs add up to around 13% of gross domestic product. It is quite high compared to developed economies such as the US, South Korea, Singapore, and EU. Here, costs are estimated to be 7-10%.

But this cost is disputed by some scholars.

Which are Initiatives by the government that will help in improving logistics?

Transport infrastructure has been put in place. It is evident from **greenfield expressways to dedicated freight corridors**.

The goods and services tax and e-way bill system have transformed the nature of **transport documentation**.

Coastal zones are being developed. **GatiShakti platform** seeks to build the necessary connectivity.

How will the National Logistics Policy be implemented?

The National Logistics Policy will be implemented Through **a five-pronged strategy**–

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One, the share of the railways is to be pushed up from the current 28 per cent to 40 per cent. The current emphasis on “**dedicated freight corridors**” with committed time-tables, along with RORO will help enormously.

Two, multi-modal logistics parks are to be set up.

Three, special emphasis is to be given to **inland water transportation, coastal shipping**, and moving liquid bulk cargo via pipelines.

Four, specific plans are to be drawn up for 15 industries that constitute the majority of bulk cargo movement.

Five, **digital integration** is to be achieved for tracking and monitoring. A new platform called **Unified Logistics Interface Platform** or Ulip will offer open access to relevant data crucial to tracking and expediting cargo movement. It will be done by integrating e-portals of the railways, customs, aviation and commerce authorities.

The outcome of all these efforts is to be monitored by a **Logistics Ease Across Different States** survey.

What are the issues that need to be resolved?

The adoption of **standardised multi-use containers** is to be emphasised. Agricultural mandis to aerotropolises, modern reefer trucks and refrigerated warehouses as **viable cold-chains** need to be established.

The **capacity and efficiency** of Indian ports have improved considerably. The average turnaround time of a container vessel has come down to 26 hours from 44 hours. But **maritime freight-pricing-power** needs some bold reforms.

The issues related to perennial navigable channels, night navigation, and, crucially, the absence of appropriate river-ports and related connectivity need to be resolved.

15. [Gene-altered food crops: Enhancing mustard yields](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Enhancing mustard yields**” published in **Business Standard** on **2nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country

Relevance: About the benefits of GM Mustard and gene-altered food crops.

News: Recently, the government cleared the [GM Mustard Hybrid DMH 11](#) for commercial cultivation. It is a bid to pave the way for the introduction of gene-altered food crops, which can revolutionise Indian agriculture.

Must read: [Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee approves commercial cultivation of genetically modified mustard yet again](#)

About the approval of GM Mustard

The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) approved GM mustard for general cultivation in 2017. But the government then blocked this move under pressure from the anti-genetic modification lobby.

The same lobby once again tried to block the commercialisation of DMH-11 mustard

Agricultural science bodies, such as the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, have now prepared to carry out field tests, demonstration trials, and seed multiplication of DMH-11 in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the GEAC.

What are the other gene-altered food crops allowed for field-testing by GEAC?

GEAC has granted permission for the field-testing of four more genetically engineered crops, which include two food crops — potato and banana — and two commercial crops — rubber and cotton.

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No new **Bt-cotton** hybrid has been approved since the release of Bollgard-II in 2006. The new strains of Bt-cotton are required to replace the existing ones that have outlived their useful life.

Read more: [GM Crops in India: Issues and challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

How GM Mustard will aid mustard yields?

India is a net edible oil-deficit country. India at present imports as high as 55-60% of its edible oil. GM mustard will have a yield advantage of nearly 28% over the available mustard varieties. So, it can help substantially reduce the gap in the domestic demand and supply of edible oil.

How do global countries take advantage of Indian gene-altered food crops?

a) Australia has released **GM Mustard** developed in India for general cultivation to take advantage of its high-yield potential, **b) GM brinjal** developed in India was adopted for cultivation by Bangladesh with good results and without any environmental or health hazards.

So, India should take advantage of indigenous GM crops to increase both productivity and profitability and double farmers' income.

16. [Seeds of hope: On GM crops and scientific consent](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles "**Seeds of hope: On GM crops and scientific consent**" published in **The Hindu** on **3rd November 2022**.

"Science can help India regain traditional cooking mediums" published in **Livemint** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country

Relevance: About the benefits and concerns associated with DMH-11.

News: The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) last week cleared the DMH-11 or Dhara Mustard Hybrid-11 for environmental release. The seed can now be grown in fields for producing more of its kind and is a precursor to it being approved for commercial release.

About India's oil consumption pattern

Coconut oil is popular in south India, while the western regions like to deep fry in groundnut oil. Mustard oil is used more in the east and north. But for almost 25 years, local oilseed production has fallen short of demand.

None of the traditional, cold-pressed, filtered oils have managed to hold their ground against imported palm, soy and sunflower oil. Almost 70% of demand is now met with imports. India became the world's largest importer of soybean and sunflower oils.

Due to marketing, traditional favourites like mustard, coconut, groundnut and sesame oil have reduced in their share.

Must read: [Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee approves commercial cultivation of genetically modified mustard yet again](#)

What are the benefits of DMH-11?

Aid in self-sufficiency of edible oil: Self-sufficiency in food has to be a legitimate public-policy concern. At present, Indian kitchens spend \$19 billion annually on Indonesian palm, Ukrainian sunflower and Argentinian soybean oil.

Improve health: The most price-conscious segment of the oil market was cornered by palm oil. Getting rid of the 8 million tonnes of imported palm oil could help India lower its ischemic heart disease mortality rate associated with it.

What are the other GM Crops approved in India and rolled back?

In 2009, GEAC cleared Bt Brinjal, a transgenic food crop. But the decision has been overruled by the government due to protest.

Read more: [Gene-altered food crops: Enhancing mustard yields](#)

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What are the concerns associated with the DMH-11?

DMH-11 alone may not be the panacea for India's edible oil crisis. This is because,

1) The barnase-barstar system, used in DMH-11, is promising but already outdated given that cutting-edge technology such as CRISPR is in popularity, **2)** The DMH-11 represents a platform technology that requires seed companies to invest and develop their own hybrids. But, there is uncertainty around regulatory policy regarding seed development in India, **3)** Instead of making India's oilseed economy self-reliant, GMO mustard would render farmers "seriously dependent" on a multinational giants like Bayer AG, which holds the ultimate patent on the technology.

Read more: [GM Crops in India: Issues and challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

Overall, India's imbalance of three decades in oil market won't be fixed in a day. But science can help put traditional oils back on Indian kitchen shelves.

17. [Draft telecom Bill: A move that turns back the clock](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "[Draft telecom Bill: A move that turns back the clock](#)" published in the **Indian Express** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Relevance: About the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill and ways to improve it.

News: The draft Indian Telecommunication Bill reimagine and reshapes the digital architecture in India.

About the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill

Read here: [Draft Telecommunication Bill, 2022 – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the concerns associated with the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill?

Read here: [Draft Telecom Bill enhances unease of doing biz amid regulatory overlaps](#)

What needs to be done to improve the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill?

Liberalise the regulatory regime in the telecom sector: After 1991, India focused on liberalisation. For instance, electricity-generating plants were liberated from licensing under the Electricity Act, of 2003.

On similar lines now, the internet economy requires a supporting and facilitative legal framework and regulatory mechanism that is simple and easy to navigate and aids the digital economy.

Limit the application: The new law should only regulate the hard infrastructure/network layer, the essence of telecommunications, and not the software layer.

This is because, the Telecom service providers (TSPs) operate at the network level while the OTTs function at the software layer. Also, the OTTs are governed by the Information (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 and the Information Technology Act, 2000.

Avoid regulatory supremacy: The Supreme Court recently resolved a 10-year long jurisdictional battle between the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission and the Security and Exchange Board of India to regulate and control forward trading/future contracts in the electricity markets.

The telecom sector has, in the past, witnessed a tussle for regulatory supremacy between TRAI and the Competition Commission of India. So, instead of having an overlapping jurisdiction, a clear Lakshman Rekha has to be drawn.

Do not offend the doctrine of equality: The inclusion of OTTs under the regulatory regime for TSPs will be tested on the principles enshrined under Article 14 of the Constitution — "unequal cannot be treated equally". This is because of the merger of two distinct service providers. So, the government should reexamine these contentious issues and course correct them.

Read more: [What are the limitations of auctions as a method of spectrum allocation? How does the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022, try to bring reforms to this area?](#)

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The regulatory framework offers stability, predictability and legal certainty. A legal architecture based on the concept of “one sector one regulator” can help provide clarity to stakeholders and facilitate the growth of the digital economy.

18. [Empowering Gati Shakti](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “Empowering Gati Shakti” published in **Business Standard** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Information Technology**

Relevance: **reforms in Internet connectivity and its benefits**

News: **The article discusses the importance of telecommunication in the development of India and Gati Shakti.**

What is Gati Shakti and what are its aims?

Gati Shakti or the **National Master Plan for logistics development** on a digital platform was introduced in October 2021.

It is based on the recommendations of the **National Transport Development Policy Committee** in January 2014.

It establishes digitised institutional processes for comprehensive, integrated project planning and execution to assist ministries and infrastructure sectors. Thus, aiming at more efficient outcomes at reduced cost and time for logistics.

Gati Shakti also includes **digitised database** and portal along with **geographic positioning capabilities**. However, the effectiveness of Gati Shakti platform depends on telecommunications reform.

What does the different reports highlight on the importance of telecommunication?

A study conducted by **World bank** shows the importance of telecommunications (and electricity) for growth.

Further a report published by **Asian Development Bank** confirms that internet and mobile density contribute to their high rate of growth in India and China.

Therefore, there is a need to change the policy for telecommunication as it impacts many sectors.

Which sectors have impact of telecommunication?

Environmental care & climate mitigation: Effective broadband coverage and shared networks improve both.

Education and work life: Effective broadband coverage will enable learning in rural areas and provide employment opportunities.

There are other areas such as e-commerce, distributed healthcare, government services, entertainment where broadband services are required.

Therefore, there is a need to bring the reform in the policy to enable the use of internet services on wide-range.

What are the reforms required?

First, there is a need for inexpensive, higher capacity connectivity by enabling spectrum usage for wireless and shared networks.

Second, there is a need to increase the network coverage along with high-speed wireless network at a reduced cost.

Third, India has enabled restricted use of 60 GHz but government should permit telcos to use 60 and 70-80 GHz “mmWave” technology for **pay-for-use backhaul** with no extra cost (auctions, extra taxes).

- This would provide huge service and cost benefits in India as in San Francisco and London.

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Fourth, there is a need to establish easier access to spectrum for authorised institutions and researchers so that India's R&D for commercial and defence is free from any obstacle.

Moreover, the features of Gati Shakti portal should also be changed to cater the demand of the users while balancing the security of the portal.

Therefore, there is a need to develop effective telecommunication policy to improve the infrastructure gap and increase the productivity and efficiency of Gati Shakti.

19. India must lead the creation of a citizen-centric digital economy

Source: The post is based on an article "**India must lead the creation of a citizen-centric digital economy**" published in **Live Mint** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Information Technology

Relevance: measures and need to develop citizen centric digital economy

News: The article discusses the needs for developing citizen centric digital economy in India.

"There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen." This **statement by Vladimir Lenin** is relevant to the context of India.

India has shown remarkable achievement in leveraging technology during the pandemic when rest of the world was behind. It has shown the world the power of an inclusive citizen-centric innovation framework.

The upcoming G20 presidency will also give India a platform to show its success to the world.

How has India achieved success in digitization?

India has executed many citizen-friendly programs over the last 75 years. However, the **Digital India Initiative** has been a turning point for India.

Today around **20 platforms run on this initiative** which has made Indians to adapt technology in their lives. The digitization is expected to offer a \$700 billion opportunity for India by 2030.

These **digital initiatives are present across various sectors** such as health, agriculture, finance and urban governance and have shown success.

Some of the examples are: **Co-Win** enabled over 2 billion vaccination doses, the **Aadhaar ecosystem** has scaled to 1.3 billion registrations, and **Bhim UPI** has recorded over 6.28 billion transactions in July 2022.

These platforms show India's success in tech inclusivity, innovation, scale and impact. However, there is a need to focus on other aspect of technology also i.e., **using technology to improve human lives**.

What steps can be taken by India to improve lives of Indians by using technology?

India has all means (growing technology and innovation ecosystem, etc.) to provide its citizens required digital services.

However, the success of a digital economy depends not only on available means but using those means to provide all citizens equal opportunity and access to critical services.

Therefore, India would need to utilize its opportunity of **G20 presidency** to create a framework for **a citizen-centric digital economy**.

The framework should include principles of trust and inclusion, digital public infrastructure, a robust datafication strategy and focus on security.

This would give India an opportunity to lead the world in creating a citizen-centric digital economy.

How can India create a citizen centric digital economy?

A citizen centric economy means that an economy that focuses on the development along with the development of its citizens. i.e., providing affordable healthcare for all, clean energy, food for all, and clean water.

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India would need to create strategically important projects that focus on solving real-world challenges and create equal access and opportunities for everyone.

For example, an artificial intelligence (AI)- enabled new or repurposed diabetes drug discovery program.

It should be built on population health data with real time or past data gathered through a network of **Internet-of-Medical-Things (IoMT)** devices at primary healthcare centres.

This could solve problems of healthcare **access and affordability** and promote **self-reliance** in drugs.

It will also help in reducing **premature mortality rate** from non-communicable diseases and address the needs of a diabetic population of around 100 million in African and West Asian countries

Therefore, as India has done progress in its digital economy, it also requires to develop a citizen centric digital economy to show the path to the world.

[20. A chance to expand the world biosphere footprint](#)

Source- The post is based on the article **“A chance to expand the world biosphere footprint”** published in **The Hindu** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

Relevance- Mechanism to protect the ecosystem

News- The article explains the concept of biosphere reserves. It explains the importance of South Asia in promoting this concept.

What is WNBR (World Network of Mountain Biosphere Reserves)?

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves was formed in 1971. It helps in **biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration**, and living in **harmony with nature**.

There are now 738 properties in 134 countries, including 12 in India.

All biosphere reserves are internationally recognised sites on land, coast, oceans. Governments alone decide which areas to nominate. Before approval by UNESCO, the sites are externally examined. If approved, they will be managed based on a plan.

What are the benefits associated with biosphere reserves?

WNBR promotes cooperation through **sharing knowledge, exchanging experiences, building capacity and promoting best practices**. Its members are always ready to support each other. Biosphere reserves have all developed **science-based management plans**. Local solutions for sustainable human living and nature conservation are tested, and best practices are applied.

Why is South Asia important?

In South Asia, over 30 biosphere reserves have been established. The first one was the Hurulu Biosphere Reserve, in Sri Lanka.

India is a vast sub-continent. It has become an important global player on environmental sustainability issues. India is likely to become the world's most populated country in 2023.

Spain has a landmass of 50600 square kms. It has 53 biosphere reserves. In comparison, India has a larger surface area of 3287000 square kms. It offers great potential.

Some of the countries in South Asia do not yet have any or enough biosphere reserves. In most, the political will is certainly there. But there is a lack of know-how and financial resources.

The existence of the new **World Network of Mountain Biosphere Reserves** provides a welcome opportunity for Bhutan and Nepal to establish their first biosphere reserves and participate in the world network.

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21. [Curious collage shows rhino horns are shrinking due to impact of hunting](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Curious collage shows rhino horns are shrinking due to impact of hunting**” published in **The Hindu** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Technology

Relevance– Species evolution

News- The article explains the study published in the latest edition of People and Nature by the British Ecological Society related to decreasing length of horns of rhinos.

What has been found by the study?

It found evidence for declining horn length over time across species. It is perhaps related to the **selective pressure of hunting**.

Rate of decline in horn length was highest in the critically-endangered Sumatran rhino and lowest in the white rhino of Africa.

This observation follows patterns seen in other animals, such as tusk size in elephants and horn length in wild sheep.

What were the sources of study?

It relied on a repository of images maintained by the **Netherlands-based Rhino Research Center (RRC)**.

It only included photographs where the animal was side-on to the camera to facilitate more accurate and repeatable measurements. It excluded photos of any individuals where the horn had been cut.

What are lessons from the study?

Online image repositories can offer a **freely accessible, information-rich and cost-effective alternative** to museum collections. It is useful for studying long-term changes in human interactions with nature and ecological and evolutionary change.

22. [Unprofitable, growing bad assets: The tale of existential crisis at RRBs](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Unprofitable, growing bad assets: The tale of existential crisis at RRBs**” published in the **Business Standard** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- India Economy

Relevance– Financial institutions

News- The article explains the concept of RRBs. It also explains the financial condition of RRBs.

What are RRBs?

RRBs are jointly owned by the central government, state governments and sponsoring banks.

They were set up in 1975 with the intent of bringing financial services and products to agricultural workers and labourers.

What are the steps taken by the government for RRBs?

Last month, the finance ministry issued draft guidelines setting the criteria for the listing of regional rural banks on the stock exchange.

The guidelines included listing banks that have earned an **operating profit** of more than Rs 15 crore in three out of the past five financial years, a **net worth** of Rs 300 crore and a **capital adequacy ratio** above the required 9 per cent in the past three years.

The government has amalgamated various standalone RRBs at different points in time to cut overhead costs. A decade ago, there were 82 RRBs. Since then, their number has reduced to 43.

What is the financial condition of RRBs?

There has been a steady decline in the number of profit-making RRBs from 75 in FY11 to 34 in FY22. Only 20 have made a profit of over Rs 15 crore in the past three years.

Between FY11 and FY22, **net NPAs** have doubled from 2.05% to 4.68%.

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Agriculture sector borrows more from commercial banks than the RRBs. The **share of institutional credit** by the commercial banks for agriculture and allied activities has increased from 65 per cent to 76% between FY11 and FY22. While, the share of RRBs in the total credit has remained constant between 11 per cent and 13 per cent.

In FY22, **institutional credit** in the RRBs marginally declined to 11% from 12% in the previous year.

23. [Indian military's capabilities: Handling a high-tech Chinese military](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Handling a high-tech Chinese military**” published in the **Business Standard** on **4th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Security challenges and their management in border areas.

Relevance: About the challenges and advantages of the Indian military's capabilities.

News: Recently, Prime Minister has laid the foundation stone for the C-295 transport aircraft manufacturing facility. He talked about his vision of “atmanirbharta” in the defence sector. But there remain serious questions over the Indian military's capabilities.

What are the concerns associated with the Indian military's capabilities?

India's ability to prevail in the two-front war: China is fighting its version of an “informatised war.” In this killer robots, driven and enhanced by artificial intelligence, machine learning and quantum computing quickly will threaten the Indian Army that is driven in a more conventional manner. An opportunistic Pakistani military might not ignore the opportunity to jump into battle.

So, the Indian military going to such a battle in future using tactics and equipment very similar to those used in the 1999 Kargil conflict will severely limit India's ability to prevail in such a battle.

Technological advancement in battle: The glimpses in Azerbaijan-Armenia and Ukraine show the new threat to ground forces is posed by remotely piloted vehicles (RPVs), or weaponised drones, that are driven by ultra-modern technologies. These can overleap the enemy's forward defences to strike its reserve echelons and tactical infrastructures.

While Pakistan enjoys parity with India in legacy weapon systems, it is beginning to enjoy superiority in drone warfare. This is due to RPVs supplied by China, including the Wing Loong and RPVs obtained from Iran and Turkey.

India does not have a doctrine to counter new threats: India does not have a tactical, and operational doctrine for drones. This is a painful absence of a National Security Strategy (NSS).

India's weakness in [Grey Zone warfare](#): This involves information, disinformation, cyber-attacks, gathering electronic, signals and satellite intelligence and altering historical records. For instance, China did these in Tawang, Doklam and Ladakh.

India's lag in conventional fields: China has dominance over India's conventional fields, such as long-range fires and missiles to support ground operations.

Read more: [Will Agnipath energise or demoralise the military?](#)

How advantages are the Indian military's capabilities compared to China?

Resilience and fighting quality of India's combat forces: India has a significant advantage in this domain. Indian soldiers face high mountain terrain severely tests even the most rugged of them.

In contrast, the average Chinese soldier is a lone male child, pampered by an adoring family and ill-prepared for the hazards and discomforts of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

However, this will be diluted by the so-called Agniveers having only short-service tenures.

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India is not alone: With India's growing relations with Indo-Pacific democracies such as Japan, Australia, the UK and the US, India would quickly align and combine the Indian forces with the AUKUS and Quadrilateral groupings. This will split Chinese forces in two directions — the land border with India and the South China Sea maritime theatre.

Read more: [Today's weapon of choice, its expanding dimensions](#)

24. [Global Energy Transition: Blurred energy nirvana: The world is fast turning green](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Blurred energy nirvana: The world is fast turning green**” published in the **Business Standard** on **4th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Relevance: About the Global Energy Transition to renewables.

News: Coal energy is getting increased, but renewable energy is growing rapidly.

What is the present trend of Global Energy Transition?

Few regions are expanding their coal power plants. For instance, **a) Europe** is extending the life of its coal plants, **b) India** is expanding coal production.

On the other hand, a few regions are expanding their renewable energy. For instance, **South Africa** and **Indonesia** have just secured \$1 billion from the climate investment funds to prematurely retire coal plants to transition to renewables.

Solar energy: As much as 250 gigawatts of new solar capacity is projected to come online this year. This is 38% higher than in 2021. The top five markets would be China, the US, India, Brazil and Germany.

Solar installations far outpace wind because combined with batteries, Solar power factories provide a compelling choice to households, businesses and utilities.

Wind energy: A record 106 gigawatts of wind will be installed globally this year, with cumulative installations surpassing 1,000 gigawatts next year. Offshore wind represents 13% of total installations in 2022.

Increase in Corporate power purchase deals: **a)** Alphabet's Google signed its largest solar deal agreeing to buy 942 megawatts to eliminate emissions from its operations, **b)** According to a private report, almost 22 gigawatts of corporate power purchase agreements have been signed globally, **c)** Corporate power purchase deals hit a record high in 2021, with more than 30 gigawatts procured.

Increase in EVs: BNEF's latest update projects passenger EV sales at 10.6 million this year. India EV sales are also rising, but there is a skew towards two- and three-wheelers.

Read more: [Ministry of Power notifies 'Green Energy Open Access' Rules to accelerate ambitious renewable energy programmes](#)

What are the challenges ahead in the Global Energy Transition?

a) Widening gap between energy transition asset finance in developed countries compared with emerging markets and developing economies (EM&DEs). For instance, while global energy transition asset finance hit a record \$785 billion in 2021, EM&DEs saw only a fraction of that with \$67 billion, the lowest share in 10 years. **b)** There is skewed finance among EM&DEs also. For instance, just handful of countries, such as India, Brazil and Vietnam have more finance allocation to green energy transition.

Read more: [Government initiatives to tap green energy: Centre explodes plan to run ships fully on clean energy](#)

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What will be the next phase of the Global Energy Transition?

Battery storage: Power from a battery is the next energy revolution. Storing solar, wind or other kinds of power for later use is becoming increasingly common. Battery technology is also evolving to lean more on metals that are easily acquired and at lower costs such as sodium-ion batteries.

Vehicle-to-grid or V2G technology: The growing number of electric vehicle (EV) batteries open another avenue for storing excess power for later use. Millions of EV batteries can be used to import or export power to the grid.

EV owners would get some revenue for participation, and grid operators would save on costly upgrades.

25. [Non-Proliferation Treaty to ban fossil fuels: Vanuatu's big plea does little to arrest climate change](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Vanuatu's big plea does little to arrest climate change**” published in **The Hindu** on **4th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Climate change

Relevance: About the Non-Proliferation Treaty to ban fossil fuels.

News: The President of Vanuatu, a small Pacific island, wanted the UN General Assembly to adopt a universal Non-Proliferation Treaty to ban the use of fossil fuels across the world.

Vanuatu represents a strong and vocal group of small island developing states. Many including the Mayor of Kolkata (the capital of one of the largest coal-producing States in India) have lent their support to such a treaty.

About the previous instances of phasing out of coal

Last year at the Glasgow climate conference, there was a call for phaseout of coal. India argued that a phaseout was unfair to countries that were heavily dependent on coal power in the medium term.

So, the call was toned down **from phaseout to phase down** of unabated coal power and inefficient fuel subsidies.

Read more: [Significance of greening of the coal sector](#)

What are the challenges in implementing a Non-Proliferation Treaty to ban fossil fuels?

a) A call to end fossil fuels through a mandate in the UN has very different implications than when it is presented under the UN Climate Change Convention, **b)** The UNGA treaty will dilute the legal responsibility of the polluting countries to reduce their emissions on the basis of responsibility, capability and national circumstances, as required by the Climate Change Convention, **c)** The treaty will also make no provision for technological and financial innovations that are necessary to ensure the transition.

Read more: [Greening Initiatives of India's Coal Sector](#)

Why targeting coal through Non-Proliferation Treaty to ban fossil fuels is not desirable?

1) Coal phasedown is not the only way to reduce global emissions. This is because a substantial share of rising global emissions is accounted for by the unsustainable levels of consumption of natural resources and lavish lifestyles led by the consumers in developed economies, **2)** Coal is the mainstay of primary energy supply in many countries such as India and forms the basic and essential component of their energy system, **3)** A plan to drastically reduce coal fired power may create insurmountable difficulties in securing the progress of developing economies towards key sustainable development goals, **4)** While the developed economies have full access to alternative sources of energy the developing nations are handicapped.

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What needs to be done instead of creating a Non-Proliferation Treaty to ban fossil fuels? A **just transition needs to be built** on the promise that green energy and a green future will be available to all.

Consumers in countries that consume at an unsustainable pace and contribute to rising emissions have a much greater responsibility to clean up the planet and support the growth of green energy. For instance, the [Lifestyle for Environment \(LiFE\)](#) movement in India.

Building **climate-resilient infrastructure** in developing and growing countries has to be given as much importance as phasing down coal and investment in energy innovations and alternative technologies.

26. [Delhi's air quality crisis: Why we are all culpable](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Delhi's air quality crisis: Why we are all culpable**” published in the **Indian Express** on **4th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environmental pollution and degradation.

Relevance: About Delhi's air quality crisis and ways to control it.

News: Almost every year after Diwali — for about a decade or so — an invasion of particulate matter makes Delhi unhealthy for people whose air passages are vulnerable to irritants.

Delhi's air quality gets attention only when people have severe impacts. There has been no concerted activism to push the authorities to clean up the city's air. Hence, the problem requires a long-term solution.

Read more: [CAQM Policy to Combat Air Pollution in Delhi NCR – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the reasons for Delhi's poor air quality?

A combination of geographical factors, industrial activities and lifestyle choices of its residents are the major reasons for heavy pollution in Delhi. Geographical factors include the city's location, wind speeds, etc. A large fleet of the city's private vehicles makes the air unhealthy for the most part of the year.

The movement of pollutants and smoke from neighbouring states make the condition worse.

What are the other polluted cities worldwide, and how did they control pollution?

a) London's tryst with smog is well-known, **b) In the 1950s and '60s**, the air in **Los Angeles** became so unhealthy which resulted in athletes training indoors, parents keeping their children out of school, etc.

Los Angeles: It adopted a combination of environmental legislation that gave autonomy to regulatory institutions and citizen activism that kept the government on its toes.

Read more: [CAQM formulates comprehensive policy to abate the menace of air pollution in Delhi-NCR](#)

What needs to be done to improve Delhi's air quality?

Regulation is not only limited to imposing bans. Instead, the government has to persuade industry — most of them small factories — to adopt environment-friendly measures.

Read more: [The action plan against Delhi's air pollution](#)

27. [The real issue at COP27 is energy security](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The real issue at COP27 is energy security**” published in **The Hindu** on **5th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Environment

Relevance: Climate change and associated issues

News: The article explains the global energy inequality across the world.

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What are issues related to climate change negotiations?

Climate declarations by developed countries are not enough to limit the temperature rise by 1.5-degree celsius.

Four-fifths of the **global carbon budget** to limit warming to 1.5°C has already been exhausted. Developed countries are responsible for more than half of these historical CO2 emissions. But they are not assuming their historical responsibility.

What are some facts related to global energy inequality?

In 2021, 733 million people had no access to electricity. Almost 2.6 billion people lacked access to **clean fuels and technologies**. The average per capita energy use of the richest 20 countries is 85 times higher than that of the 20 poorest countries.

The reality of global inequality was acutely evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America are facing severe **agricultural and industrial slowdowns** in the post-pandemic period.

In 2022, these inequalities have been aggravated by **rising energy and food prices**. Poor and energy-importing countries of the global South suffer the most. Almost 90 million people in Asia and Africa, who gained access to electricity recently, cannot afford to pay their energy bills.

Why addressing the issue of energy inequality is important?

There is a strong correlation between energy supply and **human development**.

The average annual per capita electricity consumption of sub-Saharan Africa is 487 kilowatt-hours. It has an **infant mortality rate** of 73 per 1000 live births and per capita GDP of \$1,645. On the other hand, the OECD group of countries have a per capita electricity consumption of 7750 kWh. It has an infant mortality rate of 18 and per capita GDP of \$42,098.

What is the hypocrisy of the global north?

In the United States, 81% of primary energy is from fossil fuels. In Europe, fossil fuels constitute 76% of energy consumption.

The **level of decarbonisation** in the global North has been minuscule.

In July 2022, the European Union voted to classify the use of natural gas for some uses as **“green and sustainable”**. Natural gas was responsible for 7.5 billion tonnes of CO2 in 2020.

They are advocating the need for shifting to green energy by the developing world. They are using this argument for banning the financing of fossil fuels in poor countries.

What is the way forward?

At COP27, the question of energy poverty and the global inequalities in energy access should be the centre of all discussions.

The world needs to achieve **zero hunger, zero malnutrition, zero poverty, and universal well-being**. There is a need for **global cooperation** against energy inequality.

Developing countries should show leadership to ensure that discussion is based on **equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities**.

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28. [Don't Delhi And Punjab Govt Breath The Same Air?](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Don't Delhi And Punjab Govt Breath The Same Air?**” published in **The Times of India** on **5th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Environmental pollution and degradation

Relevance: Air pollution in large cities.

News: The article explains the issue of poor air quality in Delhi.

Why is stubble burning in Punjab the leading cause of pollution in Delhi?

In the month of November, the contribution of stubble burning to Delhi pollution is more than 30%. More than 90% of farm fires in the months of October and November are reported from Punjab.

What are other factors responsible for air pollution in Delhi?

There is a lack of **robust public transport infrastructure** in Delhi. It has fewer buses today than it had 10 years back.

Biomass burning for cooking and heating leads to poor air quality in Delhi. The pollution intensity of open biomass burning is 100 to 1000 times more than those from vehicle and industries

There is reluctance on part of the government to grass the sideways and open spaces.

What is the way forward?

There is a need for more investment in well-connected **public transport and roads**.

Greening of open spaces should be prompted to reduce the dust.

Delhi has to work with neighbourhood states to reduce pollution from open biomass burning and coal.

There is a need for **no-harm agreements** with neighbour states. It should be a **formal and binding agreement** to stop fires.

29. [Data goes private: Positive for India but also a challenge for the govt](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Data goes private: Positive for India but also a challenge for the govt**” published in the **Business Standard** on **5th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy

Relevance: Importance of data for the economy.

News: The article explains the increasing importance of private data in India. It also explains the issues related to government data.

What is the importance of private data?

Developing economies will have **new and multiple sources of data sets**. Digitisation has made a huge difference. The growth of online selling and payment systems has created new sources of data on consumer behaviour. For instance,

-**CMIE data** provides the members related to employment. Its sample size matches those used by the government.

-The most trusted source of data on the true state of Indian school education is the Pratham foundation.

-**IHS Markit's purchasing manager's index**, which serves as a reliable guide to the economic indicators. **CRISIL** tells about the creditworthiness of companies.

-A private monsoon forecaster like Skymet has in at least some years done better than the government's meteorology department.

What is the case of government data?

The quality of important economic statistics by the government which has no private substitute is questionable and its frequency is low.

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There is no consumption survey data beyond 2011-12. The situation of employment statistics is similar. The government has suppressed numbers while trying to substitute the old accepted statistics with partial substitutes like the number of people with provident fund accounts. The census survey which was due in 2021 has not begun yet.

Some data by the government have become more frequent like the quarterly GDP data. Some data sets have seen improvements in methodology. Some have come out faster than before, like trade statistics and some are more transparent, like tax and fiscal data.

What is the way forward?

The dream of the third-largest economy is not possible without data. The data should meet the tests of **speed, frequency, reliability and completeness**. So, the government should improve its record of producing **timely and reliable statistics**.

30. [About winter pollution in Delhi: Severe policy lapse](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles “**Severe policy lapse-Pollution control needs a holistic approach**” published in the **Business Standard** on **7th November 2022**. “**What will finally save us from toxic air isn’t democracy**” published in the **Livemint** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environmental pollution and degradation.

Relevance: About winter pollution in Delhi.

News: The winter pollution in Delhi is devastating. North India’s vehicular, industrial and agricultural pollution does not blow away and instead fills the lungs of hundreds of millions, damaging many in irreparable ways.

What is the reason for winter pollution in Delhi?

Apart from stubble burning, climatic factors like the temperature dropping and the wind speed slowing are also reasonable. Instead of dissipating the pollutants, they make them hang in the air near the surface in the form of smog.

A private study by the Centre for Science and Environment confirms, local sources of pollution, especially vehicular emissions, constituted 51 per cent of the PM2.5 content of the air. The contribution of other activities was relatively small — about 11% by industrial units, 13% by household activities, 7% by construction work, 5% by the burning of garbage and other wastes, 4% by road dust, and the rest by other factors.

Read more: [CAQM Policy to Combat Air Pollution in Delhi NCR – Explained, pointwise](#)

How can North India solve winter pollution in Delhi?

a) Self-interests of politicians: The governments need to increase awareness around the long effects of smog on weak lungs.

b) Farsighted influential stands: The problem of pollution does not lie in checking stubble burning alone. Curbing the local sources of pollutants is equally important. This can be done by,

-Experts suggest that an improvement in the public transport services in the metropolis, with a well-planned integration of metro rail and bus services, and greater use of non-polluting means of travel like electric vehicles are essential. These steps should be incorporated.

-The traffic-control system also needs to be spruced up to avoid traffic snarls and jams on the roads, which aggravate air pollution.

-Manually sweeping roads and burning tree leaves and other wastes should be strictly barred at all times of the year.

c) Consider the issue as nationalism of shame: Instead of indulging in blame games, the governments of the states concerned need to discuss joint strategies to combat this calamity.

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Unless a holistic approach is adopted to curb all sources of pollution simultaneously, winter pollution in Delhi is hard to surmount.

Read more: [CAQM formulates comprehensive policy to abate the menace of air pollution in Delhi-NCR](#)

31. [New hope for malaria vaccine: the science, challenges, opportunity](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**New hope for malaria vaccine: the science, challenges, opportunity**” published in the **Indian Express** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Relevance: About Malaria vaccines and India’s vaccine research.

News: Malaria kills nearly 600,000 people every year, the majority of whom are children under the age of five in sub-Saharan Africa. The need to develop an effective vaccine against the disease has long been a top priority.

What are the promising breakthroughs in Malaria vaccines?

RTS,S/AS01 (RTS.S): Its trade name “Mosquirix” was endorsed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) recently.

Read here: [What is Mosquirix, the first malaria vaccine to get the WHO’s backing?](#)

Although RTS,S/AS01 has modest efficacy and reduces severe malaria cases by only about 30% after four doses given to children under age 5, it still provides significant public health benefits and could save thousands of lives every year.

However, RTS,S/AS01 fails to meet the WHO’s own benchmark for malaria vaccine efficacy of 75 per cent set in 2015.

R21/Matrix M: It is a modified version of Mosquirix and has been developed by researchers at the University of Oxford.

Read here: [R21/Matrix M: a new malaria vaccine](#)

This vaccine demonstrated an efficacy of 77% in phase 1 and 2 trials among 450 children in Burkina Faso. In early September 2022, a booster dose of R21/Matrix-M showed a high efficacy of 80%.

Phase 3 trials of R21 are already underway in four African countries.

What are the commonalities of both Malaria vaccines?

RTS,S and R21 both contain the **same part of a major protein** that is found on the surface of the liver stage parasite, called **sporozoite**.

Both contain hepatitis B virus surface antigen (HBsAg), a protein that has the ability to self-assemble and that helps in the formation of virus-like particles of the CSP antigen fused with it. What are the differences between both Malaria vaccines?

The amount of the HBsAg: RTS,S has about 20 per cent of the fusion protein, with the remaining 80 per cent made up of HBsAg antigen, produced separately.

R21, on the other hand, is made up entirely of the CSP fusion protein moieties, resulting in much higher proportion of CSP antigen displayed on the virus-like particle surface, which significantly raises its exposure to the immune system of the host.

Read more: [Malaria Vaccine and India’s Malaria burden – Explained, pointwise](#)

Why has India not been more successful in developing the Malaria vaccine and other vaccines? Basic malaria research in India has been robust and there are well established malaria research and control centres across the country. Despite that, India is not able to develop vaccines because,

a) There is a major gap in the establishment of safe and scientifically robust control human infection models in India for diseases like malaria or influenza, **b) Absent of Controlled Human**

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Malaria Infection (CHMI) model: Scientists have carried out phase 1 safety trials of two experimental blood-stage malaria vaccines developed and produced in the country. But further development of these vaccines has been a challenge in the absence of the CHMI model in India. What needs to be done to promote vaccine research in India?

The government should provide **long-term continuous funding**. Further, **regulatory and logistic processes** need to be better coordinated to assist scientists in the development of novel vaccines against infectious diseases.

India should **capitalise** on the highly successful and deeply committed **vaccine-producing biopharma industry and a strong scientific base**. This will make India in leading the world in developing and producing vaccines.

32. [About the proposed telecom bill: Do not let a licence raj for apps set India back](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“Do not let a licence raj for apps set India back”** published in **Livemint** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Relevance: About the proposed telecom bill

News: India’s proposed telecom bill could transform how the internet is used in India.

About the proposed telecom bill

Read here: [Draft Telecommunication Bill, 2022 – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the concerns associated with the proposed telecom bill?

Definition of telecommunication services: This includes almost every aspect of the present online experience instead of limited services.

Government’s monopoly: The government claims a default monopoly over all such services in India, with private players needing a licence to operate, just as telecom firms do. So Gmail, WhatsApp and Zoom, among other apps on handsets, would suddenly need a government nod.

Impact right to free expression: The internet is not owned by any state. Nor do apps use the state-allotted spectrum to work. But the licensing would imply a new level of control on the users might right to free expression.

Encompassing licence raj: Licensing would hand the state arbitrary authority over market entry. This tends to promote toll collection and suffocate innovation.

Only a maximalist ownership role of the state would allow state overlordship of chat enablers. This is an approach taken by colonial and communist regimes, not democratic administrations that prioritize business and social freedom.

Read here: [Draft Telecom Bill enhances unease of doing biz amid regulatory overlaps](#)

What needs to be done?

The Supreme Court has held privacy to be part of fundamental rights, which makes it essential to our democratic freedoms. The draft telecom bill violates them in both commercial sense and Constitutional wisdom. Parliament must not enact it in its current form.

Read more: [Draft telecom Bill: A move that turns back the clock](#)

33. [Tap Diaspora Dollars ... Now – on forex reserve issue](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“Tap Diaspora Dollars ... Now”** published in **The Times of India** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Economic Development

News: India’s economy is currently facing problems due to the increasing Current Account Deficit (CAD), declining forex reserves, inflation amongst others.

What are the concerns for Indian economy?

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US Federal Reserve: The monetary policy adopted by the US Fed Reserve has impacted worldwide currencies including the rupee in India.

Forex Reserves: India's forex reserves have fallen over \$100 bn this year because India is spending its reserves to control the volatility of the rupee in the currency market. Even the value of other currencies included in the forex reserves have depreciated against dollar.

Slowdown in exports: Exports have slowed down in India due to the slow economic growth in the West as it is the largest export market for India.

What steps can be taken by India to control the volatility of the rupee?

First, it can leave rupee to depreciate totally depending on the market forces. However, this may increase inflation and disrupt businesses.

Second, RBI can raise interest rates higher and faster. However, they may affect the borrowers of loans and will impact the people with low incomes.

Third, India can raise a large amount of dollars through a special focused program. This would increase its forex reserves and control the rupee volatility. India has used this program in the past.

How has India raised dollar in the past through different programs?

India has previously raised dollars through various programs from the Indian diaspora.

1. **a)** the first time India brought dollars in 1998 due to the sanction imposed on it. It raised **Resurgent India Bonds**, **b)** the second time was in 2000 when rupee depreciated. It was tackled by issuing **India Millennium Deposits**, **c)** the third time was in 2013 when rupee witnessed a freefall. RBI raised \$35 bn through a special **FCNR deposit scheme**.

However, raising dollars might be expensive but it shows India's potential to tackle the economic situation and trust of India's diaspora on India.

It also shows that India does not have funding constraints for its external liabilities and it doesn't need to depend on foreign investment to finance its public debt.

What can be the course of action?

India's domestic economic conditions are better than the past three time when it raised dollars. Therefore, India should consider raising dollars through various programs to control the volatility of the rupee and increase its forex reserves.

34. [Helicopter accidents in October point to broader concerns](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Helicopter accidents in October point to broader concerns**" published in **The Hindu** on **7th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Infrastructure

Relevance: helicopter accidents In India

News: There has been increase in the helicopter accidents in India. According to a report, between 1990 and 2019, more than 150 people lost their lives in accidents of commercial helicopters.

What are the reasons behind helicopter accidents?

There are many reasons behind the accidents such as **pilot error, bad weather, and hitting of the cables**.

These cables are used by locals in mountains to transport goods. They are not marked by warning signs and are not visible especially in the poor weather conditions.

However, the number of accidents of helicopter and flights have decreased in the last decade compared to the earlier periods. Moreover, there also concerns with the **Indian aviation standards**.

What are the concerns with the Indian aviation standards?

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According to an audit conducted on eight parameters, India scored above the world-average in six of the eight parameters but lagged behind in two – **personnel licensing and training, and civil aviation organization.**

These two parameters require procedures to ensure that personnel and organizations meet the established requirements before they are licensed to fly.

Therefore, a poor score in the licensing regime and organizational processes along with pilot errors raise deeper concerns about Indian aviation.

35. What the chip industry and the petroleum sector have in common

Source– The post is based on the article “**What the chip industry and the petroleum sector have in common**” published in **The Indian Express** on **7th November 2022.**

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

News- The article explains the similarities between the petroleum and semiconductor industry.

What are similarities between the petroleum industry and semiconductor industry?

Both industries are dominated by a handful of countries and corporations. Both are **capital intensive and cyclical.** both sit at the centre of **interdependent global relations.** Both are in the **cross hairs of international geopolitics** and are characterised by **technological dynamism.**

Domination by few– The supply of petroleum is dominated by the OPEC and mega-sized public and private multinational companies, often referred to as the “**super majors**”.

The US is the most powerful player. Every chip produced in the world has a direct or indirect connection with the country. The software for chips is provided by three US based companies.

Samsung and Hynix, which together produce 44% of the world’s memory chips. TSMC, fabricates 37% of the world’s logic chips and 92% of the most advanced chips. Both companies are Korean and Taiwanese respectively. Both are protected by the US military security blanket.

Geopolitics– Geopolitics is at the core of both industries. Every oil import dependent country has reached to the Middle East to secure access to petroleum. At times, they have weaponized their efforts to safeguard this objective. The Saudi embargo of exports to the pro-Israeli Western world in 1973; the US intervention in Iraq in 2003 and the current cutback of Russian gas to Europe are three examples of this phenomena.

Semiconductors have also been the consequence of the “**technology Cold War**” between the US and China. The US has imposed sanctions on the **physical and intellectual export** of chip technology to China. President Xi has called for a “**full scale assault**” to “**rejuvenate**” China.

Global scale– Both petroleum and semiconductor chips have a **global footprint.** Petroleum is tradable across the world. Oil and gas prices are **cyclical.** They reflect the **capital intensity** and long lead times of the **investment cycle.**

The value chain of semiconductors straddles the globe. Investment to create part or all of this value chain runs into billions and the returns depend on engineering precision and technical talent.

What is the case for India?

India has struggled for more than five decades to reduce its dependence on external sources of petroleum supply. It has not been successful. India’s import dependence is now more than 80 per cent.

India has recently embarked on a journey to develop domestic chip fabrication facilities.. There are two lessons they should internalise from historical experience-

One, chip nationalism will be economically costly and could be technologically regressive. They should be cautious about decoupling from the **international supply chain.**

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Two, government support should be limited to financial support, nimble cooperation, and the creation of an **innovative ecosystem**. **Bureaucratic intervention** should be minimal.

36. [The questions that CoP-27 must answer to ensure climate justice](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The questions that CoP-27 must answer to ensure climate justice**” published in **Live Mint** on **8th November 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3- Climate Change**

News: The 2022 United Nations Conference on Climate Change also known as CoP-27 (the UN’s 27th Conference of the Parties) has begun. It will discuss the issue of climate change and measures to mitigate it.

What are the reasons behind climate change?

Climate change is caused by concentration of greenhouse gases from human activity. The current atmospheric concentration of CO₂ is mostly a result of past emissions from the developed countries. They argue that there was insufficient awareness or scientific knowledge about the harmful effects of burning fossil fuels.

Therefore, they **shouldn’t be held accountable** for it and focus should be made on future actions to control climate change. However, it is a misleading statement as past and future actions go hand in hand.

How can developed countries help other emerging countries in reducing the impact on climate?

First, developed countries should **provide creative, constructive and fair support** to the emerging countries to move from fossil fuel-based energy emission to renewables.

Second, developed countries should provide required **financial resources** on affordable terms to developing countries to recover from the impact of climate change and adapt themselves to mitigate future challenges.

Third, developed countries should focus on helping developing countries moving to non-fossil fuel-based energy. Some of the ways of providing resources are – supporting labour employed in the fossil fuel-based industries, skilling them for the jobs for green economy, providing rare earths and technology, etc.

What can be the course of action?

Efforts are needed from both developed countries and developing countries to mitigate climate change.

Developed countries can focus on changing lifestyles that impact the climate least whereas developing countries can focus on adopting non fossil fuel-based technologies.

Therefore, a proper balance is required between mitigating the past emission and adopting technologies for future.

37. [Welcome write-off: Acknowledging failure of 116 projects is the first step](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Welcome write-off: Acknowledging failure of 116 projects is the first step**” published in **Business Standard** on **8th November 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3- Infrastructure**

News: A report from the NITI Aayog has recommended the removal of 116 infrastructure projects from the overall project-monitoring system.

These public funded projects have not been completed and have been delayed due to various reasons.

What are the reasons behind the delaying of the projects?

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Land acquisition – This is one of the major problems faced by any infrastructure projects. Land acquisition with private parties is not the only problem, at times there are also disputes between the Union and state governments over land issues.

Share of Funds: There have been tussles between the central and state government over sharing the fund on infrastructure projects. State governments have stepped behind funding the projects which has caused delay in those projects.

Environmental clearances –These have also caused delay in the projects.

Other reasons behind the delay of the projects are **red tape, internal disagreements, etc.**

What is the way forward?

Land acquisition problems have been reduced from the past due to the increasing financialisation of savings, greater financial literacy, and the spread of bank accounts.

However, there is a need that the government should come up with a proper **compensatory mechanism** that can help land acquisition and help to gain trust of the landowners.

38. Regulation could help ONDC counter an e-com duopoly

Source– The post is based on the article “**Regulation could help ONDC counter an e-com duopoly**” published in the **mint** on **8th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance– E-commerce

News- The article explains the concept of Open Network for Digital Commerce proposed by the government to counter the platform power of e-commerce majors.

What is ONDC?

It will **decentralise** e-commerce. It will allow buyers and sellers to transact via multiple apps without being locked into a specific platform.

Interoperability will foster competition, lower e-commerce entry barriers and reduce the ability of larger platforms to charge exorbitant commissions from sellers.

It will institute an “**issue and grievance management**” structure . It will also institute the reputation profile of all network participants.

What are the issues with ONDC?

Big platforms have **technological capability**. They provide consistent management of **customer satisfaction** and **dispute resolution**. ONDC needs to ensure it.

ONDC runs into conceptual problems from an **operational and privacy perspective**. Different entities in a transaction means disaggregated responsibility.

The issue of reputation is problematic. All customers, sellers and logistics providers must be visible through all buyer and seller sides apps. It requires badging of all network participants. This badging will have to be centralised and publicly available. It has privacy implications.

What is the way forward?

There is a need for regulations to manage **conflict of interest, mandating interoperability and data portability**.

Privacy issues can be solved by limiting the badging to sellers. But it will raise overhead costs.

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39. [The irrelevance of regional rural banks](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The irrelevance of regional rural banks**” published in the **Business Standard** on **9th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy.

Relevance: About regional rural banks (RRBs).

News: Several of the regional rural banks (RRBs), are now facing an existential crisis due to dwindling business and soaring bad assets.

About the present status of RRBs

The RRBs set up in the mid-1970s to provide financial services to agricultural workers and labourers. Many of them have either collapsed or got merged with their parent banks.

The overall business of rural financial institutions has generally gone up in the last decade. But the performance of RRBs does not go up. For instance, **a)** The number of RRBs has nearly halved from 82 to 43, **b)** RRBs non-performing assets have more than doubled from 2.05% to 4.68%, **c)** The volume of the credit disbursed by the RRBs, on the other hand, has shrunk from 13% to 11%. But the share of commercial banks in agricultural loans increased from 65% in 2010-11 to 76% in 2021-22.

What are the steps taken by the government to improve RRBs?

a) Merged some stand-alone RRBs with larger units to cut their overhead costs and scale up the business volumes, **b)** Inducted funds to expand their capital base, **c)** Over Rs 4,000 crore has been provided towards recapitalising the RRBs in last fiscal year.

Why there is a growing irrelevance of the RRBs?

-The RRBs have been left primarily with the government-sponsored business of servicing the official schemes involving direct benefit transfers.

-RRBs have **1)** Limited business activity, **2)** Swelling operational costs, **3)** Lack of internet banking facilities, **4)** Some of the RRBs, even today, have not fully digitised their operations, and **5)** Many of them do not expand their business operations beyond farm-related activities such as reaching out to micro, small and medium enterprises located in the rural areas and offer them banking services.

So, most people in rural areas, therefore, prefer to deal with commercial banks.

-Further, most of the RRBs are ineligible for being listed on the stock exchanges because they do not meet the required pre-conditions. This is because, the RRBs need to have earned an operational profit of over Rs 15 crore in three out of the previous five financial years, besides a net worth of at least Rs 300 crore and a capital adequacy ratio of above 9 per cent to qualify for listing on the stock exchange.

Read more: [Unprofitable, growing bad assets: The tale of existential crisis at RRBs](#)

What will be the better course of action for RRBs?

The best course for most RRBs is to either merge with their sponsoring banks or close down. They have very little space to survive as stand-alone financial enterprises.

Read more: [Regional Rural Banks \(RRBs\) have been successful in fulfilling the financial needs of agriculture sector and rural economy](#)

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40. [After the dust, a clearer picture of Agnipath's direction](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**After the dust, a clearer picture of Agnipath's direction**” published in **The Hindu** on **9th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security

Relevance– Recruitment reforms in army

News- The article explains the rationale behind the Agniveer scheme.

What are arguments in support of the Agniveer scheme?

Nothing is ever constant and change will always be the order of the day. Therefore, our policies also need to change and be aligned with the future. The **merits or demerits of a particular policy can be debated** and feedback is given to make it more robust. **But to denounce it outrightly is not appropriate.**

The present system of almost one year of training was devised when the standard of education of recruits was low and they had lower technical skills. They required more time to learn.

Nowadays, **youth are technologically savvy**. Everyone has a smartphone. **To continuing with old training methodologies is irrational.**

Another aspect that has been much discussed is whether the Agniveers **will be able to deliver when the time comes**. It is not right to have disbelief in their capabilities.

Prior to the 1971 war, recruits were inducted into units after a curtailed training period. They had to face battle within months. They were able to stand up and deliver. Young soldiers have more risk-taking abilities. Most gallantry award winners have had a younger profile.

Agniveers can have lateral absorption into the Central Armed Police Forces, State police and even in other Ministries. The Home Ministry and certain State governments have announced 10% lateral induction. The aspects such as pension and medical cover would be automatically addressed in case of lateral induction.

41. [The master map fast-tracking infra](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The master map fast-tracking infra**” published in the **mint** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Infrastructure

News- The article explains the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan.

What is PM GatiShakti National Master Plan?

It is like the google map of infrastructure. It offers a dashboard with a bird eye view of bridges, roads, tunnels, pipelines, power transmission cable, forest, water bodies and airports in any region of the country.

It has over 2000 layers of data.

It aims to solve the complex problem of delay in important projects.

It includes projects that cost over 500 crore. The projects will be screened before they use this database because of the amount of data and information provided by it.

A three tier system monitors the plan. At the bottom of the pyramid is the technical support unit. The middle layer is the National Planning Group. At the very top is an empowered group of secretaries headed by Cabinet secretary.

What are the benefits associated with this initiative?

Earlier, the information was not centralised. It was available in silos. This led to bureaucratic delays. The GatiShakti database breaks the departmental silos.

Because of the lack of a unified database, agencies worked at cross-purpose with each other. The database will increase coordination between agencies.

The database will save time and money. It could optimise the project performance.

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What are the roadblocks ahead for PM GatiShakti?

The database is loaded with sensitive information. It is not easy for the government to open it up for the private sector.

Lack of digitised land records is a big hurdle. Without private sector participation, the benefits of this tool can be limiting. Private sector has to rely on bureaucrats to access the platform. It would add another layer to the process.

42. Policing with talent, resource sharing, not squabbling

Source– The post is based on the article “**Policing with talent, resource sharing, not squabbling**” published in **The Hindu** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Internal security

News- The article explains the centre-state relations in the context of policing. It also suggests the way forward for better coordination.

What is the contribution of Sardar Patel for internal security?

He placed great value on professional policing. This was the reason for his insistence on an elitist and well-trained corps such as IPS which worked alongside the IAS.

The two all-India services have been a cementing force and have greatly contributed to establishing nationally accepted standards of governance, especially in the area of law and Order.

What are the issues with policing today? There is conflict between the MHA and some States over utilising talent in the IPS and the sharing of resources available in the States. Both sides have to be partially blamed for

this unfortunate state of affairs. Differences in personnel management has occasionally affected administration in the Centre and States.

There are frequent spats between States and the Centre over the use or alleged misuse of the Central Bureau of Investigation. Insensitive action by a few States to withdraw consent to the CBI to function in a State. This is influenced by politics and vindictiveness, which diminishes the fight against public servant graft.

What is the way forward?

Friendly conduct between states and centre is needed.. The Centre has always been provided with support from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

There have also been other outfits such as the Border Security Force (BSF), the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) which have also worked in tandem with the State Police.

Crime and bureaucratic corruption have inter-State ramifications and only a national agency can bring in a much-needed and wide perspective. So, Body like the CBI is the need of the day.

Police is a State subject under the distribution of powers laid down in the Constitution of India. But that does not mean the Union government has no say in the matter.

Training and technology are two areas where the Centre does greatly contribute to sharpening police ability to combat terrorism and other major public disturbances. The Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad is a world-class institution that has resources and the professional excellence which are generously available to State Police forces.

We need a political leadership that does not care about petty differences but promotes a free exchange of talent and resources between New Delhi and the States.

43. [Our choking cities: How we can improve air and water quality in urban spaces](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

“Our choking cities: How we can improve air and water quality in urban spaces” published in the **Indian Express** on **10th November 2022**.

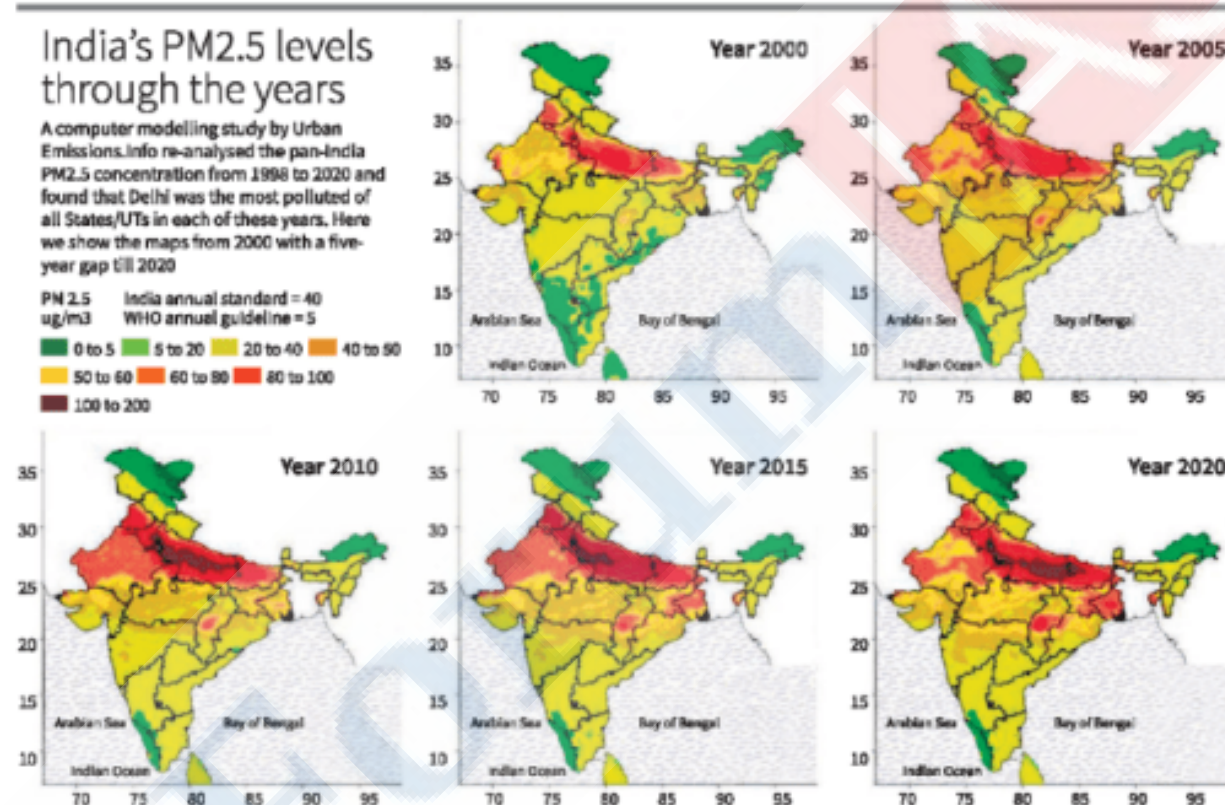
“Reduce year-round pollutants to make Delhi’s air less hazardous” published in **Livemint** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environmental pollution and degradation.

Relevance: About India’s air and water pollution.

News: Recently, in Delhi, pollution-related curbs were lifted and schools opened, despite air quality continues to be in the “very poor” category.

About air and water pollution in India



Source: The Hindu

Air pollution: More than 1,10,000 infants are likely to have been killed by air pollution in India in 2019. Long-term exposure to outdoor and household air pollution was estimated to be responsible for about 1.67 million annual deaths amongst the adult population in the country.

Water pollution: The Central Pollution Control Board reckons that more than 50 per cent of 351 river stretches (on 323 rivers) are polluted. About 72% of urban sewage is untreated in India’s urban freshwater bodies.

What needs to be done to reduce air and water pollution in India?

A massive improvement in public bus services: Public bus services must procure services from private operators on structured contracts, **b)** Special services to the airport, railway stations, employment hubs and local circulators will help bring down the extent of personal motor-vehicle use.

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Deployment of clean technologies: electric mobility must be taken forward aggressively. For instance, electric buses can be significantly cheaper than diesel/CNG options so they needed to be procured more.

Infrastructure upgrades for non-motorized modes of conveyance: It needs a safer infrastructure for cycling and walking. India should develop pedestrian and bicycle masterplans to ensure that walking and cycling in urban spaces become safe and pleasant is essential.

A plan to reduce travel demand: This can be done by **a)** Improving online delivery of public services, **b)** Mixed land-use planning to reduce trip lengths, **c)** Encourage policy and support to work from home or shop online options and **d)** Commercial and residential areas should be co-located

Increase green cover across urban areas: For instance, Ahmedabad's municipal corporation using the Miyawaki technique has more than urban forests. Chandigarh has about 1,800 parks. Close to 46% of the city was classified as a green area in 2019.

Read more: [About winter pollution in Delhi: Severe policy lapse](#)

Involve more Civil society: In Chennai an NGO has been able to grow 25 Miyawaki forests, raising over 65,000 trees. Such plantations are now being replicated in other cities including Tuticorin, Vellore and Kanchipuram. This can be done in other Indian cities as well.

Implement globally successful airshed management systems: **a)** In the US, the passage of the Air Quality Act (1967) saw the state of California being divided into 35 districts and pollution was regulated at the state level. This approach was successful in reducing emissions by 98% from 2010 to 2019, **b)** London's air pollution revolution has initiated an **Ultra Low Emission zone** in Central London. It has a hefty daily fee on cars that emit more than 75g/km of pollution.

Protect water and riverine pollution: India needs to adopt a systems-based approach along with a push for protecting "blue infra" areas — places that act as natural sponges for absorbing surface runoff, allowing groundwater to be recharged.

At the **household level**, India needs to encourage rainwater harvesting, urban roof terrace greening, urban roof water retention tanks and green corridor around residential buildings.

At the **city level and beyond**, policymakers should push for "sponge cities" and incorporate disaster planning.

For example, Mangalore's City Corporation (MCC) has wastewater treatment plants with end-user linkages. The MCC offered to supply treated water to such industrial end-users in the city's special economic zone if the latter agreed to fund about 70% of the operations and maintenance cost of the pumps and the sewage treatment plant.

44. [Global banking is a bright spot – on challenges to Global financial system](#)

Source– The post is based on the article "**Global banking is a bright spot**" published in the **Business Standard** on **10th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance– Economic situation around the world

News- The article explains the present economic situation across the world and future of the world economy. It also tells about the challenges to the world financial system.

What are the challenges to the world financial system by the IMF's Global Financial Stability Report, October 2022?

China's housing market woes: Stringent lockdowns in China have impacted home sales. Buyers do not want to make advance payments for the purchase of properties. As a result, developers face liquidity pressures and many have gone bankrupt. Banks' exposure to the property is 28 per cent of total loans.

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Poor market liquidity: Central banks are tightening monetary policy and shrinking their balance sheets. This has meant less liquidity in the market. Investors would like to sell securities when interest rates rise. Investors trying to exit their holdings of securities end up incurring losses that can trigger panic.

Corporate debt at risk: Rising interest rates pose challenges for firms with high debt. The IMF's sensitivity analysis shows that under conditions of stress 50% of small firms would have difficulty servicing debt. Banks are bound to be impacted.

Leveraged finance under pressure: Leveraged finance is lending to companies with high debt or a poor credit history. It is, therefore, of the high-yield variety. An increasing share of leveraged finance in recent years is credit that is outside the regulated bank market and the financial markets and is of poor quality.

Housing price declines: Rising interest rates could trigger a steep decline in housing prices worldwide. This will have adverse implications for banks.

What is the present economic situation?

The Ukraine conflict poses the biggest challenge to growth since the global financial crisis of 2007. As per IMF, the world economy will grow at 3.2 per cent in 2022 and 2.7 per cent in 2023. Growth in 2023 will be the lowest since 2010, leaving aside the pandemic year of 2020.

GSFR report is that the world's banks seem well-placed to cope with the very worst.

All growth forecasts at the moment are based on the economic conditions continuing same as present. Like, if the Ukraine conflict remains at the present level, oil prices will be around \$92 per barrel, and inflation will start getting normal in the next couple of quarters.

What if the situation worsens?

Global economic growth will be severely hit. The IMF looks at this scenario. Growth will drop from the baseline projection of 3.2% to below minus 3% in 2023 before recovering to around 3 per cent in 2024.

The global Common Equity Tier I ratio in banking will be well above the regulatory minimum of 4.5%.

Banks in emerging markets would face a serious problem. Banks accounting for a third of banking assets would lack the minimum capital required.

How do we explain these outcomes?

There has been a big change in the banking system following GFC. Bankers have come to realise that **it pays to have capital way above the regulatory norm**. As a result, banks have performed well when it comes to capital adequacy. That is the reason for the robustness of the banking system even in these difficult times.

That is true of the Indian banking system as well. The 12 public sector banks together have reported a second quarter increase of more than 50 per cent in profit after tax over the previous year. Loans in the banking system are growing at 17 per cent.

45. [What the Vande Bharat train says about the lopsided priorities of Indian modernity](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**What the Vande Bharat train says about the lopsided priorities of Indian modernity**" published in **The Indian Express** on **11th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Growth and Development

News: India has developed in all fields but the problem still persists which gives us the real image of India.

What are the achievements made and problems associated with them?

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Railways: Vande Bharat express was launched with all modernity but it collided with cows on the track. This shows that with modern trains there should also be development amongst local governments, fencing of the tracks, etc.

Medical facilities: India is considered to be the home to medical facilities around the world but most of the primary care clinics in India don't have enough doctors and India has amongst the worst health indicators of any country.

Unvaccinated children: India has produced the highest vaccines in the world but it is also the home to the largest number of unvaccinated children in the world.

Food stock: India is a country where foods are stored as buffer stock while tens of millions of Indian children go hungry and are stunted.

Illiteracy: India has the most prestigious engineering institutions that offer visas to serve US's university while half its children are unable to read and write at the minimum level expected for their age.

Laws: Laws in India say that all cars must have seat-belts while basic road laws are broken in India by jumping the red light, over-speeding, etc.

Sports: India has the richest sports leagues in the world while performance is dismal at most global sporting competitions.

Digitisation: Most of the children in India do not have the digital devices or access to the internet which they needed during the school closures in the pandemic, even though India is said to be leading in the use of technology.

Slum areas: Luxurious houses and colonies in India are built alongside overflowing sewage, garbage storage areas, etc.

Rivers: Modern infrastructures are built alongside the banks of the holy rivers while the rivers themselves are not clean.

Poverty alleviation: India's economic development is expected to lift millions out of poverty while the recent estimate of World Bank shows that the number of people living in extreme poverty had increased by 5.6 crore in 2020.

These all gives the problems existing with the development made in India. Therefore, these needs to be addressed.

What can be the way forward?

India can learn from other modern countries and priorities its development accordingly.

Some of the areas that India can focus are – improving primary health care and primary education, improving public infrastructure, comprehensive sanitation infrastructure, environmentally friendly roads and policies, etc.

These were the areas where today's modern country has focused to reach the modernity.

Therefore, India should also focus on these things because developing modern trains, infrastructure will not serve the purpose when the base is itself weak.

46. COP-27: An opportunity for rich nations to help vulnerable communities

Source: The post is based on the article “**COP-27: An opportunity for rich nations to help vulnerable communities**” published in **The Indian Express** on **11th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Environment

News: The article discusses the developments made at CoP-27 Summit.

What were the major developments made at CoP-27 Summit?

There are two important developments – **a)** inclusion of “loss and damage” and **b)** early warning of the hazardous weather globally.

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The UNFCCC has decided to compensate countries that suffered loss and damage and came up with a plan to ensure that everyone on the planet is warned of hazardous weather in the next five years.

These concepts are not new as loss and damage was first discussed at COP 19 in Warsaw in 2013. Efforts were made in developing warning systems to protect people in the past. However, the required progress wasn't made.

What are the Challenges?

One of the major concerns is the **investment**. Developing countries are not taking efforts to fulfil their funding commitments while the harm caused by the extreme weather condition is increasing.

For example, the economic loss from cyclone Amphan in India and Bangladesh in 2020 was assessed at \$15 billion.

Therefore, there will be a need to solve the issue of funding of the developed countries.

47. C-DOT emerges as govt's biggest bet for India's ongoing 5G rollout

Source: The post is based on the article "**C-DOT emerges as govt's biggest bet for India's ongoing 5G rollout**" published in the **Business Standard** on **11th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

Relevance: About Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT).

News: The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) has emerged as the government's biggest bet for India's ongoing 5G rollout.

The Department of Space, the home ministry and other key ministries plan to leverage C-DOT's capabilities on artificial intelligence, cyber security, optical fibre, machine-to-machine communication, and even reconnaissance.

About Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)

C-DOT was established in 1984 as an autonomous Telecom R&D centre of the Department of Telecommunications. It is a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

It is also a registered public-funded research institution with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research(DSIR), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India.

How did C-DOT help in India's telecom revolution?

The infographic is divided into two main sections: 'RISING THROUGH THE RANKS' and 'BIG PLANS'. The 'RISING THROUGH THE RANKS' section highlights C-DOT's history and contributions, while the 'BIG PLANS' section outlines its future goals for 5G technology.

RISING THROUGH THE RANKS

- Established in 1984 as a premier research body to boost the telecom sector
- Credited with establishing digital exchanges, laying cables nationwide and successive 2G, 3G and 4G roll-outs
- Responsible for the mushrooming of the ubiquitous black & yellow PCO booths

BIG PLANS

- First indigenously designed
 - 5G standalone core by Oct 2023
 - 5G radio by Mar 2023
- Related 5G equipment like antennas in next 6 months
- Full-stack 5G solutions within next 2 years
- The 5G core is the heart of a 5G mobile network, establishing reliable, secure connectivity to the network

Source: Business Standard

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C-DOT research has focused on the design and production of 'Made in India' telecom technology suited to the Indian landscape. This helped India to **a)** Set up reliable telecom infrastructure that allowed public call offices or PCOs to mushroom nationwide, **b)** Establish digital exchanges, **c)** Create network infrastructure that supported successive waves of 2G, 3G and 4G rollouts and **d)** Recently, it designed a fully indigenous non-standalone (NSA) 5G core in record time. This NSA core has been installed at the state-owned telecom company, BSNL's premises in Chandigarh.

Note: *The 5G core is the heart of a 5G mobile network. The core domain handles a wide variety of essential functions in the mobile network, such as connectivity and mobility management, authentication and authorisation, subscriber data management and policy management, among others.*

As of August 2022, India had 1.17 billion telecom connections, of which 98 per cent were mobile phone connections, and an estimated 65% were smartphones. This phenomenal rise over the past three decades in an economically distressed nation is credited to C-DOT.

Why C-DOT is essential for India's ongoing 5G rollout?

Development of standalone (SA) 5G core

At present C-DOT is working on the development of India's first-ever indigenously built standalone (SA) 5G core. It is a technological improvement on the NSA core. The NSA core technology leverages existing networking infrastructure, but the SA core modernises network infrastructure to suit the myriad needs of enterprises.

Need for SA Core: **a)** The SA core will be necessary for achieving optimal capability in many of the classic use cases of 5G that have been showcased by both the government and industry, **b)** Only an SA Core can provide a long list of high-tech applications, ranging from robotics, advanced manufacturing and remote surgery, to advanced retail and logistics operations, requires ultra-low latency.

5G radio and antennas

C-DOT is also set to launch the first domestically developed 5G radio and antennas in the next six months.

5G Radio Access Network (RAN)

5G RAN allows the disaggregation of network equipment components, enabling a telecom company to source hardware and software from different vendors for network building.

5G alliances program

Under it, C-DOT has set up 10 consortiums to deliver a complete suite of 5G products by 2024. The focus is on domestic companies from across the value chain. This helps in quickly identifying export opportunities for India's telecom tech.

Read more: [Telecom secretary asks C-DoT to work on 6G, launches Quantum Communication Lab](#)

What are the present challenges faced by C-DoT?

Charges of recruiting favourites to crucial posts, and of furnishing false progress reports about C-DoT

a) Commercialising the newly developed technologies remains the bigger challenge, **b) Amount of customisation:** **c)** C-DOT's longtime partner BSNL has often proved to be a problem. BSNL was unhappy with a C-DOT-Tata Group consortium currently working to provide BSNL with 5G equipment because of the higher costs, **d)** C-DOT often struggled to hire the required number of researchers. Further, researchers often have to get into administrative roles which drains their time.

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48. [We must break 'lock-ins' of water usage in agriculture](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**We must break 'lock-ins' of water usage in agriculture**” published in the **Livemint** on **11th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage.

Relevance: About breaking India's lock-ins of water usage.

News: The annual United Nations climate conference is underway in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. The conference has entire days devoted to two crucial sectors agriculture and water. We must enable farmers to make choices that improve their earnings while helping them reduce their demand for water.

Water 'lock-ins' are among the factors that prevent progress in reducing water usage. So, lock-ins surrounding the use of water in agriculture must be tackled.

About the water crisis in India

India's current system is focused towards growing high water-using and energy-intensive crops. The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) estimates that over 60% of irrigation in India is done through groundwater.

As of 2015, there were about 20 million pump sets using energy in India. Hence, the agricultural sector accounts for about 20-22% of total electricity consumption.

About lock-ins of water usage in India

Lock-ins dictate how farmers choose their crops, irrigate their fields and use energy. When generations of farmers follow certain patterns of behaviour in terms of crop choices or cultivation practices, it is hard for them to break out of it.

Most of the water is used to grow water-intensive crops like paddy. Almost a quarter of India's net cultivable area is under rice cultivation. It is predominantly grown in the Punjab-Haryana belt. This is because there is less risk associated with such crops, given their large-scale procurement by the government at minimum support prices (MSPs).

Why breaking lock-ins of water usage is challenging?

There are many reasons for lock-ins that are carbon and water intensive.

a) Physical infrastructure in terms of cold storage, granaries and markets have all been set up to support current crop choices. New crops would require new supply chains that may be expensive to set up, **b)** Conventional agricultural methods have developed over centuries based on specific skills and expertise. Shifting to new methods of farming would need additional investments in capacity, **c)** Consumption patterns are based on crops that are currently grown. For instance, rice and wheat continue to dominate Indian kitchens. Adapting to less water-intensive crops such as millets will take time, even if there are nutritional benefits and **d)** The Indian farm sector displays siloed ways of thinking and working.

How India can break lock-ins of water usage?

1) Different government ministries and departments need to work in conjunction at the policy design stage to solve complex challenges that span sectors. For instance, India needs to assess changes in farmers' energy consumption with green technologies, increase farmers' income and also achieve less water use.

2) Changes required from production to consumption: Due to insufficient demand, the Haryana government's introduction of maize in the MSP system has failed to divert farmers from rice and wheat cultivation. So, the government has to create an ecosystem for farms to transition as done by Odisha's Millet Mission.

Under the Odisha Millet Mission, the Odisha government ensured the complete procurement of millets, ensured its distribution, and encouraged the consumption of millets at local levels

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through Public Distribution System (PDS), Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and even the Midday Meal Scheme at schools.

49. [What India needs to do to plug its defence gap](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**What India needs to do to plug its defence gap**” published in **The Indian Express** on **12th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security

News- The article explains the challenges associated with defence manufacturing in India. It also tells about the achievements of India in this sector.

What are the issues related to defence manufacturing in India?

There is a high dependency index foreign suppliers for major military inventory items. This dependency is a challenge to national security and dilutes India’s quest for credible strategic autonomy.

Global level crises like Covid and Russia invasion of Europe that disrupted the global supply chain and weakening rupees adds to challenges faced by the defence sector.

India does not yet have the domestic competence to fully design and manufacture any significant combat platform and. It is dependent on the foreign supplier for the critical components.

India is now going to manufacture the C295 transport aircraft in a collaboration with Airbus. But the reality is that the engine, avionics, landing gear, etc, will come from abroad and the integration will be done by the Indian entity.

India has not invested enough in the national research and development (R&D) effort. As per data collated by the World Bank, India has been able to allocate only 0.66% of GDP towards R&D in 2028, while the world average is 2.63 per cent. Israel spent 5.34% and the USA 3.45%.

India missed the industrial design and manufacturing bus, a national competence demonstrated by nations like South Korea and China, over the last five decades.

Technological advances have made the design and manufacture of the semiconductor chip the new currency of national prosperity and military power. India is yet to acquire a strong credentials in this field.

What are the achievements of India in defence manufacturing?

Our defence exports have grown eight times in the last five years. We are exporting defence materials and equipment to more than 75 countries of the world. In 2021-22, defence exports from India reached about Rs 13,000 crore. The government has now set a target of Rs 40,000 crore.

India has commissioned indigenously-designed and built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. It fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile from the INS Arihant. It awarded the manufacture of a military transport aircraft (C 295) to a major private sector entity;

The induction of the made in India Prachand LCH and the conclusion of a deal with Russia to manufacture a Kalashnikov-type light weapon in India are other achievements.

50. [Raising money for green transitions](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Raising money for green transitions**” published in **The Indian Express** on **12th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environmental degradation

Relevance: Climate change related issues

News- The article explains the issue of finance for green transition.

What are the challenges associated with green transition?

Besides technical and economic challenges, it has a **human dimension** also.

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Workers that are currently engaged in the non-renewable energy sector may face livelihood related issues.

There can be **political opposition** to the shutting down of industry. The opposition could also come from trade unions and other local bodies. This can be counter-productive because the transition can appear insensitive at worst.

What are issues related to climate finance?

Shifting to renewables requires **planning and resources**. Emerging countries face challenges related to **access to capital**.

Not only the source and scale of finance, but the **channel of this finance** is also important to consider. Take the case of South Africa where the mechanics of finance have some interesting lessons. At COP26 in Glasgow, five developed countries agreed to channel \$8.5 billion to South Africa. But very little of this materialised. With more time, it has become clear that almost all of this finance is loans.

Several multilateral development banks are also supporting projects for just transitions. But the limitations of these MDBs remain. They continue to have **inflexible governance structures** in terms of voice and vote, leadership selection. This undermines the legitimacy of these institutions in the eyes of the emerging market countries.

The GCF was established to address some of the prevalent challenges of climate finance. But it has its own challenges. It is slow and hard to access. It appears less able to engage directly with countries; in fact some of us are arguing that the GCF should have more strategic clarity rather than try to do it all.

What is the way forward for green transition? There is a need for **“just transitions”**. The negative impacts on workers and communities should be reduced, and the benefits should be fairly distributed.

There is a need to strengthen GCF. It is the only institution which combines a very large scale with **legitimacy and ownership**. It could reduce dependence on the policies and concessionality imposed by MDBs, and avoid **fragmentation of finance**.

51. [How Northeast Finally Took Wings](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **“How Northeast Finally Took Wings”** published in **The Times of India** on **12th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Growth and Development

News: The efforts taken by the current government have changed resulted in the growth and development in the North eastern states of India.

What progress has been made by PM Modi?

Government launched **“Purvodaya” mission** in 2014 to bring development, especially basic infrastructure to the Northeast.

The region was declared as a priority area and pledged to turn it into a growth engine for India. All the ministries were asked to spend at least 10% of their budget in the northeastern region. These efforts brought change in the North eastern states, especially in the aviation sector.

What changes came in the aviation in North-East?

A separate budget was allocated for the aviation sector which led to the inclusive growth on aviation. Further, **UDAN** (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme acted as multiplier effects for the local economies with the increase in the number of flights.

For example, airports in five northeastern states Mizoram, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland have seen flights take off for the first time in 75 years.

Airports of Sikkim and Assam are attracting travelers from all over the world. The airport in Arunachal Pradesh has also been brought on the civil aviation map for the first time. **Krishi UDAN** has also helped in the exporting agri-products worldwide.

Advance Landing Grounds (ALGs) are now developed for commercial air services to connect the remote areas. These were airstrips built shortly before the 1962 Sino-India war and are strategically important for India.

These developments in the aviation sector along with the improvement in rail and road connectivity has helped North-eastern states to get **inclusive development**.

What are the future projects for the North-Eastern States?

The routes under UDAN have been planned in such a way that ensures connectivity both **vertically and horizontally**, i.e., within the Northeast region as well as, connectivity with the rest of India.

There are also plans to provide helicopter services in the remotest areas. Two **international air routes** under PM's "**Act East Policy**" – between Imphal-Mandalay and Agartala-Chittagong will be operationalised soon.

These all development will attract private investments in the North-eastern states ensuring that they are not excluded from the nation's overall development.

52. [Idea of war: The battlefields are changing](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Idea of war: The battlefields are changing**" published in **Business Standard** on **12th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Technology

Relevance: defence technologies

News: The article discusses the need to adapt to advance defense technologies.

How has the battlefield changed?

The battlefield has seen the development of machine guns, tanks, anti-tanks and now the use of drones in the battlefields have changed the scenario.

Further, the latest warfare in the Ukraine has raised concerns and challenges on the future of large armoured formations, big battleships and manned fighter aircraft.

Why are the challenges?

The use of **Advanced Technologies and weapons** have made it difficult to stand in the war.

The Ukraine Russia war is a great example of it. Ukrainians have used defence technologies in the war against Russia and it made it difficult for the Russian army to fight the war.

They never get within the visual range of the Russian army and attack with the use of drone and satellite communication or by small guerrilla-like bands armed with American or British equipment.

This has made it difficult for the Russian Army to completely invade Ukraine.

This also shows Russia's inability to adapt to the technology in its defence even though it saw drones earlier being used in the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Further, Missile technology has developed so much that big warships and any other defence assets will be vulnerable to the attacks.

The same applies to aircraft technologies. If advanced technologies are not adopted then it would be difficult to launch air attacks as it is being witnessed in the case of Russia.

Therefore, this shows that there is an urgent need to sync defense with the latest technology to withstand the attack from the opponent.

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53. [The coal reality: How coal is phased out is India's policy choice, the transition cannot be decided by West's interests](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The coal reality: How coal is phased out is India's policy choice, the transition cannot be decided by West's interests**” published in **The Times of India** on **14th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Relevance: About phase out coal.

News: Far from the phase-down of coal that COP26 called for in Glasgow, now in COP27 India has proposed that the decision text should call for phasing down all fossil fuels rather than focusing only coal.

This is because, **a)** Natural gas and oil do contribute to GHG emissions as well, **b)** India gets targeted for heavy coal reliance for its energy needs, and **c)** The energy security of many countries still dependent on coal.

How rich countries are performing in climate change pledge?

Rich countries have fallen horribly short of their commitments to help developing countries make a just transition from fossil fuels. For instance, US energy use per capita is 6,804 kg of oil equivalent compared to India's 637 kg.

What are the challenges in phasing out coal in India?

Needs internal just-transition: 85% of coal production is concentrated in the relatively poor eastern and central states. On the other hand, over 60% of renewable energy potential and 80% of current capacity is concentrated in relatively wealthy southern and western states. So, while phasing out coal India needs an internal just-transition.

Need longer time to eliminate coal: More finance and technology support is required before phasing out coal.

Why India needs to phase out coal?

a) Regular accidents that show open-cast mines to be death traps, **b)** Cleaning up coal is very much in workers' interests, **c)** Sickening smog hovering over northern India and global carbon emissions from fossil fuels expected to hit a record level this year. So, phasing out them is essential to improve environmental conditions.

Overall, India should put hard timelines to phase out coal and extract and deploy cleaner technologies.

54. [Green yields – Transparency will be critical for green bonds](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Green yields – Transparency will be critical for green bonds**” published in the **Business Standard** on **14th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian economy

Relevance: About India's Sovereign Green Bonds Framework

News: Union government issued a robust framework for sovereign green bonds. This will allow the government to issue green bonds as announced in the Union Budget.

What are Green Bonds?

[Click Here to read](#)

About India's Sovereign Green Bonds Framework

[Click here to read](#)

Funds: The funds raised by green bonds will be deposited as usual in the Consolidated Fund of India. However, a separate account will be maintained by the finance ministry to make funds available for green projects.

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Green Register: The Finance ministry will set up an information system to maintain a “Green Register” with details such as the bond issuances, funds raised, and allocations made.

Annual assessment: The government further intends to involve an external third-party reviewer to provide an annual assessment of allocation.

What is the need for Sovereign Green Bonds Framework?

Need resources for India’s climate commitments: A report submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change showed that India’s emission intensity declined by 24% between 2005 and 2016. It has committed itself to reduce the emission intensity of a gross domestic product by 45% by 2030 compared to the level of 2005.

This would obviously need resources and investment in a variety of areas, and green bonds are one of the enabling factors for investment

To take advantage of Greenium: “Greenium” is defined as the yield difference between similar conventional bonds and green bonds. It is higher in developing economies.

For instance, according to estimates, greenium in emerging markets is about 49 basis points for dollar-denominated bonds. The same is 5-6 basis points in advanced economies. The difference can partly be explained by the usual yield difference between advanced and emerging economies.

What are the challenges with Sovereign Green Bonds Framework?

a) A sustained higher fiscal deficit and inflation could undermine the potential of green bonds, **b)** India lacks transparency in the proceeds of green bonds, **c)** History shows that the government often doesn’t spend on the stated purpose for which the funds are raised as is the case in various kinds of cess and surcharge levied.

But the overall conditions in the framework should be able to boost transparency.

55. [Preserving the precious: On ground water use](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Preserving the precious: On ground water use**” published in The Hindu on **14th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

Relevance: Groundwater conservation related

News– The article explains the issues related to management of groundwater.

What do the facts reveal?

According to a report by the Ministry of Water Resources, the total annual groundwater recharge is, 437.60 billion cubic metres. The quantity extracted out of it was 239.16 bcm

The 2022 assessment suggests that groundwater extraction is the lowest since 2004, when it was 231 BCM. The above facts reveal that a decrease in groundwater extraction may indicate better water management.

However, [National Compilation on Dynamic Ground water Resources of India](#) says that the improvement is only **marginal**. It may be explained by **natural conditions** and **changes in methodology** by the Central Ground Water Board and States, which conduct the survey.

Also, the percentage of blocks where the groundwater was ‘**critically**’ low was around 14%. It is roughly similar to that in previous years.

What are the Regional consumption trends?

Firstly, regions with the most blocks with critical groundwater levels are in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and western Uttar Pradesh. Despite replenishable systems, indiscriminate groundwater withdrawal in these regions has depressed the water table.

Secondly, other endangered blocks are in Rajasthan and Gujarat. Here arid climate has limited the groundwater recharge.

Finally, in parts of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, groundwater availability is low due to inherent characteristics of crystalline water-storing aquifers.

What are challenges to groundwater management?

At present, there is no central law governing the use of groundwater.

Various States have their own laws on regulating its extraction. These are deployed in a perfunctory manner.

What is the way forward?

Water ought not to be considered a **free, private resource** but one whose costs must be **measured and borne equitably**.

The climate crisis should inspire consensus across the political spectrum on **disincentivizing wasteful consumption** of this precious resource.

A **draft National Water Policy** recommends a shift in usage from water-guzzling crops and prioritising recycling over freshwater for industrial purposes.

56. [Behind the smokescreen around private climate finance](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Behind the smokescreen around private climate finance**” published in **The Hindu** on **14th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

Relevance: Climate change

News- The article explains the issues related to climate finance.

What are the main points emphasised by developed countries on climate finance?

They claim that their commitment of \$100 billion in climate finance a year for developing countries is close to being met.

They view the mobilisation of private finance as the critical component of climate finance.

What are the issues related to climate finance goals by developed countries?

The **UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (SCF)** released a report on the progress made by developed countries towards achieving the goal of mobilising \$100 billion per year. It says that the \$100 billion goal has not been achieved in 2020. Efforts to mobilise private finance by the developed countries have met with comprehensive failure.

The SCF report relied mainly on the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Oxfam reports**. The OECD report claims that developed countries have mobilised \$83.3 billion in climate finance in 2020. The latest Oxfam report challenges this figure. It claims that the actual value of climate assistance is only around \$21–\$24.5 billion.

In 2016, developed countries issued a “**Roadmap to \$100 billion**” with forward-looking projections of climate finance in 2020. The road map indicated that public finance would reach \$67 billion. Remaining \$33 billion would be provided by private finance.

The OECD 2020 data shows that the **mobilisation of private climate finance has underperformed** against the expectations of developed countries. It is \$13.1 billion in 2020 against \$33 billion in the road map.

What are the concerns of developing countries?

Developing countries have for a long time insisted that a significant portion of climate finance should come from public funds. Private finance will not address their needs.

Climate finance already remains skewed towards **mitigation** and projects that yield profit on investment. Low-income countries with poor credit ratings need more **adaptation finance**.

What is the future plan of developed countries for climate finance and associated challenges?

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Developed countries pushed the target year for achieving it to 2025 from 2020. At COP26 in Glasgow, developed countries came up with a **Climate Finance Delivery Plan (CFDP)** to meet the goal. They claimed that the goal would be met in 2023.

The CFDP scenario implies that the composition of public climate finance portfolios will progressively change. It will go **towards a larger share of activities with low private finance mobilisation potential for adaptation**, and capacity building, as grants, for least developed and small island developing countries. In these scenarios, financing the urgent adaptation needs of developing countries is pushed further into the future.

What is the way forward?

The climate finance needs of developing countries cannot be left to private climate finance by developed countries.

Grant-based and concessional international public climate finance is needed in addressing the needs of developing countries.

57. Why India cannot afford to ignore the GM crop revolution

Source– The post is based on the article **“Why India cannot afford to ignore the GM crop revolution”** published in **The Indian Express** on **14th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Agriculture and Science & Technology

Relevance: Recombinant technology

News- The article explains the issues related to GM crops.

What are arguments in support of GM crops?

GM crops have spread around the world since 1996. By 2019, roughly 190 million hectares were under GM crops. There has been no harmful impact on human or animal health or the environment per. More than 70 countries have accepted the use of GM crops.

Cotton production increased remarkably from a mere 13.6 million bales in 2002-03 to 39.8 million bales in 2013-14. **Cotton productivity** increased from 302 kg per hectare in 2002-03 to 566 kg per hectare in 2013-14.

Bt cotton has made India the second-largest producer and the second-largest exporter of cotton in the world today.

GMOs have been in our food systems for years. India heavily depends on imported edible oils. A large portion of this comes from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, the US, which is all from GM technology. Cotton seed is also fed to cattle which gives the milk its fat content. Even poultry feed, such as soya and corn, is being imported.

By not allowing GM crops, we are denying the **basic rights of farmers** who want to increase their incomes. The best way to do so is by raising productivity in a sustainable manner. The field trials of GM mustard at different locations showed 25-28 per cent higher yield and better disease resistance compared to indigenous varieties.

What are concerns associated with GM crops?

There has been enhanced sucking pest damage in Bt cotton. It has led to an increase in secondary pests such as mired bugs and emergence of pest resistance.

It has **environmental and health implications** in terms of toxicity and allergenicity that can cause hepatotoxic reactions in the human body.

There is increased exposure of farmers to a **greater risk of monopoly** in the seed business.

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58. [Spare a thought for the trilemma of central bank digital currencies](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Spare a thought for the trilemma of central bank digital currencies**” published in **Live Mint** on **14th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Growth and Development

Relevance: challenges with CBDC

News: Central banks around the world have started to issue their own digital currencies (CBDC) but it has challenges too.

Why are central banks issuing CBDC?

One of the reasons behind issuing CBDC is that it will be **accessible** to masses that will bring **financial inclusion** and **ease of payments**. However, there are other ways of financial inclusion which India has already tried.

How has India tried to achieve financial inclusion?

The Prime Minister’s People’s Wealth Scheme has addressed the issue of offering zero-balance, low-cost accounts to underbanked rural residents. This led around 400 million people to open the account.

Further, the **United Payments Interface (UPI)** is also a low cost electronic-payments infrastructure that has also helped in financial inclusion.

What are the challenges with CBDC?

It is argued that CBDC will help in facilitating the **cross-border payments** and might be a **digital alternative** to the dominance of the US dollar.

Central banks with help from the Bank for International Settlements have also experimented with a platform ‘**mBridges**’ to globally exchange CBDC.

However, there are political concerns with the use of CBDC globally and it would also be difficult to adopt such a common platform worldwide.

For example, it would be difficult for China and the US to come to an agreement on a single platform of exchanging CBDC.

Therefore, central banks face a trilemma when issuing CBDC as they can have only two of three things – a **digital currency, confidentiality of transactions and financial stability**.

Further, if CBDCs are used for bank transfers then commercial banks will be disintermediated from the system which will raise financial risk and imbalances for the central banks.

59. [Importance of agri exports — and what Govt can do to boost India’s farm trade surplus](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Importance of agri exports — and what Govt can do to boost India’s farm trade surplus**” published in **The Indian Express** on **14th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Agriculture

Relevance: concerns associated with increase in imports of agri-products.

News: The article discusses position of India in importing agri-products and measures to improve it.

What is the position of India in agri-exports?

India’s agriculture exports have grown 16.5% in the period of April-September and are expected to grow further.

This growth has come at a time when the government has brought measures to ban the export of wheat, broken rice and sugar.

However, despite the ban all three have shown a rise in exports from the last year. For example, sugar exports grew 45.5% in April-September this year compared to last year.

However, imports have increased more than exports.

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What is the position of India in import?

The first six months of the current fiscal (2022-23) have seen a **narrow trade surplus** because imports grew at a faster rate (27.7%) than exports (16.5%).

India's **trade deficit** in overall merchandise trade account has widened from \$76.25 billion in April-September 2021 to \$146.55 billion in April-September 2022.

Even with a wide trade deficit, India's surplus in agriculture trade reduced only from \$7.86 billion to \$7.46 billion.

Therefore, surplus in agricultural trade matters because this is one sector, apart from software services, where India has some comparative advantage.

Which agri-products have seen increase in import?

Exports of all agri-products have been good except **cotton, spices, cashew and vegetable oils**. Exports of cotton have declined and its import has increased due to the **lower domestic production** which has turned India a net cotton importer.

In spices, India has become an importer of **pepper and cardamom**. Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Brazil have out-priced India in pepper, while India has lost market share to Guatemala in cardamom.

India has also increased its import of cashew compared to its export.

Further, India is a major importer of vegetable oils. Imports have increased by more than 25% in the first half of this fiscal year. **Vegetable oils** are the country's fifth biggest import item after petroleum, electronics, gold, and coal.

That is why the government has come up with important decisions to reduce its import of vegetable oil.

What are the decisions taken by the government?

a) government has raised the MSP of mustard from Rs 5,050 to Rs 5,450 per quintal for the 2022-23 crop season, **b)** government has granted clearance for commercial cultivation of genetically modified (GM) hybrid mustard.

The yield from GM hybrid mustard is claimed to be 25-30% more than from currently-grown popular varieties and it would be also useful in developing new mustard hybrids giving higher yields.

What is the way forward?

A similar kind of approach is needed to boost high yields of cotton production.

GM Bt technology has helped in the increase in the cotton production but a new approach is required as production has started to fall down touching a 12-year low in 2021-22.

Therefore, India should focus on domestic production and productivity by leveraging technologies.

60. [The shape of the Indian economic pie must change](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“The shape of the Indian economic pie must change”** published in **The Hindu** on **15th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance: Issues related to current economic structure

News- The article explains the increasing inequalities and unfair distribution of wealth across the world. It explains the dominant position acquired by the financial sector.

With the decision of Supreme Court on EWS reservation and recent debates on subsidies, the issue of inequality has come to surface.

What are the issues with the present economic structure?

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Shape of the economy is disturbed. Decent jobs and social security are available to too few. Good education and health care is not available to all.

Issues about **fair distribution of opportunities** and the need for subsidies will become harder for the Government to resolve until the current pattern of economic growth continues.

Economic inequalities have been increasing in all countries, even the rich ones. Governments are struggling to meet conflicting demands for a smooth business climate and decent living for common citizens.

Populism is on the rise. On the left, populism demands rights for all workers, across races and religions. On the right, populism wants to protect racial and religious majorities from immigrants and minorities competing with them for limited economic opportunities.

What are the viewpoints of Thomas Piketty about inequality?

He describes that **societies were historically divided into three classes**– a religious class, a noble and warrior class, and labouring class. **Merchant and financial class later emerged** and became dominant.

Every human society must justify its inequalities. Unless it does not do so, there will be **social and political instability**.

Modern inequality is said to be just because everyone enjoys **equal access to the market** and to property. It benefits automatically from the wealth accumulated by the wealthiest individuals.

How has the financial sector become dominant in the economy?

The **financing of wars** gave money-owning class power over governments. International trade provided another avenue for growth of the financial class. With the victory of **neo-liberalism** over welfarism, money became the master. Central banks with responsibility to look after the health of money, acquired independence from elected governments.

The role of banks and financial institutions was to provide **lubrication to the wheels of the real economy**, rather than making large profits themselves. By the 21st century, profits seem to have become the purpose of financial institutions.

What are the impacts of the dominant position of the financial sector?

Innovative **ways of making money from money** also became the fastest way to increase personal wealth. Inequalities have increased because a much larger share of wealth is sucked into the financial sector.

The **rules of the economic game** are now set by the wealthiest. They influence governments' policies the most. They can determine the wages they will pay workers and prices for small enterprises.

Lives of common citizens have become precarious. Formal jobs in large enterprises are becoming fewer with the changing shape of the **modern, post-industrial economy**.

What should be the course of action?

The **shape of the economic pie** must change so that the majority benefits much faster than a tiny minority on top. This will require **reforms of institutions and economic ideology**.

The Government must listen and respond to the needs of common citizens more than to big business lobbies.

Ease of living for the majority must drive government policies more than policies for attracting big investments with ease of doing business.

61. [India's long-term strategy to transition to a 'low emissions' pathway involves more nuclear power, more ethanol](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**India's long-term strategy to transition to a 'low emissions' pathway involves more nuclear power, more ethanol**” published in The Hindu on **15th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

Relevance: Climate change

News– The article explains India's [long-term strategy to transition to a “low emissions” pathway](#) at the [United Nations Conference of Parties](#) ongoing in Sharm el-Sheikh.

What is the recent long term strategy announced by India?

It is premised on expanding its nuclear power capacity by **at least three-fold** in the next decade. There is focus on becoming an international hub for producing **green hydrogen** and increasing the proportion of ethanol in petrol.

The LT-LEDS ([Long Term-Low Emission Development Strategy](#)) has been prepared in the framework of India's right to an **equitable and fair share of the global carbon budget**. The strategy emphasises **energy security, energy access, and employment**, while keeping focus on our vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

The **journey to net-zero** is five-decade-long. India's vision is therefore evolutionary and flexible. It accommodates new technological developments and developments in the global economy and international cooperation.

The LT-LEDS are **qualitative in nature**. It is a requirement emanating from the 2015 Paris Agreement.

LTS says that the transition to low carbon development pathway will entail several costs pertaining to the development of new technologies, new infrastructure, and other transaction costs. The cost of transition falls generally in the range of trillions of dollars by 2050.

Provision of climate finance by developed countries will play a very significant role. It needs to be considerably enhanced, in the form of grants and concessional loans, ensuring scale, scope and speed. It should be predominantly from public sources, in accordance with the principles of the UNFCCC.

What is the strategy adopted by India to achieve net zero targets?

India aspires to maximise the use of electric vehicles. It aims for **ethanol blending to reach 20%** by 2025 which is currently 10% .

India will also focus on improving energy efficiency by the **Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme**, the **National Hydrogen Mission, increasing electrification, enhancing material efficiency; recycling** and ways to reduce emissions.

India's forest and tree cover act as a **net carbon sink** absorbing 15% of CO₂ emissions in 2016. Also, the country is on track to fulfilling its **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)** commitment of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of additional carbon sequestration in forest and tree cover by 2030.

India's most **updated NDC** commits to ensuring half its electricity is derived from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. It aims at reducing the **emissions intensity** by 45% below 2005 levels by 2030.

What is the way forward for LTS?

India's long-term strategy (LTS) can guide the growth of Indian industry, urban planning, and infrastructure creation.

India needs to create a **legal or institutional framework** to pursue policies based on its long-term goal.

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LTS should include **carbon pricing through a domestic emissions trading scheme** as a key element of India's strategy, given that the government has already announced the creation of the same in India.

Provision of **climate finance** by developed countries will play a very significant role. It needs to be considerably enhanced, in the form of grants and concessional loans.

62. India's LT-LEDS: Setting the COP agenda

Source: The post is based on the following articles **"Setting the COP agenda"** published in the **Indian Express** on **16th November 2022**.

"COP-27: India's net-zero strategy lays out the challenge before it, and the world" published in the **Indian Express** on **16th November**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation.

Relevance: About the key takeaways of India's LT-LEDS.

News: At COP27, India submitted its long-term strategy (LTS) for low carbon development and joined the coveted list of 56 countries that have submitted their LTS.

Must read: [India Submits its Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy to UNFCCC](#)

Why India's LT-LEDS is significant?

India's announcements at the 26th and 27th Conference Of Parties (COP) are now the pillars of its climate leadership. This is because,

a) COP26 last year was a watershed moment because of the country's plan to go net-zero by 2070, **b)** This year's COP27 will be remembered for India's path-breaking announcement of a long-term strategy (LTS) for low carbon development.

The LT-LEDS is consistent with India's net-zero targets and mentions India will need "trillions of dollars" to become carbon-neutral by 2070.

What are the five key takeaways from India's LT-LEDS?

Sectoral transformations are key: India's LTS has prioritised six strategic sectors — electricity, transport, urban, industry, carbon dioxide removal(CDR) and forests. Of these, electricity and industry sectors together account for over three-fourths of India's CO2 emissions.

The focus areas of each sector are, **1) Electricity sector:** More renewable power, demand side reductions and a just transition for phase down of coal, **2) Industrial sector:** Improve energy efficiency, electrification, material efficiency, green hydrogen and decarbonisation of hard-to-abate sectors, **3) Transport:** Transition to cleaner fuels, increase energy efficiency, and aggressive electrification, **4) Urban transition:** material efficiency of buildings, **5) CDR:** Using methods such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) to remove GHGs before they enter the atmosphere and **6) Forest cover:** Protect India's forest and expand tree cover.

Finance and investments: According to a Council on Energy, Environment and Water assessment, India will need \$10 trillion to achieve the 2070 net-zero target. The LTS has gauged the country's financial requirement, potential sources, the importance of mainstreaming of climate finance and international climate finance, and multilateral arrangements for climate finance flows.

Changes to LiFE: The LTS nudges people to make simple yet effective sustainable choices, industries and markets to scale these, and government policies to support them.

Invest in research and innovation: The LTS notes the relevance of research and innovation, and identifies multiple technologies in the energy and industry sectors.

Adaptation, resilience and international cooperation: India's 75% of districts are hotspots of extreme weather events. So, the LTS emphasises the **a)** need for strengthening basic infrastructures like irrigation systems and disaster-resilient buildings, institutional

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infrastructure for better disaster response, and **b)** raising incomes to bolster the capabilities of individuals and communities.

Read more: [“In our LiFetime” Campaign launched by India at COP 27, Sharm El-Sheikh](#)

What should be done to improve India’s LT-LEDS further?

a) India’s LT-LEDS only focuses on technology-related innovations. This should be expanded to innovation in **business models**. **b) India should include carbon pricing**, and **c)** India’s LT-LEDS does not specify mid-term targets or goals. So, the strategy **should present a mechanism to assess progress** towards its intermediate goals and course corrections if necessary.

63. [A call to action to avoid climate catastrophe](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“A call to action to avoid climate catastrophe”** published in **The Hindu** on **16th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation.

Relevance: About the required actions to avoid climate catastrophe.

News: Climate change is a global problem that requires cooperation between all nations. Hence, more than 30 newspapers and media organisations in more than 20 countries have taken a common view about what needs to be done.

What was the view of media organisations on present actions against climate catastrophe?

Media organisations think that the world is heading towards climate catastrophe because,

1) Instead of phasing out fossil fuels, many wealthy nations are **a)** Reinvesting in oil and gas, **b)** Failing to cut emissions fast enough and **c)** Bargaining over the aid they are prepared to send to poor countries.

2) Since the Cop26 in Glasgow last year, countries have only promised to do one-fiftieth of what is needed to stay on track to keep temperatures within 1.5°C of pre-industrial levels.

3) No continent has avoided extreme weather disasters this year — from floods in Pakistan to heatwaves in Europe, and from forest fires in Australia to hurricanes in the US. With rising temperatures, the world can expect far worse to come.

4) After the Russia-Ukraine crisis, many nations seek to reduce their energy reliance on Russia. So, the world is experiencing a **“gold rush” for new fossil fuel projects**.

Why do rich countries need to take climate responsibility?

Clear moral responsibility: Rich countries account for just one in eight people in the world today but are responsible for half of the greenhouse gases.

From melting ice sheets to crop failures, the world’s poorest people are bearing the brunt of climate destruction.

Read more: [COP-27: An opportunity for rich nations to help vulnerable communities](#)

What needs to be done to avert climate catastrophe?

Humanity should end its addiction to fossil fuels: Developed countries should focus on clean and renewable energy instead of focusing on fossil fuels at present.

Rich nations should deliver on the promise: Rich nations should provide the previously committed funds – such as the \$100bn a year from 2020. This will signal their climate seriousness.

This can be done by levying a bare minimum windfall tax on the combined profits of the largest oil and gas companies.

Need radical approach in funding: During the pandemic, central banks across the world lubricated states’ expenditures by buying up their own governments’ bonds. Such radical thinking is essential as trillions of dollars are needed to deal with the ecological emergency.

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The other steps are, **a)** Using cash to support the most vulnerable as demanded by the United Nations, **b)** Poor nations are burdened with debts that make it impossible for them to recover after climate-related disasters or protect themselves from future ones. So, the Creditors should write off loans for those on the frontline of the climate emergency.

Read more: [The questions that CoP-27 must answer to ensure climate justice](#)

To make all this an urgent reality, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change should be about the power of argument not the argument of power.

64. [Health as the focus of air pollution policy](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Health as the focus of air pollution policy**” published in **The Hindu** on **16th November**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – environmental pollution and degradation.

Relevance: About the status of health in India’s pollution policy-making.

News: The harmful effects of air pollution on health has again been highlighted by the poor winter air quality in north India.

Why status of health in India’s pollution policy-making is essential?

Clearly mentioned in Indian environmental laws: The primacy of protecting public health is clearly laid out in the statement of objects and reasons of India’s key environmental laws.

Impact of air pollution on health: According to the Lancet, in India, in 2019, 17.8% of all deaths and 11.5% of respiratory, cardiovascular and other related diseases are attributable to high exposure to pollution.

Read more: [The action plan against Delhi’s air pollution](#)

What is the present status of health in India’s pollution policy-making?

Non representation of health experts: India’s environmental regulators, expert groups and decision-making entities do not have any health expertise.

For instance, **a)** the recently constituted Commission for Air Quality Management also lacks any health representation, **b)** Recent papers published by the Centre for Policy Research revealed that health sector representatives comprise less than 5% of the membership of State Pollution Control Boards.

What are the contributions of the Ministry of Health’s Steering Committee on Air Pollution on pollution policymaking?

Ministry of Health’s Steering Committee on Air Pollution was India’s only effort to include health in India’s pollution policymaking The committee took an exposure-centred view of policy.

The committee **a)** Prioritised interventions that contributed the most to reducing exposure and thereby providing health benefits, **b)** Brought the local and global epidemiological evidence on the harmful effects of air pollution to light, and **c)** Defined policy measures aligned with science.

Read more: [The weakest link in air pollution fight](#)

What needs to be done to include health in India’s pollution policy-making?

Mention explicit health benefits: Health must be turned into a feature and eventually a function of the air pollution policy. For instance, foregrounding health in ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) will improve awareness among people.

Radical rethinking policy design: India should centre science and health to permanently fix the problem of air pollution.

Must read: [Air pollution in Delhi: In the hopes for a clear blue sky](#)

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65. [The monetary policy committee should slow its pace of tightening](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The monetary policy committee should slow its pace of tightening**” published in **Live Mint** on **16th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Economy

News- The article explains monetary policy related matters.

What is the present Monetary Policy stance?

Indian monetary policy easing began in early 2001.

The pace of easing quickened after the pandemic struck in early 2020. They have increased the **benchmark repo rate by 190 basis points** since May 2022. It is due to a recovery in economic activity which allowed policymakers to focus more on the challenge of rising prices.

Monetary conditions have also become **tighter** since the evaporation of **excess liquidity** in the money market. It was also led by a sharp fall in **foreign exchange reserves**.

Why should RBI follow the policy of modest interest rate hike?

It would signal that the **battle against inflation** is still not over. The MPC meeting in October has already revealed how interest rate hikes in recent months have been curtailing domestic demand, rather than maintaining the recent pace of rate hikes.

Another argument is that there is not enough evidence whether the spike in inflation has had significant second-round effects. It usually happens through either the **labour market or corporate pricing power**.

The Indian labour market still has slack, especially if we look at the **labour force participation ratio** rather than the unemployment rate. **Wage growth** is likely to be muted in such a labour market.

On the other hand, companies have greater **pricing power** now because of the multiple shocks to small and informal enterprises over the past five years.

How does Indian inflation compare with the price situation in other major economies?

The numbers show that the Western world is in the midst of **full-fledged inflation shocks**. They chose oversized stimulus packages during the pandemic

For reasons specific to each country, **India, China and Japan are better off**.

A good thumb-rule is that countries with greater distance from their inflation targets as well as past inflation need to react more strongly to price pressures. For example, the US has more reason to push its real interest rate beyond its estimated neutral interest rate than India does right now.

What is the way forward?

The Indian MPC needs to figure out whether it wants to use the interest rate solely to **target inflation**, or also use it to **manage the exchange rate** as well as **financial stability**.

Ideally, RBI should manage the exchange rate by using its foreign exchange reserves. But the sharp fall in its reserve during the recent defence of the rupee. It means that the interest rate tool will have to be used for inflation control as well as curbing volatility of the exchange rate.

66. [Boosting production](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Boosting production**” published in **The Business Standard** on **16th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Industrial policy

Relevance: **Fertiliser sector**

News- The article explains the situation of the fertiliser sector in India. It tells about the issues related to fertiliser subsidy.

What is the current situation of fertiliser production in our country?

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Government has recently commissioned a fertiliser plant at Ramagundam in Telangana last week.

This is one of the five public-sector fertiliser plants that were taken up for revival under the New Urea Policy of 2015. These units would add over 6 million tonnes to the country's existing urea production capacity.

The new urea policy has helped enhance the **energy-use efficiency** of the existing gas-based urea units. It has led to an increase in their net output.

India is close to achieving **self-sufficiency** in urea production.

What are the issues related to fertiliser subsidy?

Government's **fertiliser subsidy bill** may still remain high. It is because of the unabated imports of phosphatic and potassic fertilisers and heavy discounts on their sale.

A bag of DAP, priced in the international market at around Rs 4,000, is being supplied to farmers at only around Rs 2,500.

What are some facts about nano urea?

It is developed and patented by Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO). It contains nitrogen nutrient in a size that is **much thinner** than that in normal **granular urea**.

Government is lending full support for production and promotion of this product.

IFFCO has **licensed the technology** for the production of this liquid fertiliser to a couple of public-sector urea producers free of cost. The purpose is to make this critical plant nutrient available to farmers at cheaper rates.

One 500 ml bottle of nano urea is deemed equivalent to a bag of normal urea.

67. How we can further our efforts in curbing terror financing

Source– The post is based on the article “**How we can further our efforts in curbing terror financing**” published in **The Indian Express** on **16th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- linkages of organised crime with terrorism

Relevance: Terror funding

News- The article explain the issue of terror funding.

What are new emerging challenges related to terrorism?

Amorphous terror groups are emerging a big threat.

Terrorist are using newer cyber linked methods of recruitment of radical elements.

The increasingly **lethal lone wolf attacks** are all adding to the threats emanating from extremist violent elements.

What are methods used by terrorist groups for global flow of funds?

Traditional channels– First, is direct smuggling of cash through international borders.

Second is the use of **hawala networks**.

Third is banking networks including SWIFT and other international channels.

Terrorist organizations raise money through several sources like travel agencies, money changers, real estate, retail outlets, NGOs, charitable trusts, and even from state sponsors.

Terrorists also derive funding from a variety of criminal activities ranging from low-level crime to organized fraud, narcotics smuggling, and illegal activities in failed states and other safe havens.

But now, swift technological developments in areas of **blockchain or cryptocurrencies** which transcend national boundaries and international currency systems have emerged as a new channel for financing terrorist.

What are global instruments used to tackle terror funding?

Financial Action Task Force (FATF) was formed in 1989 to tackle terror financing and money laundering.

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The UNSCR resolution 1267 in 1999 and UNSCR resolution 1373 in 2001 formed the bedrock of the financial sanctions regime for terrorist organizations and individuals.

FATF has developed its entire paradigm around the **word risk**. It used the United Nations Security Council sanctions against terrorists and terrorist organizations to begin to evolve a complex body of documentation in order to assess **technical compliance and effectiveness** of countries in implementing those UN designations.

What is the way forward resolve the issue of terror funding?

The first step to stop the flow of funds to terrorists is **to understand the funding requirements** of modern terrorist groups. The costs associated are not only for conducting terrorist attacks. These are also related to developing and maintaining a terrorist organization and its ideology.

Funds are required to promote a **militant ideology**, pay operatives and their families, arrange for their travel, train new members, forge documents, pay bribes, acquire weapons and stage attacks.

Accurate and **well linked financial intelligence** is needed to reveal the structure of terrorist groups and also the activities of individual terrorists.

68. OTT services should not have an unfair edge over Indian telcos

Source: The post is based on the article **“OTT services should not have an unfair edge over Indian telcos”** published in the **Livemint** on **17th November**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Relevance: About the Draft Telecom Bill and status of (telecom service providers) TSPs and OTTs (over-the-top).

News: The proposed regulation of over-the-top (OTT) communication services in India's Draft Telecom Bill has stirred up an intense debate.

About the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill

Read here: [Draft Telecommunication Bill, 2022 – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the concerns associated with the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill?

Read here: [Draft Telecom Bill enhances unease of doing biz amid regulatory overlaps](#)

Why TSPs and OTTs should be seen as one entity?

This is because **a)** All digital technology-enabled voice communication today requires applications of data, **b)** The external environment and associated risks are the same for both the telecom service providers (TSPs) and OTTs. So, they need to be governed by the same statutory agencies/bodies which oversee security aspects.

Findings of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI): TRAI's consultation paper on 'Regulatory Framework for Over-the-Top (OTT) Services' said that **a)** The technological differences between OTTs and TSPs have led to a situation where both TSPs and OTT service providers become capable of providing similar services to customers, **b)** The communication OTT players are actually competing with traditional TSPs. But the TSPs bear the costs for the infrastructure, and spectrum management and also pay licence fees for use of spectrum.

Department of Telecom committee view on OTT platforms: [Voice over Internet Protocol] OTT communication services bypass the existing licensing and regulatory regime. Thus creating a non-level playing field between TSPs and OTT providers despite both competing for the same services.

So, Each has its own value and should be looked at through similar lenses. They must contribute similarly too.

Read more: [Draft telecom Bill: A move that turns back the clock](#)

Why TSPs are in a disadvantageous position compared to OTTs?

1) OTT players can pass on the cost to their consumers, **2)** TSPs are not allowed to monetize the data of their subscribers as per Indian laws, while OTT services do so at will, **3)** TSPs continue to invest heavily in infrastructure for high-tech networks that serve Indian citizens. On the other hand, OTTs make direct/indirect profits off these networks and use them towards their development, **4)** TSPs have exclusive rights of the spectrum, interconnection, right of way, unique numbering resources, etc, but OTT services don't, **5)** TSPs pay exorbitant levies and taxes (of above 30% of their revenues). TSPs also contribute to India's Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). However, OTT services, despite their growing revenues, pay nothing to the government, and **6)** The average revenue per user of TSPs is abysmally low, even as they must make large capital investments in spectrum and infrastructure and also pay taxes/levies, while OTT profits usually go abroad, and they have no such commitments.

So, under the new Draft Telecom Bill, India must introspect and decide.

69. [Handling external shocks – on economic policy](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Handling external shocks**” published in the **Business Standard** on **16th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance: Global economic scenario

News– The article explains impacts of rapid tightening of monetary policy by US and other Advanced Economies. It also explains its implications for India.

Why blindly following the federal reserve policy is not appropriate?

This is designed for the **excess macro-stimulus** and **tight labour markets** in the US. Moreover, interest parity holds tightly only for AEs that are fully open to capital flows.

following the Fed involves letting the **exchange rate** depreciate while tightening monetary and financial conditions. But this could aggravate **external shocks**, creating sharp price movements in thin markets.

A **sharp currency depreciation** hurts those who have borrowed abroad but a sharp interest rate rise hurts domestic debtors. It can push **leveraged sectors** into crisis.

Exporters who typically sell in contested markets gain little, while the cost of commodity imports that are invoiced in dollars rise immediately.

We are seeing the consequences of **demand over-stimulus** that ignored **supply-chain bottlenecks** in advanced economies' response to pandemic.

The belief that Advanced Economies can borrow at low rates regardless of the size of borrowing ignores history. Even in the US, which has the advantage of being able to print dollars, inflation, interest rates and deficits were high in the 1970s. Fiscal rules were implemented later and debt was brought down.

What is the pragmatic policy that is needed by India?

To sustain growth while keeping inflation low, **supply-side reforms** must continue. It should be supported by **counter-cyclical tax rates**, a larger share of expenditure on **capacity building**, real repo rate that are based on expected inflation, **competitive real exchange rate** without **excessive nominal depreciation** and **capital flow management policies**.

A widening of the **current account deficit** due to a persistent rise in oil prices does require reduction in aggregate demand as well as depreciation, but within limits. Continuous depreciation is **inflationary** and results in real appreciation, which encourages more imports.

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Therefore, to reduce deficits **multiple policy levers** are needed. More emphasis should be on **longer-term sustainable measures** such as encouraging exports, reducing **oil intensity** and energy imports.

Why is this type of policy feasible for India?

Growth and reform induced **tax buoyancy** gives **fiscal space** consistent with adequate consolidation.

India does not have full **capital account convertibility**. So, **capital flow management policies** can be fine-tuned to selectively encourage or discourage different types of flows.

Micro and macroprudential regulation can be relaxed to counter tightening of financial conditions due to outflows. Reserve loss further tightens **liquidity** but can be sterilised by increasing holdings of government securities. The surplus reserves are adequate for cyclical US tightening.

Policy cannot work against fundamentals. **Rupee depreciation and stock market correction** have been less than in most other advanced and emerging markets. This indicates that markets are factoring in India's comparatively better prospects and lower inflation.

70. COP27: To decarbonise by 2050, India needs investments of at least \$7 trn

Source: The post is based on an article "**COP27: To decarbonise by 2050, India needs investments of at least \$7 trn**" published in **Business Standard** on **18th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3- Climate Change

Relevance: concerns associated with transition from fuel-based economy to green economy.

News: India's transition from fuel-based economy to a green economy and achieving net zero by 2070 is based on multiple factors and challenges.

What are the climate targets set by India?

India announced its goal to become a **net-zero emitter by 2070** last year at COP26. It will be the last major economy to get there.

India has committed to reduce its power generation by half from fossil fuel-based plants by 2030. Thus, achieving a **45 per cent reduction** in emissions intensity from 2005 levels. However, there are challenges in achieving these.

What are the challenges with India?

Investment: Power, industry and agriculture are the three major sectors that emit around 80 percent of the carbon emission. India is also currently the world's third largest emitter of CO₂ even though its emission per capita is less than the US and China.

Further, India has the second highest emissions intensity or volume of emissions per unit of GDP after Russia. The US and Japan by comparison are lower.

Therefore, decarbonizing the economy will require **investments of \$7-12 trillion** until 2050 which is around 6 percent of GDP.

Economic growth: India's economy is expected to grow further by 2070 and this will **increase demand** across power and steel sectors which would ultimately **increase the greenhouse gas emission**.

About 70 percent of India's emissions are driven by **six sectors**: power, steel, automotive, aviation, cement and agriculture. Out of these electricity generation contributes 34 per cent, industry at 28 per cent and agriculture at 18 per cent.

Therefore, India would need **to create 500 Gw of non-fossil fuel-based plants** to achieve net zero.

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Changing Priorities: Electric vehicles (EVs) are effective only if they are powered by renewables and not coal. Vehicular emission in India only accounts for 9 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions.

Therefore, there is a need to look at bigger emitters of greenhouse gas such as power, agriculture, etc.

Moreover, India has reduced the emissions intensity by 1.3 percent of GDP per year over the last decade. However, this speed of reduction is not enough.

What is the way forward?

First, India needs **proper implementation** of the existing policies because climate action must match with the intensity of the climate crisis.

Second, India needs to **increase its renewable capacity** by five times to 50 Gw per year in 2030 and nine times a year in 2040 to achieve net zero by 2070.

Third, all two-wheelers, three-wheelers and light truck sales may need to be electric early in the next decade and all car sales electric by 2035.

- The **cost of the battery needs to decline** by 40 percent in 2030 and **charging stations would need to increase** 40 times by 2040 to boost the sales of EVs.

Fourth, the government should provide **subsidies to green hydrogen** along with carbon pricing. However, there will be challenges with this transition as employment, tax revenues from the automotive fuel would decline with increased issues on land acquisition for renewable plants.

[71. Three decades after military opened doors to women, they remain at courts' mercy](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Three decades after military opened doors to women, they remain at courts' mercy**” published in **The Indian Express** on **18th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security

Relevance: Women empowerment

News- The article explains the issue of women induction into armed forces.

What is the position of higher courts on this matter?

The Supreme Court yesterday directed the Centre and the Indian Air Force to consider granting **Permanent Commission** to 32 retired women Short Service Commission officers based on their suitability with the purpose of giving them pensionary benefits.

In 2010, Delhi HC directed the government to give permanent commission to women serving in the army.

What are steps taken by the government for induction of women into the army?

Women have been inducted into the army since 1992.

Government has followed a **piecemeal approach** for induction of women. It is taking decisions at various times on whether girls can enter the National Defence Academy, Sainik Schools or RIMC.

What are the issues related to women induction into the army?

Women have been allowed in combat in the Air Force, but we are yet to see women in **combat roles** in the army and navy. All career options in the armed forces are not offered to them.

They are not considered fit for many roles in the armed forces. There are doubts on their capabilities for core work of the army that is traditionally performed by males.

There still exist many gaps. Court has also not given full judgment about women's induction into the army.

What is the way forward?

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The military should **consolidate its position** on the matter. The policymakers need to go back to the drawing board and decide on all the cases as a whole rather than having to address the issue piecemeal.

72. [Why regulators must take a coordinated approach to protect financial consumers](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Why regulators must take a coordinated approach to protect financial consumers**” published in **The Indian Express** on **19th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Mobilisation of resources

Relevance: Financial services

News- The article explains the G20/OECD draft of the proposed revisions to their 2011 High-level Principles on Financial Consumer Protection.

What has been proposed by G20/OECD released a draft of the proposed revisions to their 2011 High-level Principles on Financial Consumer Protection (FCP)?

The 2011 principles covered 10 thematic areas reflecting the market and consumer issues, including **equitable and fair consumer treatment, disclosures and transparency, and financial education**.

In 2022, two additional principles were included, that are **access and inclusion and quality financial products**.

The updated principles also recommend intervention by regulators in certain high risk products, cultivating appropriate firm culture and using **behavioural insights** to better consumer outcomes.

These principles deal with three cross-cutting themes — **financial well-being, digitalisation and sustainable finance**.

What should be the consideration of FCP policies?

Financial well-being– FCP policies must contribute to overall financial well-being and resilience of consumers.

An effective FCP regime should provide information to consumers that is **adequate and understandable**. However, merely providing information for compliance is not enough, especially in India where financial literacy is low.

Digitalisation– FCP must factor in the increasing number of digital channels used by consumers to interact with financial products and services. The impact of greater use of **artificial intelligence** and other emerging technologies also needed to be considered.

Additionally, concerns regarding **redress of grievances** against payment service providers in the UPI ecosystem should be taken care of.

Sustainable finance– There is growing consumer demand for **sustainable financial investments**. Financial services providers are incorporating **environmental, social and governance factors** into their operations, products and services.

FCP recommends improved **transparency** to help consumers make informed choices.

Avoid greenwashing– The 2022 draft also warns against “**greenwashing**”. Financial regulators must monitor that corporations are not misleading consumers with false claims regarding progress towards climate targets.

What steps are taken by India regulators in this regard?

SEBI prescribes certain financial service providers to assess **customer suitability** and undertake **risk profiling** before providing services.

The RBI has released guidelines on digital lending. It has mandated entities providing digital lending services to have a grievance redress officer, assess a borrower’s creditworthiness before extending credit and allow a borrower to exit without penalty.

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SEBI has transitioned from “**business responsibility reporting**” to “**business responsibility and sustainability reporting**”. The purpose is to promote responsible **corporate governance** for climate change. Eligible companies under BRSR must provide **environmental sustainability** related disclosures, including a **sustainability performance report**.

73. [Why and how the focus of our industrial policy needs to shift](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Why and how the focus of our industrial policy needs to shift**” published in **The Indian Express** on **19th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth

Relevance: Reforms in industrial sector

News- The article explains the important aspects that should be considered while designing the industrial policy.

Which aspects should be considered while designing industrial policy?

Job creation– The industries need to be very carefully selected. Many of the industries currently chosen to be under PLI are highly **capital and skill intensive**. **Goal of job creation** for our massive numbers of unskilled workers should be considered.

Job creation or even economic growth may not always be the main goal of industrial policy. In a world of **geo-political conflicts and supply chain disruptions**, **national security** is often considered a major goal. But unnecessary subsidies should be avoided.

Disciplining the firms– In **policy implementation**, there is a need for **monitoring the performance** of the target firms. We have to be strict with non-performing firms. If necessary, we can withdraw support from them. It requires extra efforts that go beyond the **traditional culture of bureaucracy** in India.

We have to be careful while disciplining the firms. They should not become **white elephants** or they acquire too much market power. South Korea and Taiwan used the discipline of success in export markets to nudge the firms supported by their industrial policy to have international standards of quality and cost-consciousness. They followed a **stick-and-carrot policy**: The stick of export market discipline and the carrot of generous credit subsidies.

Soft industrial policies- These are policies like encouraging research and development, extension services, vocational training, improving regulations and infrastructure are needed. The goal should be to develop domestic policies of coordination that improve **productivity** more than interventions that distort prices.

soft industrial policies need to be customised to **local decentralised contexts**, particularly when you want to help small and medium sized firms.

Focus on green products– The **2017 United Nations publication on Green Industrial Policy** suggests many examples of new green products and service opportunities that have a great deal of job-creating potential. These are from renewable energy generation and storage, bioplastics, decentralised miniature electric grids, technologies of drip irrigation and rainfall harvesting, the reinforcement of sea walls, green energy-powered three-wheeler public transportation, and so on.

The support for industrial policy has to be **nuanced, multi-faceted and vigilant** in its disciplining functions.

74. [Vikram-S launch](#)

Source– The post is based on the articles “**The Vikram-S launch opens exciting possibilities for space exploration in India**” published in **The Indian Express** and “**The Skyroot Of Our Final Frontier**” published in **The Times of India** on **19th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Awareness in the field of space

Relevance: Participation of private sector in space exploration

News- The article explains the importance of the private sector in manufacturing quick launch capabilities for small satellites.

What is the potential of the Indian private sector in the space sector?

India has more than 350 private firms in the space sector making it the fifth-largest in the world in this respect after the US, UK, Canada and Germany. But the country's share in the global space economy is barely 3%.

According to this year's **Economic Survey**, the country's space regulator has received close to 40 proposals from the private sector and the academia for activities ranging from manufacturing launch vehicles to **earth observation applications**.

Other private firms are close to emulating Skyroot. Agnikula Cosmos, a Chennai-based start-up, is planning the commercial launch of its rocket Agnibaan in the first quarter of next year.

What are the steps taken by the government to increase private sector participation?

The government intends to increase the country's share in the global space economy to 10 per cent by 2030.

In June 2020, it approved the **participation of private players** in all sectors of space activity.

It also instituted the **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre**, a unit of ISRO, to enable private companies to become independent players.

What is the utility of small satellites?

Small satellites can be assembled today in less than a week at a fraction of the cost of conventional satellites.

Currently, ISRO launches less than ten rockets each year. India must hit double-digit launches each year to stay competitive with its peers.

Small rockets allow light payloads weighing 500 kg or less to be placed precisely in preferred orbits.

What are the advantages of rapid launch capabilities?

A decade ago, **rapid and tactical space launch capabilities** were considered extremely difficult to acquire due to the high costs of constructing rockets. They are now a reality because of innovations like 3D printing of components and carbon-fibre body construction.

The primary use is for **military purposes**. During a conflict with an adversary, India's communications assets might be destroyed by an adversary's **offensive cyberattacks, kinetic kill capabilities or directed energy weapons**.

This would be requiring quick replacement. In such cases, accessing reliable rockets launched on short notice becomes a **strategic necessity**.

Other use cases could include the deployment of small satellites for **surveillance of borders** during a crisis.

For small satellites, we can not rely on vehicles designed for satellites weighing around 1500 kg to launch these satellites.

At present ISRO's **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle** is the only rocket in the small launch vehicle range capable of delivering a payload of up to 500 kg into orbit. But its tech demonstration mission earlier this year failed.

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SSLV is a three-stage rocket powered by solid rocket motors. But having a solid propellant rocket for quick response comes with limitations. We need more innovative launch vehicles.

What is the way forward?

Private sector participation is necessary for making India a thriving space power.

GoI must remain consistent with its current policy to achieve its goals.

Developing an ecosystem for private players will not be possible without ISRO's support. In the US, NASA still reserves a part of its budget for such enterprises.

There is a need for **close collaboration** between India's premier space research institution and private players.

75. [Yes, the Indian Air Force needs a new doctrine](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Yes, the Indian Air Force needs a new doctrine**" published in **The Hindu** on **19th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Security

Relevance: challenges with the Indian Air Force.

News: There has been an increase in the indigenization of the defense sectors in India which is leading India towards the Atmanirbhar in defense.

But the doctrine of Indian Air Force (IAF) is old and it needs to be revised to meet the current challenges.

What are the challenges with the IAF?

Weaponization of space: There is a need to examine the role of IAF as space would be a major source of conflict in the future. The weaponization of space with emphasis on unmanned platforms and space assets needs to be addressed.

Capital: Technologies have been increasing with the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML). Therefore, including these advanced technologies would require **good investment** which would be a challenge in the future.

Integration: Department of Military Affairs and Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) are the new areas that require proper integration with the military forces including IAF. The creation of these two areas should not act as a hurdle for the IAF.

Further, **Airborne Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR)** and **precision attack capabilities** of the IAF would need to be merged effectively.

Threat: India faces two major threats: **Pakistan and China**. Therefore, there is a need for **joint operations** with friendly nations including commitments in partnerships such as the Quad.

Conflicts: India should also be ready to face future conflicts with other developing economies. India in the future would need raw material from other countries to fulfill its requirement which may be the reason for the conflict from other competitors of the world.

Technology: Multiple technologies in all areas such as cyber, space, electromagnetic spectrum, etc. require proper approach to meet the national objectives Therefore, IAF would require a proper synchronization with these technologies.

Human Resource: The IAF personnel should be trained well to handle new technologies and information from these technologies should not act as a stress for them.

Politics: IAF new doctrine should also focus on keeping IAF out of politics as **national defence is a national endeavour**.

Combat Enablers: There is a need to **integrate combat enablers** such as aerial refuellers, Airborne Warning and Control System, transport and helicopter fleets, etc. with the air force. Neglecting them would act as a disadvantage for India as they are required for proper military functioning.

Therefore, looking at challenges of security and limited finance IAF needs a revised doctrine.

76. [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 Jammat 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.

77. [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%.

What is the trend in Post independence India?

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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?

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.

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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.

78. [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.

79. [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.

80. [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.

81. [Low crop yield in India: WHAT FARMING NEEDS: A GIANT TECH LEAP](#)

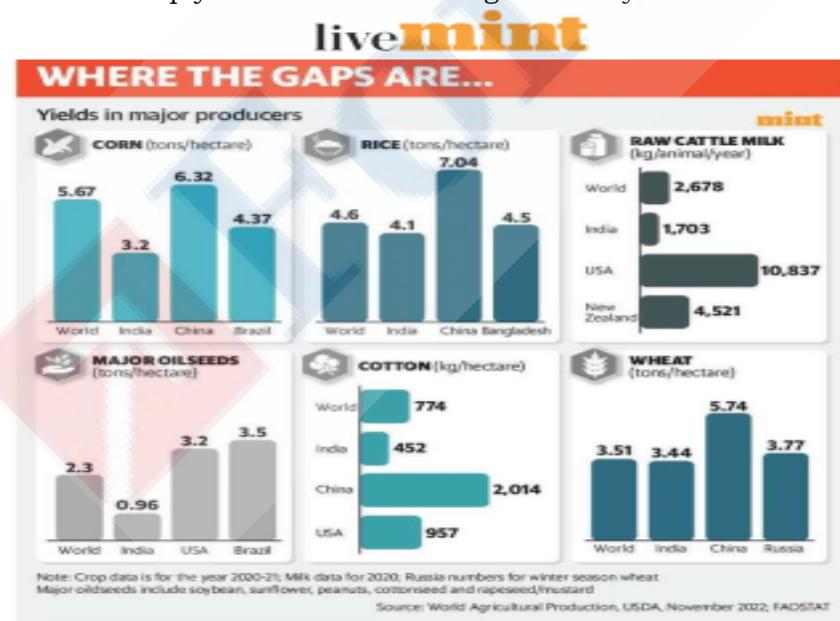
Source: The post is based on the article **“WHAT FARMING NEEDS: A GIANT TECH LEAP”** published in the **Livemint** on **22nd November 2022**.

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.

82. [Private-sector participation in space: Space for start-ups](#)

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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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83. [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.

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.

84. [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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85. 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**.

86. [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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87. [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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88. [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.

89. [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.

90. [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**.

91. 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.

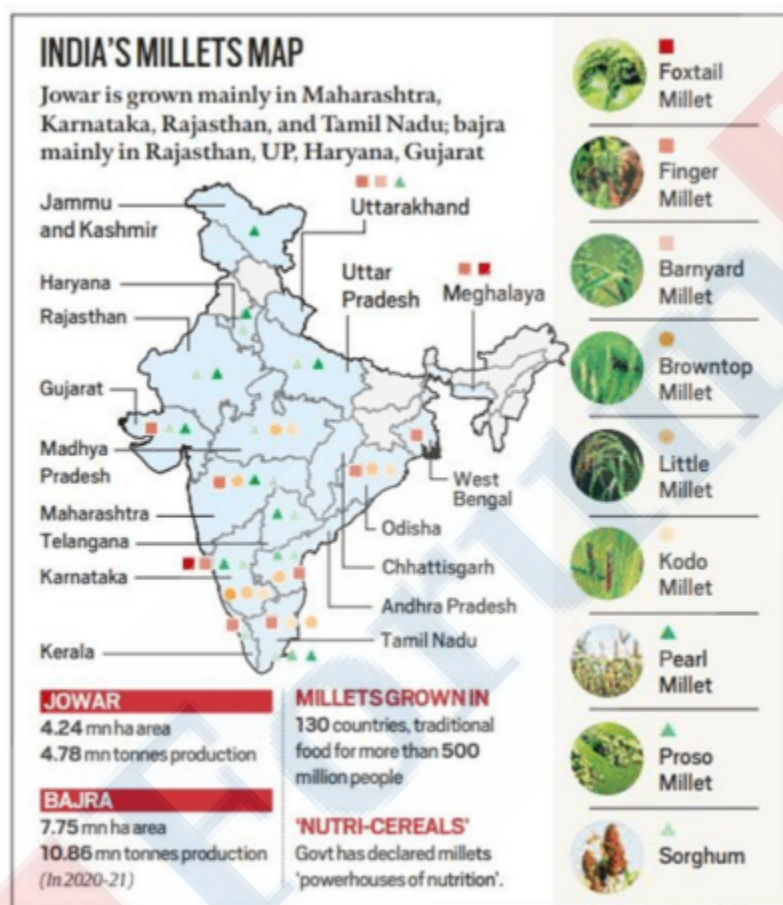
Growth: They require much less water than rice and wheat and are mainly grown in rainfed areas.

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.

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.

92. [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.

93. [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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94. [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.

95. [India’s high growth a good position for G20, but urban pollution must be checked](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**India’s high growth a good position for G20, but urban pollution must be checked**” published in **The Indian Express** on **28th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment degradation

Relevance: Urban pollution in India

News- The article explains the increasing urban pollution in India and steps needed to reduce pollution. It also explains the scenario of climate change.

What is India’s strength?

India is a shining star. As per the IMF forecast its GDP growth is expected to be 6.8% in 2022 and 6.1% expected in 2023. India will surpass China in two successive years by a wide margin.

Why is urban pollution a big problem for India?

Delhi is being branded as the most polluted city in the world. The **Air Quality Index** of Delhi during November 1-15, stood at 267. In comparison, Washington stood DC at 8, and Beijing at 97. Delhi has the poorest AQI amongst the G20 nations.

The **Air Quality Life Index Report (2022)** of the University of Chicago claims that Delhites are losing their life expectancy by 10 years

What is the scenario of climate change?

There is a global call for reducing **greenhouse gas emissions**. Climate change has started causing significant damage through heat waves, droughts and floods of increasing intensity and frequency.

The COP27 agreement on creating a “**loss and damage fund**” for compensating developing countries is a good beginning. But the international community is falling far short of the Paris targets.

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According to Climate Watch, the biggest GHG emitters in 2019 were China (12.06 billion tonnes of CO₂), the United States (5.77 Bt CO₂), and India (3.36 Bt CO₂).

However, in terms of GHG emissions on a per capita basis in 2021, Australia tops. It is followed by Saudi Arabia, and Canada. In terms of per capita emissions and emission intensity of GDP, India is in a relatively much better position.

What is the way forward to tackle urban pollution in India?

According to **SAFAR**, the largest share of stubble burning to Delhi's AQI this year was 34 per cent. Measures aimed at stubble management are not likely to succeed. There is a need to reduce the paddy area in Punjab by at least one million hectares.

The switch away from paddy towards crops such as maize, soyabean, pulses requires a **"diversification strategy"** for at least five years. It requires handsomely rewarding farmers with **carbon credits**, and savings of water and energy.

Vehicular emission in Delhi is another major cause of poor AQI. **A fast-track strategy** to promote electric vehicles is the answer. Incentivising and even subsidising EVs and charging stations in all parking lots and residential colonies is the need of the day.

To control dust, heavy fines must be enforced on builders who do not use water sprinklers multiple times a day at construction sites.

All thermal power plants in and around Delhi must be replaced with more renewable energy sources.

Solarisation should be made mandatory for all government buildings, schools, as well as public spaces with a minimum specified area. **Easy access to finance** for such renewables would be key.

96. [Our free trade agreement with Australia is unique in its details](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **"Our free trade agreement with Australia is unique in its details"** published in the **mint** on **28th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy

Relevance: economic reforms for more growth

News- the article explains the steps taken by the Indian government to increase the trade potential of firms.

What are initiatives taken by the Indian government to boost trade?

More exports- India has more than 2 million firms that produce quality products and services. But, less than 100000 of these firms are engaged in exports.

There is a need to increase the number of firms doing commercial exports. **District hubs scheme** can push more firms to export their products.

Flexible labour laws– Labour laws apply to only **formal sector workers**. It constitutes just 8% of all workers. India has introduced **four labour codes**. It will help to set up many new units and increase the **employment opportunities**.

Support for manufacture of high-tech products– India's share in global export of high-value items is low. Our export share in machinery is 0.9% and electronics is 0.4%.

The government has introduced the **production linked incentive scheme** to make India a major production centre of these products. It will lead to more exports.

Enhanced efficiency of commercial courts– Courts delay in settling commercial disputes is stunting industrial growth. **Weak contract enforcement** is one of the reasons for poor industrial growth.

The government has made several interventions like introducing new laws and **automating courts**. These are yielding results.

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The introduction of WTO-compatible export schemes– Government has abolished export schemes that are not compatible with rules of WTO. The most important one was the Merchandise Exports from India scheme.

Improved product quality through regulation– Many Indian products fail quality tests due to traces of pesticides, pathogens etc. India needs to redesign its **quality assurance framework** to help firms reach higher standards.

The government has issued **Quality Control Orders** and **Technical Regulations** for many products. It will reassure the quality of these products.

Service sector diversification– The IT sector dominates India service exports. The government is working to diversify exports in 12 service sectors under **Champion Service Sector initiative**.

97. [Why DBT schemes need to fix the problem of tenant farmers](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Why DBT schemes need to fix the problem of tenant farmers**” published in **The Indian Express** on **28th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Agriculture

Relevance: problems associated with agri-DBT

News: Many economists argue that all agricultural subsidies should be converted into direct income support to farmers.

It is because DBT is transparent and simple to administer. It is crop-neutral and does not cause distortions in input/output markets. However, there are problems associated with it.

What is the problem associated with agri-DBT?

There is one limitation with the present agri-DBT schemes that they do not reach **tenant farmers**, i.e., those who undertake cultivation on leased land.

Due to the rise in leasing of lands the tenant farmers are excluded from income support including zero/low-interest loans, crop insurance, disaster compensation and other agri-related schemes.

What does the data highlight?

According to the **National Statistical Office’s (NSO)** survey for 2018-19, 17.3 percent out of the total estimated 101.98 million farms in rural India were on leased lands.

Andhra Pradesh (42.4 per cent) has the highest tenant farmers followed by **Odisha** (39 per cent).

Haryana and Punjab have the share of leased-in area higher than the percentage of tenant holdings. It means that the tenant farmers of Haryana and Punjab cultivate large area of land, even though they don’t own these lands.

The NSO surveys highlight that there has been a steady increase in tenant farmers but the agreements between the land owner and tenant farmer are mostly oral and unwritten.

This causes problems with DBT transfers as benefits cannot be availed by the real farmers and it gets transferred to the account of non-cultivating owners.

However, **Andhra Pradesh** tried to solve the problem of tenant farmers but it also has problems with it.

How has Andhra Pradesh tried to solve the problem?

The AP government agri-DBT scheme also covers tenant farmers. The government in 2019 enacted the **AP Crop Cultivator Rights law**.

The law provides for the issuance of “**Crop Cultivator Rights Cards (CCRC)**” to persons cultivating the lands of owners under agreements with 11-month validity countersigned by the concerned village revenue officers.

The cards provide tenant farmers benefits under the state’s DBT schemes along with obtaining crop loans from banks.

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However, very few tenant farmers have received the CCRC card and out of those who received the card, very few availed the benefits of loans or DBT.

The problem with CCRC is that it requires **landowner's signature** and cannot be issued without his consent but most owners are reluctant to sign.

They fear that this may give rights to tenant farmers over lands and they might face the burden of loan taken by the tenant farmer if they fail the repayment.

What is the way forward?

Agriculture in India is increasingly seeing both “**tenancy**” (landless/marginal farmers leasing in land to cultivate) and “**reverse tenancy**” (small landowners leasing out to better-off farmers keen to reap economies of scale).

Therefore, the central government needs to expand the scope of PM-KISAN by subsuming all existing input and output subsidies under it. However, the problems of benefitting tenant farmers may still be a concern.

98. A region-specific strategy and their introduction in mid-day meals could boost millets cultivation

Source: The post is based on the article “**A region-specific strategy and their introduction in mid-day meals could boost millets cultivation**” published in the **Indian Express** on **28th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Agriculture

Relevance: About improving millet cultivation in India.

News: The United Nations has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets.

About India's millet cultivation

India produces various types of “nutri cereals” such as jowar, bajra and ragi and minor millets such as kodo, kutki, kakun, sanwa, cheena and kuttu. However, India's own production of these nutri cereals has fallen from 23-24 million to 19-20 million tonnes over the last 4-5 decades.

Read more: [Centre formulates action plan to promote exports of millets and value-added products of millets](#)

Why has India's millet cultivation been reduced recently?

This is because, **a)** Millets aren't the first choice either of consumers or producer, **b)** Unlike wheat, millets are gluten-free. So, kneading dough and rolling rotis is hard with millets. **c)** Public Distribution System (PDS) has made rice and wheat accessible even to the rural poor, for whom millets were previous aspirational cereals, **d)** Millets are orphan crops for farmers as with access to irrigation, farmers switched to growing wheat and rice that yield 3-4 times more than jowar or bajra.

Why does millet cultivation deserve a special push?

Read here: [Multidimensional benefits associated with enhancing millet cultivation](#)

Apart from health benefits, Millets are a hardier and drought-resistant crop. They have a short growing seasons (70-100 days, as against 120-150 days for paddy and wheat) and lower water requirements (350-500 mm versus 600-1,200 mm).

What should be done to improve millet cultivation in India?

Incentivise millet cultivators to not shift to rice and wheat: The government needs to incentivise farmers in western Rajasthan, southern Karnataka or eastern Madhya Pradesh — who are already cultivating bajra, ragi and minor millets.

Adopt region-specific strategy: Like Dindori in MP for kodo and kutki, the millet cultivation districts/regions can be developed as clusters for particular millets.

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Create a potential market: According to data for 2021-22, India has 14.89 lakh schools with 26.52 crore students. These, plus another 14 lakh pre-school anganwadi centres, constitute a large potential market for millets.

The schools and anganwadis can serve khichdi, dosas, energy bars and puddings made from locally-sourced millets. Further, the need for such wholesome nutrition would be more for children in the very regions that are suited for millet cultivation.

Read more: [Why India's push for millets is yet to gain widespread traction](#)

99. [Exotic and novel food items: Growing across nations and continents](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Growing across nations and continents**” published in the **Business Standard** on **28th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Agriculture

Relevance: About exotic and novel food items.

News: The cultivation of exotic and novel fruits and vegetables is expanding in India at a fast pace.

What are some common exotic and novel food items consumed in India?

The most common among them are fruits like avocado, kiwi and dragon fruit; vegetables like Brussels sprouts, zucchini, asparagus, coloured cabbages and capsicums, baby corn, and cherry tomato; and salads like lettuce, broccoli, celery and parsley.

There are also some unique edible items that have traditionally been collected from the wild and consumed primarily by the locals but are now commercially grown by enterprising farmers. These include the likes of Japane Phal (Persimmon), Ambarella (Indian hog plum), Jangli Jalebi or Kodukkapuli (Camachile), Karonda (Carandas cherry), and Buddha's hand (Fingered citron).

Top producers: Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have emerged as the major producers of exotic and novel food items within India. **Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, and Telangana** are the other key producers.

Why there is an increase in the intake of exotic and novel food items?

a) Increased awareness of the need to eat diversified food, **b) Impact of the pandemic** increased the need for nutritious and immunity-boosting foods. For instance, the import of exotic fruit items has almost doubled in just one year, from about 3.6 lakh tonnes in 2020 to a record 7.21 lakh tonnes in 2021, **c) Increased cultivation:** According to agriculture ministry estimates, exotic fruits were grown in 2021-22 in over 2.8 million hectares. The area under such crops was almost negligible in the early 2000s.

All these made exotic and novel food items to be readily available in fruit and vegetable shops in even tier-II and tier-III cities.

Why there is an increase in the domestic cultivation of exotic and novel food items?

Farmers replaced traditional crops like sugarcane, grapes, soybean, and vegetables with dragon fruit because it requires less water and cash inputs but fetches higher prices in the market.

Many farmers in Kerala have begun to diversify their farming from traditional crops to butternut squash (introduced from Central America), Gac fruit from Vietnam, and Loquat from China. As they provide much more remunerative than conventional crops.

How India is promoting exotic and novel food items?

Integrated Horticulture Development Mission: Under this, the government promotes several novel fruits, such as kiwi, avocado, passion fruit, blueberry, dragon fruit, figs, mangosteen, persimmon, rambutans and strawberry.

A University in Himachal Pradesh has **developed high-yielding technology** suitable for growing products like avocado, kiwi, and hazelnut in northern hilly areas.

The **Indian Agricultural Research Institute** has been promoting the technology for growing non-native plants under controlled environmental conditions in poly-houses.

What are the concerns associated with exotic and novel food items?

Despite domestic cultivation, 80-85% of the demand for these products is still met through import. So, **a)** India's highly diverse agro-climatic conditions in different regions should be effectively utilised for cultivation of exotic and novel food items, **b)** Farmers need to include high-value exotic fruits and vegetables in their cropping patterns to get good returns.

100. [Loss and Damage decisions, pitfalls and promises](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Loss and Damage decisions, pitfalls and promises**” published in **The Hindu** on **29th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

Relevance: Climate change related issues

News- The article explains the issue of climate financing with respect to Loss and Damage mechanism.

What is the decision relating to new funding arrangements focusing on L and D?

The decision includes a **transitional committee** to prepare elements relating to the operationalisation of the new funding arrangements to be adopted at COP28.

The decision restores the faith of countries, especially those vulnerable, in the process of multilateralism.

The new funding arrangements will **complement the existing arrangements** and include sources, funds, processes and initiatives under and outside the Convention and the Paris Agreement.

What are the issues associated with new funding arrangement?

Lack of clarity on the **source of funding** accruing to the new fund only.

There is a question mark over the new L and D fund with **non-compliance by developed countries** as far as climate finance commitment is concerned.

This dilutes the consistent demand by the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)** to set up a **dedicated loss and damage response fund**, which would be on top of existing climate finance commitments.

The decision again recognises the **mitigation-centric** nature of the history of climate change negotiations to be suiting the agenda of developed countries. The mitigation-centric nature of the negotiation can be traced to **Article 2** of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**) **1992**.

What is the viewpoint of developed countries?

The developed countries have **consistently opposed** being made liable for climate-change related adverse effects. The basis for their contribution to various funds so far is the principle of **common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR)**.

They only acknowledge their responsibility in view of the pressures their societies place on the environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.

The compensation aspect involves a **serious legal hurdle** of establishing causal relations between the injurer and the victim since the adverse effects of climate change occur substantially later than the greenhouse gas emissions that cause them.

What are the demands of Alliance of Small Island States?

During the negotiation process for the **UNFCCC in 1991**, AOSIS, unsuccessfully tried to include the establishment of an **international insurance pool** as a collective loss-sharing scheme. But

it requires more research and deliberation amongst major emitters in developed and developing countries.

In Egypt, AOSIS, demanded a dedicated L and D Response Fund. It wanted funding from governments on a grant basis.

The fund would also draw upon other potential sources, which include, as **UN Chief Antonio Guterres** advocates, a **windfall tax on oil and gas** companies' profits.

The AOSIS favours a dedicated L and D response fund including the **German-backed "Global Shield Scheme"** against climate risks which is aimed at increasing **re-arranged finance** to be disbursed before or just after disasters happen, and avoid a piecemeal approach.

101. [What Does Inclusion Being Key To Growth Mean?](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**What Does Inclusion Being Key To Growth Mean?**" published in **The Times of India** on **29th November 2022**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Inclusive Growth**

Relevance: **problems with inclusive growth and measures to improve it**

News: The article discusses the problems faced in achieving inclusive growth at the time of Nehru and measures that can be taken to improve it.

How did the concept of inclusive growth fail during the Nehru period?

At the time of Nehru, it was argued that poverty can be reduced by focusing on growth. However, this concept failed to provide the desired result.

The failure led to the emergence of cottage industry under the title of "New Economics" which argued that redistribution was the only way to reduce poverty.

However, this argument does not hold importance as inclusive growth is important for the overall growth of a nation.

Why is inclusive growth important?

Growth raises incomes of the poor along with revenues of the government which help the government to launch anti-poverty programmes.

Inclusive growth is important for the overall growth of a nation and the government should focus on inclusion in its policies and programmes.

Why did the growth during the Nehru era not achieve the desired result?

India at the time of Nehru was at the early development stage. Therefore, in the early stage of development the most abundant resource of developing countries is labour.

A country at an early stage can only grow by using the full potential of its **labour force**.

For example, 68% of the South Korean workforce was employed in agriculture in 1960. This proportion fell to 18% by 1990. In the later decades, industry and services absorbed an additional half of the workforce with real wages rising 8-10% annually.

However, India under Nehru adopted a development strategy that was centred not on the utilisation of its abundant labour force but on its **low capital**.

Indians had a low level of income with a saving rate of just 7-9%. With these low capital resources, the government chose to invest them almost **entirely in heavy industries** which employed less than 5% of the nation's workforce.

Even though, this development strategy created a modern industry, 95% of the workforce was excluded and relied on sectors such as agriculture, cottage and household enterprises.

Census data show that the proportion of workforce in agriculture remained unchanged at 69.7% between 1951 and 1971 whereas workers in countries like South Korea became skilled at the same period of time.

However, with the change in policies, the growth rate in India began to change.

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What changes were brought in India?

As per the **Employment-Unemployment Survey**, the proportion of workforce in agriculture fell from 58.5% in 2004-05 to 48.9% in 2011-12. These years also saw the annual growth rate reach 8%.

However, the process of direct inclusion of workforce into the mainstream of the economy remains slow in India compared to other fast-growing economies of Asia.

What are the concerns?

Policy-makers focusses on capital and skilled-labour-intensive industries such as automobiles, railways, steel, telecom equipment, IT, finance **for output** but **for employment**, they rely on MSMEs which have little capacity to impart skills to their employees.

Therefore, to grow at 8% or higher rates India must recognise that **inclusion is an integral part** of rapid growth and only then India's labour-intensive industries can grow leading to overall development of the nation.

102. [Long-term ecological, environmental effects of herbicide-tolerant crops haven't been considered](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Long-term ecological, environmental effects of herbicide-tolerant crops haven't been considered**" published in the **Indian Express** on **29th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Major crop-cropping patterns in various parts of the country.

Relevance: About concerns related to the DMH-11 hybrid.

News: The government recently approved the environmental release of genetically engineered (GE) mustard ("**DMH-11 hybrid**") in India.

Must read: [Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee approves commercial cultivation of genetically modified mustard yet again](#)

What are the preconditions attached to the approval of the DMH-11 hybrid?

DMH-11 carries a gene for herbicide resistance (also termed herbicide tolerance or HT). The GEAC in its recommendation made on October 18 for environmental release of DMH-11 has accepted **a)** Usage of any formulation of herbicide is recommended only under controlled and specified conditions exclusively for hybrid seed production, **b)** Usage of any formulation of herbicide is not permitted for cultivation in the farmer's field under any situation. **c)** Usage of herbicide would require the necessary permission as per procedures and protocols of safety assessment of insecticides/herbicides by CIB&RC (Central Insecticide Board and Registration Committee).

What are the concerns related to the DMH-11 hybrid?

1) Long-term ecological and economic consequences are not analysed properly, **2)** Details of the mandatory trials to ensure food and environmental safety which is a prerequisite before environmental release have not been made public, **3)** A detailed long-term assessment of the potential social and economic benefits of using DMH-11 and its potential drawbacks are not made.

The other drawbacks include,

HT offers short-term benefits at the cost of long-term sustainability: HT crops imposes strong selective pressure for resistant weeds to emerge. Once that happens, still higher amounts of herbicide need to be used; the cycle continues progressively.

Can be a disaster for the normal crop: The deployment of herbicide-resistant or HT crops has been accompanied by deleterious outcomes in several places including the US, Australia, and Canada.

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Usage of herbicides: There have been numerous recent reports highlighting the illegal use of unapproved herbicide-resistant crops.

Role of CIB&RC: Safety assessment by CIB&RC raises debate as it is not the competent body for recommending approval of GM crops.

Read more: [GM Crops in India: Issues and challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

103. [The regulatory puzzle of MIIs](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The regulatory puzzle of MIIs**” published in the **Business Standard** on **29th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources.

Relevance: About Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs).

News: Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) constituted a committee to review the governance framework for market infrastructure institutions (MIIs). The committee recently released its draft report for public comments.

What are Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs)?

MIIs are unique institutions providing vital infrastructure for trading, settlement and record-keeping. Stock exchanges, depositories and clearing houses are all Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) and constitute a key part of the nation’s vital economic infrastructure.

They are vested with regulatory responsibilities while also pursuing commercial interests like other profit-oriented entities.

Read more: [Market Infrastructure Institutions \(MIIs\)](#)

What are some key recommendations of the committee on MIIs?

-The regulatory framework should ensure that MIIs, in pursuance of their business objectives, should not lose sight of the regulatory roles vested in them as the first-line regulators.

-Tightening the norms should not deter innovation or customer focused service provision by MIIs. Hence, the committee calls for a review of the requirements related to the appointment and the role and responsibility of directors on the board and key managerial personnel (KMPs).

-The committee proposes **a)** Steps to improve the transparency and accountability in the functioning of MIIs, **b)** Metrics for the monitoring of their performance and measures for the safekeeping and sharing of information held by them, **c)** Independent directors must constitute two-thirds of the total strength of the board, **d)** Roles and responsibilities of the directors should be clearly defined, and the board should play an active role in the risk management framework of MIIs, **e)** Periodical assessment of the performance of the board and its members by an external agency, and **f)** SEBI meetings with independent and non-independent directors once a year.

What is the success story of the National Stock Exchange (NSE)?

The BSE had a record of several governance failures by the late 1980s. Then a government expert committee recommended the creation of the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

In the newly created NSE the three groups — ownership, management and trading — were kept separate. The NSE had the freedom of a private organisation, though its entire ownership was with public sector units.

What are the challenges in the functioning of MIIs?

MIIs have severe design challenges because,

1) They have to make a profit for the shareholders and perform regulatory functions. These two can be in conflict, **2)** Misgovernance is another challenge with MIIs. Every key management person’s appointment decision of exchanges is controlled by the regulator (government), **3)** Personnel at MIIs have begun to behave like civil servants: Not take decisions and push every small question up through the hierarchy and get multiple signatures. This has hampered

operational capability, **4)** Exchanges (and MIIs) in India can no longer be described as autonomous organisations that rapidly take decisions.

What should be done?

There is a need to get back to the journey of establishing capable exchanges. India needs to question the process of turning MIIs into de facto PSUs. Further, the SEBI report emphasises increased government control of exchanges. This should be avoided. India needs to follow NSE like approach to improve the performance of MIIs.

104. [Money to fight climate change: Are taxes the answer?](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Money to fight climate change: Are taxes the answer?**” published in **The Indian Express** on **30th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment

Relevance: problems with climate finance

News: The money that is currently being invested in climate projects is only **one to ten percent** of the estimated requirements. Therefore, there is a need to mobilize the required financial resources to tackle climate change.

What is the estimated amount of money required to tackle climate change and what is the current scenario?

It is estimated that the global transition to a low-carbon economy would likely require about **\$ 4-6 trillion every year till 2050**. TO achieve net zero targets, \$ 4 trillion investment is required in renewable energy till 2030.

Further, the total requirements of the developing countries for implementing climate actions were about \$ 6 trillion between 2022 and 2030.

Investing such a huge amount means at least **five percent of the global GDP** would need to be directed into climate action every year. This amount was just 1 and 1.5 percent of global GDP a few years back.

Developed countries agreed to mobilise \$100 billion every year from 2023 but as of now they are able to mobilise **\$ 50-80 billion every year**. Therefore, the current requirements are higher than the money being made available.

What are the problems with climate finance?

Availability: The availability of finance can be increased if businesses and corporations start investing money into green projects. Their investments are only 30 percent of current climate finance.

Businesses and corporations do not invest unless they are sure of good returns. Therefore, there is a need for **international financial institutions** to engage with stakeholders to create the right environment for investments in green projects.

Accessibility: The current rules and regulations of the global financial system make it extremely difficult for many countries to access international finance. Therefore, there is a need to make finance accessible to these countries.

Transparency: Climate finance flows through a network of channels – bilateral, regional, multilateral in different forms such as grants, concessionary loans, debt, etc. This creates confusion over the actual amount of money being spent on climate. This needs to be addressed by bringing transparency.

What are the ways to bring more money for green projects in India?

One of the ways to bring money other than from the developed countries is to impose various types of **carbon taxes on the citizens**. The use of petrol and diesel, and other fossil fuels needs to be taxed.

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Government has already imposed taxes on the production of coals which brings money for investments in the clean technologies but there is a need to share the burden on **citizens, businesses** and come up with different sources of money.

105. [Where does waste originate and go?](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Where does waste originate and go?**” published in **The Hindu** on **30th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment

Relevance: amount of waste generated and disposed in India

News: The report titled ‘**EnviStats India 2022**’ has been published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The report provides the data for Delhi for the year 2020-21.

What are the highlights of the report for Delhi?

Waste Generated: According to the report, over 40 lakh tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste (**MSW**) was generated in 2020-21. Out of which about 85% of MSW in Delhi was generated by households and 15% by shops and restaurants. (**Chart 1**)

Delhi generated over 13 lakh tonnes of construction and demolition waste, over 5.4 lakh tonnes of plastic waste, about 11 thousand tonnes of bio-medical waste, and 610 tonnes of e-waste along with 3,239 tonnes of hazardous waste.

Waste Disposed: Half the municipal solid waste went to landfills and the other half was recycled and reused. About 35% of bio-medical waste was burnt while all construction and demolition waste were recycled (**Table 2**).

About 22% of plastic waste is converted into energy while 37% is taken to landfills. However, it is not known how e-waste was disposed of as there is no treatment and disposal facility available in Delhi for e-waste.

What are the conditions of other states?

The current report highlights data for Delhi only, therefore, previous year data has been taken for other states.

Waste Generated: 68% of the **MSW generated** is processed across India in the year 2019-20.

Himachal Pradesh leads the list with 98% of MSW followed by Chhattisgarh at 93%. (**Table 3**)

An average of 2.5 tonnes of plastic was generated per 1,000 population in India in 2018-19 and 8.09 metric tonnes of the hazardous waste generated in the country per 1,000 population in 2018.

Waste Treated: 87% of **biomedical waste** was treated across India. **Seventeen States and five Union Territories** have already achieved 100% bio-medical waste treatment whereas only 29% of biomedical waste was treated in Bihar and Chhattisgarh in 2018.

Across India, only 45% of the **hazardous waste** generated was recycled/utilised. Most States lag in this indicator. Out of 30 states less than 50% was recycled/utilised in 13 states and less than 75% was recycled/utilised in 22 states in the year 2018-19.

Counting the waste

Chart 1 and Table 2 are sourced from "Envi Stats - India 2022", published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Table 3 is sourced from the NITI Aayog SDG Index



Chart 1 | The chart shows the various sources of solid waste generated in Delhi in 2020-21. Over 4 lakh tonnes of municipal solid waste was generated in the capital in 2020-21

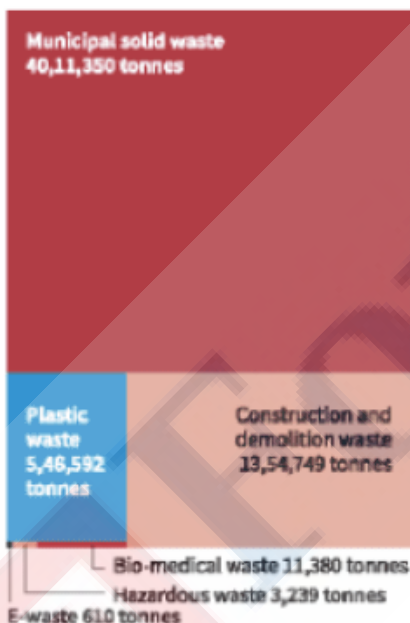


Table 3 | The table shows the % share of various types of waste processed or treated or recycled/utilised

Area	% of MSW* processed of the total MSW generated	% of BMW* treated of total quantity of BMW generated	Quantity of hazardous waste recycled/utilised of total hazardous waste generated
Target	100%	100%	100%
India	68%	87%	45%
U.P.	68%	100%	60%
Uttarakhand	57%	99%	96%
Punjab	76%	100%	18%
Haryana	50%	100%	100%
Himachal	98%	100%	65%
Jharkhand	64%	53%	2%
Bihar	58%	29%	28%
West Bengal	9%	100%	50%
Odisha	80%	100%	63%
Arunachal	24%	100%	-
Assam	63%	75%	21%
Manipur	70%	79%	-
Meghalays	65%	100%	2%
Mizoram	80%	100%	50%
Nagaland	68%	100%	50%
Sikkim	71%	73%	0%
Tripura	63%	100%	93%
M.P.	90%	92%	67%
Chhattisgarh	93%	29%	20%
Rajasthan	77%	76%	99%
Gujarat	87%	100%	33%
Maharashtra	83%	100%	12%
Goa	70%	100%	4%
Andhra	64%	100%	75%
Karnataka	64%	100%	55%
Kerala	75%	59%	33%
Tamil Nadu	70%	100%	45%
Telangana	78%	100%	52%

Table 2 | The table shows the various ways in which the waste was disposed of in Delhi in 2020-21. The figures are in % and each row adds up to 100%

	Landfill	Incineration	Recycling and reuse	Flows to the environment	Exports	Waste to energy	Unknown
Municipal solid waste	50%	0	50%	0	0	0	0
Bio-medical waste	2%	35%	31%	3%	0	0	29%
Hazardous waste	0	0	0	0	11%	0	89%
Construction and demolition waste	0	0	100%	0	0	0	0
E-waste	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Plastic waste	37%	0	25%	16%	0	22%	0

MSW- Municipal solid waste | BMW- bio-medical waste

106. [Learnings from COP27: Education as a tool of innovation for the climate change generation](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Learnings from COP27: Education as a tool of innovation for the climate change generation**” published in **The Indian Express** on **30 November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

Relevance– Climate change

News– The article explains the need for education to fight climate change.

What is contained in India Long-Term Low Emissions and Development Strategies (LT-LEDS)?

It outlines priorities for carbon-intensive sectors like electricity and industry and transport. There is emphasis on the role of a **Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)** as a mass movement towards **sustainable consumption and production**.

What are the challenges faced by the education sector in India?

First, school closures during the pandemic have led to a **learning deficit**. This will likely impact productivity and per capita income levels in the long term.

According to a paper by the OECD, one year of school closures could reduce GDP levels by anywhere from 1.1 to 4.7 per cent by mid-century.

Second, climate impacts are already disrupting children’s learning and well-being globally. For instance, extreme heat reduces students’ **learning levels** and causes **physiological harm**. Children’s health is affected due to persistently poor air quality in cities like Delhi. Floods are permanently displacing families. It is leading to children dropping out of schools and being trafficked.

Third, the lived experiences of climate-induced disasters and anxiety about the future are causing despair and dread among young people.

How education system can be leveraged to avert climate crisis?

At a national level, there is a need for **strong enabling framework** for a **climate-resilient education system**. It could cover matters from curricula to nutrition to school building codes in a climate-changed world. India should create this framework through a **consultative exercise** with educators, students, and experts.

Design and implementation in states and districts should be shaped by existing **local needs and anticipated climate risks**. Across the board, children should be able to access clean water and nutritious food. Students’ **mental health** needs should be served through an emphasis on **social and emotional learning**.

Curricula can be infused with **scientific and technical know-how** alongside **indigenous and local knowledge**. In pockets, there are already **innovative initiatives** under-way where non-government organisations are doing close work with communities. The example is the buffer zone of Kanha National Park where Baiga and Gond students are learning about the potential of integrating **biodiversity conservation** with **regenerative agriculture**.

We should foster **critical thinking instead of rote learning**. While we must strive for **abundance and equity**, societies and individuals will likely need to negotiate **scarcity and trade-offs**.

We can’t afford to be narrowly focusing on **technical training** for the innovation, research, and development of climate technologies. Rather, we should develop strong **analytical capabilities and holistic thinking** about **societal transformations** and how new technologies will be embedded in communities.

107. [Geo-engineering and climate control](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Geo-engineering and climate control**” published in the **Business Standard** on **30th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Climate Change.

Relevance: About geoengineering solutions to climate change.

News: A recent sci-fi novel (Ministry of the Future) describes what will happen in the future if countries fail to implement a carbon mitigation programme.

What are the key highlights from the novel on India and Climate Change?

-The novel appreciated the efforts of the Indian government such as spraying sulphur dioxide on clouds in the Indian Ocean. As this spraying would reduce solar radiation and bring the temperature down.

-A massive heat wave will strike Uttar Pradesh which will kill millions. The generations to come will face severe and relatively long heat episodes, floods, droughts and water uncertainty, more storms, sea-level rise, biodiversity loss and much more.

-The novel proposes measures to cope with the consequences of catastrophic climate change.

What is Geoengineering?

Geoengineering is an umbrella term for various experimental technologies designed to deliberately alter the climate system to reduce the impacts of global warming.

Geo-engineering basically compensates for the significant shortfall in mitigation options that are necessary to keep temperature rise below the agreed target level.

What are the various Geoengineering solutions to combat climate change?

Cloud seeding: [Read here](#)

Stratosphere aerosol injection (SAI): Most aerosols cause atmospheric cooling, either by directly reflecting incoming solar radiation or indirectly through their impact on clouds. For example, anthropogenic aerosols alone have cooled global surface temperatures by up to 0.8 °C over the last century.

They are short-lived in the atmosphere and more regionally variable relative to longer-lived emissions, like carbon dioxide. But there is very little scientific data to assess the impact and the uncertainty.

Solar Radiation Modification (SRM): [Read here](#)

Any SAI or SRM action will have cross-border effects.

What needs to be kept in mind while promoting geoengineering solutions?

-The nations must accept that **geoengineering is a precautionary measure** and it **should not dilute the pressure on major emitters** to do more to reduce their carbon emissions.

-The process of establishing a credible multilateral process for dialogue and decision must start soon because the **risk of wrong decisions is very high**.

What determines the success of geoengineering solutions?

The success of geoengineering solutions depends on **a) A cooperative scientific research process to analyse the available information for major volcanic eruptions that altered solar radiation, b) The governments must plan and evaluate pilot experiments and multilaterally approve them, c) The world needs to agree on a global agreement that prohibits unilateral action and sets up a process for a multilateral agreement on geoengineering initiatives.**

European Commission can take the lead in this as it will require an inter-country mechanism even for its own inter-membership decision on this issue.

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108. [ED's expansion – The agency is entering new areas of surveillance](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**ED's expansion – The agency is entering new areas of surveillance**” published in the **Business Standard** on **30th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – money laundering and its prevention.

Relevance: About the expansion of ED's power.

News: Last week, the Centre has amended a 2006 notification to include 15 organisations on the list of institutions with which the Enforcement Directorate (ED) may share information regarding cases. This expands substantially the ambit of the ED's information-sharing brief.

What is the Enforcement Directorate(ED)?

Read here: [Enforcement Directorate \(ED\)](#)

What is the functioning of the Enforcement Directorate?

Read here: [The functioning of the Enforcement Directorate](#)

About the present amendment on ED's power

The Centre has amended a 2006 notification to include 15 organisations on the list of institutions with which the ED may share information regarding cases. Among these are the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the Competition Commission of India (CCI), the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), and State Police Divisions.

Previously this information sharing is limited to bodies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation's economic offences wing, the banking and stock market regulators, the Research and Analysis Wing of the Cabinet Secretariat, and the Intelligence Bureau, apart from the chief secretaries in states.

How the recent amendment will widen the power of ED?

Expand ED's sectoral expertise: Some of the institutions that have been included in the amendment will widen ED's sectoral expertise. For instance, information sharing with Bureau of Wildlife Crime Control will provide domain expertise in that field.

ED can question other organisations: If organisations such as the SFIO, Central Vigilance Commission, and NIA are required to share data with ED, it will create an open question of the enforcement functions of these agencies.

The inclusion of the CCI within the ED's information-sharing ambit: This has significant consequences for the corporate sector since it lays open to agency scrutiny confidential data that companies submit to the competition regulator.

How does the recent Supreme Court ruling on ED also widen its powers?

Recently, the Supreme Court held that **a) The ED's have powers of arrest, property attachment, and search and seizure** with relative impunity, **b) ED was not bound to produce the Enforcement Case Information Report**, the official document recorded before starting a criminal investigation.

Note: *The court agreed to list the verdict for review.*

Why there is an expansion of ED's power?

This is due to an **expansion in the money-laundering caseload**. Between 2019-20 and 2021-22, the agency handled 2,723 cases, up from 1,262 in the seven years from 2012-13 to 2018-19.

What are the concerns with the expansion of ED's power?

a) The weaponisation of the ED might lead to an increase in cases against Opposition leaders and critics of the state, **b) The government can expand its surveillance powers** to larger swathes of society. An expanding surveillance state is usually a sign of **shrinking democracy**.

Read more: [How Enforcement Directorate \(ED\) became so powerful?](#)

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109. [Held To Ransom – Healthcare sector is a sitting duck to cybercriminals. AIIMS & other hospitals must shore up security systems](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Held To Ransom – Healthcare sector is a sitting duck to cybercriminals. AIIMS & other hospitals must shore up security systems**” published in **The Times of India** on **30th November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Basics of cyber security.

Relevance: About cyberattacks on healthcare institutes.

News: The recent massive ransomware attack has crippled the e-hospital services of AIIMS, Delhi for the last seven days. This highlights the increasing vulnerability of the country’s healthcare infrastructure and other critical IT systems to cybercriminals.

What are the concerns associated with the recent ransomware attack?

There are fears that the attackers could sell the force-encrypted AIIMS databases that contain the personal information of patients – including political leaders, senior administrators and judges – and their healthcare records on the Dark Web.

About increasing cyberattacks on healthcare institutes

A massive increase in cyberattacks on healthcare institutes worldwide has been witnessed during the Covid pandemic.

According to research by CloudSEK, the first four months of this year saw cyberattacks on the healthcare industry increase by 95% compared to the same period last year.

In the US, the ransomware attack resulted in delaying chemotherapy treatments to diverting ambulances from a San Diego emergency room after computer systems were frozen.

Read more: [Explained: What is cryptojacking, the cyber attack carried out by crypto miners?](#)

About cyberattacks on Indian healthcare institutes

The **Indian healthcare sector was the second-most targeted** globally. The Indian hospitals are even more vulnerable than their American counterparts given their measly budget for cybersecurity.

The increasing digitisation of hospital operations and records make them more vulnerable.

What should be done to make Indian healthcare institutes cyber secure?

Follow ‘3-2-1 backup approach’: Healthcare entities must save three copies of each type of data in two different formats, including one offline. This is an industry best practice to make healthcare institutes cyber secure.

Read more: [Cyber attacks on critical Infrastructure](#)

110. [This global water audit should not gather dust](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**This global water audit should not gather dust**” published in **Live Mint** on **1st December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment

Relevance: findings of the World Meteorological Organization’s report

News: The World Meteorological Organization (**WMO**) has released a water audit report that can guide global climate adaptation.

What are the findings of the report?

The report offers an overview of river-flow volumes, major floods and droughts, and identifies hotspots of change in freshwater storage with the vulnerability of the cryosphere. The findings of the reports are –

3. A large part of the Earth in 2021 was dry due to the rising global warming.
4. **India** may also face water scarcity in the future.

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5. 6 billion people have insufficient access to water for at least one month per year which is expected to exceed 5 billion by 2050. This means that more than three people would be short of water by 2050.
6. African rivers, rivers in some parts of Russia and Central Asia were all affected by weak stream flows last year while Chinese and **North Indian rivers** are becoming more prone to floods.
7. There was a rainfall deficiency in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia last year.
8. Even though India did not suffer much dryness, but **monsoon coverage** is increasingly becoming uneven which may pose a threat in the future.
9. There has been severe groundwater depletion in **North India and Pakistan** and these regions are categorized as below average compared to their 2002-2020 average.
10. The Gangetic and Indus systems also feature on the WMO's '**hotspot**' list of rapid deterioration.

The findings of the report highlight the future concerns. Even though India has its own water audit but WMO's report should also be taken into consideration and actions should be adopted by the World including India accordingly.

111. [Are ransomware attacks increasing in India?](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

"The AIIMS cyber attack is a wake-up call for national security" published in the **Indian Express** on **1st November 2022**.

"Are ransomware attacks increasing in India?" published in **The Hindu** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Basics of cyber security.

Relevance: About the recent ransomware attack on AIIMS.

News: The recent massive ransomware attack has crippled the e-hospital services of AIIMS, Delhi for seven days.

What is ransomware?

Ransomware is a type of malicious software, used by cyber criminals, to infect a computer system by blocking access to the stored data by encrypting the files. A ransom is then demanded from the owner in exchange for the decryption key.

A Cybersecurity firm, in its third-quarter global report, has identified 25 major ransomware in circulation. According to Interpol's first-ever **Global Crime Trend report**, ransomware was the **second highest-ranking threat after money laundering**, at 66%. It is also expected to increase the most (72%).

Read more: [What is a Ransomware?](#)

Why AIIMS is targeted by ransomseekers?

Many countries consider the health and medical sector as critical information (CI) infrastructure. But in India, health is not specified directly as a CI. However, an organisation like AIIMS is a natural target for cyber attackers and ransom seekers because,

a) AIIMS databases contain the personal information of patients – including political leaders, senior administrators and judges – and their healthcare records, **b)** AIIMS handles and stores **very sensitive medical research data**, and **c)** AIIMS New Delhi could be counted as a "strategic and public enterprise" as it deals with crores of patients.

Must read: [Held To Ransom – Healthcare sector is a sitting duck to cybercriminals. AIIMS & other hospitals must shore up security systems](#)

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How did India handle the AIIMS ransomware attack?

The Delhi Police used the provisions of **section 66 (F) of the [Information Technology Amendment Act 2008](#)**. Thereby identifying AIIMS incident as a case of cyber terrorism. This is significant and indicates a much larger ambit than a typical ransomware case.

Read more: [Explained: What is cryptojacking, the cyber attack carried out by crypto miners?](#)

Which agencies in India deal with cyber-attacks?

Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In): It is the national nodal agency that collects, analyses and circulates inputs on cyber-attacks; issues guidelines, advisories for preventive measures, forecasts and issues alerts; and takes measures to handle any significant cyber security event.

National Cyber Security Coordinator: It functions under the National Security Council Secretariat. It coordinates with different agencies at the national level on cybersecurity issues.

National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre: It has been set up for the protection of national critical information infrastructure.

Cyber Swachhta Kendra (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre): It has been launched for detection of malicious software programmes and to provide free tools to remove the same.

National Cyber Coordination Centre: It works on creating awareness about existing and potential threats.

Read more: [Steps Taken to Deal with Cyber Crime and Cyber Security](#)

What should be done to protect India's critical infrastructure?

AIIMS incident is a wake-up call for organisations across sectors to shore up cyber security measures. This can be done by

Announcing a national cyber security strategy: This will be a guiding document to motivate and monitor the preparedness of cyber readiness of institutes and also enhance capacity on many fronts including forensics, accurate attribution and cooperation.

Increased budget for cyber security measures: Significant budgets have to be allocated by various ministries to ensure cyber security measures.

Capacity enhancement: The capacity enhancement for the National Critical Information Infrastructure Centre (NCIIPC) and CERTIn has to be undertaken to address the emerging sophisticated nature of threats and attacks. Further, sectoral CERTs have to be set up for many areas including health.

International cooperation: This will help India to gain more knowledge and power. For this, India has to move beyond the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) meetings and the US-led Counter Ransomware Initiative (CRI) of 37 countries and the European Union.

112. [How can India make a soft landing amid global economic crash?](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "[How can India make a soft landing amid global economic crash?](#)" published in **The Indian Express** on **2nd December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy

Relevance- Performance of economy

News- The article explains the current situation of the Indian economy. It also explains the future economic prospects.

What is the current global economic situation?

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There was no disruption of economic activities by Covid-19 pandemic for the second consecutive quarter. Covid is unlikely to affect economic growth for coming times with the exception of China which is following the **zero-Covid policy**.

There are also some downsides. **Geopolitical tensions, high inflation** in many parts of the world and sharp increase in **policy rates** will impact economic growth.

How did the Indian economy perform in the July -September quarter?

Economic growth slowed down to 6.5% because of a fading **low base effect**.

Contact driven services such as trade, hotels and transport continued to be key drivers of economic growth. This sector has been impacted by recurrent lockdowns.

Private consumption was quite strong. It was growing by 9.7%. It is now 11.2% above pre-pandemic level.

Manufacturing GDP slowed sharply due to the base effect and margin pressure on manufacturing companies.

Despite climate-related disturbances, **agriculture growth** was satisfactory. Rain was lopsided and led to drop in rice acreage.

Food inflation, particularly in cereals, was high. It was due to abnormal weather.

Healthy tax revenues have allowed higher investment by the government. Investments grew 10.4% in the second quarter.

What are the future economic prospects?

The contact-intensive service is likely to maintain its momentum.

The **resilience of domestic demand** will shape the contours of GDP growth in upcoming quarters as global economic prospects are weak.

Manufacturing sector will likely face challenges as poor growth in the global economy has started to impact export growth.

Prospects for **rabi crops** look good because of favorable soil moisture conditions and health reservoir level. Overall, agriculture is expected to grow at 3% this year.

Consumer inflation is likely to be averaging at 6.8% this year.

Strong corporate balance sheets will protect them against the global economic slowdown. It will also provide an opportunity to kick-start the investment cycle once uncertainty ends.

113. [The battle to bring freshwater turtles back from the brink](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The battle to bring freshwater turtles back from the brink**” published in **The Hindu** on **2nd December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Conservation

News– The article explains the issues of turtle trafficking in India.

Recently, West Bengal Police seized 270 kg of turtle calipee in Malda district.

What is the status of turtles in India?

India has 29 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises. The main difference between the two is that turtles are primarily aquatic whereas tortoises are **terrestrial** and spend more time on land.

More than half of the turtle species are threatened and 11 are protected under **Schedule I of The Wildlife Protection Act**.

Recently, the **Conference of the Parties** adopted India’s proposal to transfer two species of freshwater turtles found in the country. These are the **red-crowned roofed turtle** and the **Leith’s Softshell Turtle** to **Appendix I of CITES**.

What are issues associated with trafficking of turtles?

According to the study, at least 111310 tortoises and freshwater turtles were trafficked from September 2009 to September 2019.

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They are being **illegally traded** as pets, for food, or to prepare medicines. India is reported to be one of the world's major sources and consumers of turtles and tortoises.

The **TRAFFIC India report** stated that an unknown proportion of illegal wildlife trade presumably goes undetected,

People who live in the Barasat and Bongaon areas of West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district are responsible for more than 50% of the country's consumption of turtles.

The pet market for trade is serviced mostly by air now. Agencies do not have the **intelligence** about them.

What are some successful initiatives by government agencies to protect turtles from trafficking?

The WCCB has carried out a pan-India crackdown on turtle smuggling. Between December 2016 and January 2017, it launched '**Operation Save Kurma**' to prevent poaching, transportation and illegal trade of live turtles and tortoises.

Two more such initiatives, called '**Operation Turtshield-I**' and '**Operation Turtshield-II**' from 2019 to 2021 were taken up to tackle the illegal trade of live turtles.

What are some success stories related to conservation of turtles?

Conservationists face the challenge of **rehabilitating** the animals rescued from the illegal trade back to their natural habitats. Organisations such as the **Turtle Survival Alliance** have assisted in the rehabilitation of over 30,000 rescued turtles over the past 10 years.

The Turtle Survival Alliance, along with the Forest Departments of U.P. and M.P., has also been credited for conserving critically endangered **red-crowned roofed turtles** in the Chambal landscape. Attempts have also been made to conserve the critically endangered **black softshell turtle** in its natural habitat — temple ponds of Assam.

114. [Safer roads for a greener, more sustainable environment](#)

Source– The post is based on the article "**Safer roads for a greener, more sustainable environment**" published in **The Hindu** on **2nd December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment pollution

Relevance– Causes of environmental pollution

News– The article explains the linkages between road safety and clean environment.

How do road accidents lead to environmental pollution?

Most vehicles contain **toxic metals** such as lead, mercury, cadmium or hexavalent chromium, which are detrimental to the environment. **Fuel and fluid leaks** are seen at crash sites.

Severe road crashes lead to automobile wreckage. It becomes a part of unusable end-of-life vehicles. This gives rise to scrappage.

What are issues with vehicle scrappage in India?

India is estimated to have about 22.5 million end-of-life vehicles by 2025.

India's **National Automobile Scrappage Policy**, launched in 2021, is still in its nascent stages.

There is absence of **widespread, systematic facilities** dedicated to their proper recycling. vehicles after road crashes as well as old **end-of-life automobiles** are left to rot by the wayside.

These end up at landfills or at **informal recycling facilities** where they are dismantled unscientifically. This leads to the leakage of **hazardous constituents** such as oils, coolants and glass wool.

How are road safety and environmental sustainability intertwined concepts?

In 2020 alone, speeding was responsible for 91,239 road crash fatalities. It comprises 69.3% of all road crash deaths registered.

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Simulation exercises in Europe have demonstrated that cutting motorway speed limits even by 10 km/h can deliver 12% to 18% fuel savings for current technology passenger cars. It can lead to significant reduction in **pollutant emissions**, particularly Nitrogen Oxides and particulate matter, from diesel vehicles.

What is the Zero-Fatality Corridor solution for road safety by the SaveLIFE Foundation?

All road safety initiatives undertaken and recommended by the SaveLIFE Foundation are designed to be **impactful and environment-friendly**.

It was deployed on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway in 2016. It helped bring down road crash fatalities by 52%, as of 2020.

Initiatives included guarding **natural hard structures** such as trees using **crash barriers** to prevent direct collisions. It also includes installing **retro reflective signage** on the trees to make them more visible to commuters.

Missing or inadequate signages are another leading cause of road crashes. It is a common standard practice to use asbestos for creating these signages.

Asbestos has an adverse impact on the environment. The ZFC programme opts only for **long-lasting, high-quality, non-hazardous** material for signage. Aluminium Composite Panels are employed for signages. It is free of toxic gas or liquids during the production process. It is also recyclable separately.

What is the way forward?

Roads and the environment are inseparable spaces. They are not just our shared resources but also our joint responsibility. T

herefore, safer roads and a sustainable environment can be ensured only through the joint efforts of road-owning agencies, enforcement officials and the public.

115. [Coming clean on coal](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Coming clean on coal**” published in **The Indian Express** on **2nd December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment

Relevance: coal-based energy generation and concerns associated with it

News: The Union Minister of Power and New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh, highlighted the importance of coal-fired plants in meeting developmental requirements.

What did he say?

He said that India is planning to gradually lower the use of coal for electricity generation but on the other hand India is also looking to expand its coal power capacity for its developmental needs. He said that the share of this fossil fuel in the energy mix will come **down in percentage terms but not in absolute measure**.

What is the current usage of coal in India and future estimation?

India’s **50 percent electricity** is generated from coal-fired plants which is expected to come down to 30 per cent in the next 10 years.

However, India is planning to increase its electricity generation capacity to 865 GW from 407 GW. Therefore, 40 GW of this additional power will come from coal-based plants.

This energy generation from coal-based plant was also a concern in the CoP-26 meeting last year where countries accused India and China.

What were the decisions made in CoP regarding the usage of coal?

Countries in the **CoP-26** decided to “phase down” their coal-based electricity generation.

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However, the final draft of the agreement wasn't successful and India and China were accused of opposing anti-coal stance. Even this year's **CoP-27** did not come with an appropriate conclusion regarding elimination of coal.

Moreover, the current **geopolitical situation** has changed the energy demand scenario of the world.

How the current geopolitical situation has changed the energy demand?

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has altered the demand of the energy sector worldwide. The conflict has caused the **EU** to restart its coal plants which were once importing clean gas from Russia. According to the **International Energy Agency**, the EU's coal consumption rose by more than 10 per cent in the first six months of 2022 and it is further expected to rise in the coming months. Even though EU governments have said that the use of coal is temporary, its usage at a time when countries are planning to eliminate the use of fossil fuel is concerning.

What can be the course of action for India?

India has made remarkable efforts in expanding its **renewable energy** but due the unstable nature of renewable energies the dependence will be on coal-based plants. Further, **new coal plants are more efficient** as they emit less GHG.

Therefore, India must begin work on plans for an energy generation which has a negligible role for coal to achieve the net zero target by 2070.

116. [Fighting the naval battle](#)

Source: The post is based on an article "**Fighting the naval battle**" published in **Business Standard** on **2nd December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Security

Relevance: challenges associated with the Indian Navy

News: The **Exercise Malabar** was conducted recently by the navies of four quadrilateral countries — Australia, India, Japan and the United States of America.

What is the importance of Malabar exercise?

This year's Malabar exercise was **hosted by Japan** with focus on countering China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) to take over Taiwan or to enforce its claims over the South China Sea and East China Sea.

Malabar exercise creates "**inter-operability**" by making the four partner navies cooperate in fighting the opponent.

This exercise helps countries to show their capability in fighting one of the major threats, i.e., Chinese PLA Navy, or PLAN. It also helps India to show the capabilities of its Navy in detecting the submarine of the opponent among others.

This kind of simulated "**locate-identify-destroy drills**" is carried by QUAD Navies every year.

What does the law say regarding the war on the sea?

India signed and ratified the United Nations Commission on Laws of the Seas (**UNCLOS**) which lays down laws for the seas. UNCLOS contains the law of **Mare Liberum** (law of the Open Seas). According to the law of Mare Liberum, seas are mankind's common heritage and everyone enjoys freedom of action on the high seas.

Further the law says that if **two nations declare war** on each other, they can destroy or seize each other's vessels anywhere in the world.

For example, if India and China were at war, Mare Liberum permits both to legally destroy each other's shipping in the Atlantic or the Southern Ocean. Moreover, India currently faces threat from its neighbours' Navy.

What threat does India face from the Navy of its neighbours?

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India faces a threat currently from two neighbours – **Chinese Navy and Pakistan's Navy**.

The Chinese Navy is certainly a major concern as it has been increasing its presence in the Indian Ocean and it is also the fastest growing navy of the world. However, there is a little threat from Pakistan's Navy.

According to a report, if the Indian Navy brought all its power on the Pakistan Navy fleet, it would cease to exist within 24-48 hours. Therefore, Pakistan would never try to engage with India in the sea.

However, it would rely on its **shore-based air force** to fight which might be a concern for the Indian Navy.

Therefore, the introduction of enhanced long-range surface-to-air missiles (**LR-SAM**) serve the purpose. It provides air defence capability to the India Navy and it also allows the Indian Navy to approach the Pakistani coast with greater efforts.

Earlier there were threats from **Pakistani long-range maritime patrol (LRMP)** aircraft but India's **LR-SAM has more potential than LRMP** as LR-SAM has 70-kilometre range compared to LRMP's range of about 50 kilometres.

Furthermore, the LR-SAM system has been inducted in **INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant** with launching facilities for MiG-29K fighters from their decks. Therefore, this has decreased the threat arising out of Pakistan's LRMP.

What is the way ahead?

Even though Pakistan's Navy does not possess a concern but Chinese PLAN has been increasing its base in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and in the East African States.

Therefore, grouping such as **QUAD and AUKUS** needs to have proper strategies to counter China in the Indo-Pacific.

117. [Before infection spreads – AIIMS episode shows big cyber-security review is needed](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Before infection spreads – AIIMS episode shows big cyber-security review is needed**" published in the **Business Standard** on **2nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Basics of cyber security.

Relevance: About the recent ransomware attack on AIIMS.

News: The recent massive ransomware attack has crippled the e-hospital services of AIIMS, Delhi for seven days.

What is ransomware and which agencies in India deal with cyber-attacks?

Read here: [Are ransomware attacks increasing in India?](#)

Why health sector such as AIIMS is targeted by ransomseekers?

Must read: [Held To Ransom – Healthcare sector is a sitting duck to cybercriminals. AIIMS & other hospitals must shore up security systems](#)

India's healthcare providers are a prime target for cybercriminals. About 28% of the global attacks on healthcare providers in 2021 targeted Indian health care.

What are some general targets for Ransomware attacks?

Ransomware attacks target municipal systems, health care (including the UK's National Health Service), financial services (many banks have been hit), and other businesses.

Cyber assaults have shut down power grids (in Ukraine and Australia), stock exchanges, nuclear facilities (Iran), telecom networks (Georgia), airlines, and government websites (too many to name), etc. In addition, there have been innumerable breaches of intellectual property (IP) and personal data.

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Why India is vulnerable to cyber-attacks?

India at present is implementing various Digital India initiatives. These are vulnerable to cyber attacks. For instance, **a)** Every bank branch is connected to the banking system, and to the Unified Payments Interface stack, and linked to non-banking financial companies, stock exchanges, toll fastags, and fintech providers, **b)** Passport information is processed by private service providers, **c)** Civil aviation system is totally digital, **d)** Aadhaar connects to multiple sectors, **e)** The national power grid is “smart” and connected to dozens of different generators and distributors, **f)** Gas distribution networks are “smart” and **g)** There are the defence and aerospace establishments and other government institutions connected to private servers.

How do various governments use Ransomware attacks?

Various governments have used ransomware attacks against other governments/agencies. For instance,

a) Google claims it has been targeted by hackers operating from Chinese government institutions to steal IP, **b)** The North Korean government has been accused of ransomware attacks, **c)** The attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities was coordinated by two governments, **d)** Cyber-attacks on Ukrainian and Georgian infrastructure coincided with physical conflict with Russia.

What should be done to prevent cyber-attacks?

Following proactive outreach programmes: Instead of reacting to breaches as and when discovered, agencies like the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team must institute proactive outreach programmes to prevent incidents occurring across public and private spaces.

Backup and disaster recovery policies also have to be instituted and upgraded continuously. All these along with regular policy reviews should be part and parcel of the Digital India initiative.

118. [Stats Of The Union – Economic gap between regions in India is growing. It will have consequences in other areas](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Stats Of The Union – Economic gap between regions in India is growing. It will have consequences in other areas**” published in **The Times of India** on **1st November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Relevance: About subnational economic convergence.

News: According to an economic theory, the incomes of countries and regions tend to converge over time. This is because areas with low-hanging fruit tend to attract capital and other resources that allow them to catch up. But India’s regions might be an exception to this trend.

How India is an exception to the subnational economic convergence theory?

A national survey on incomes by an economic think tank shows that the gap between states in southern and western India and many of those in the north, central and east is wide. A 2016 paper by IDFC Institute observed that **India is the only major economy** going against the trend of subnational convergence.

Instead of convergence, **there is a divergence in the incomes** of Indian states. For instance, Karnataka’s per capita income was at Rs 2,055 a year in 1989-90. This was almost two times that of Bihar. In 2019-20, the gap had widened to over five times with Bihar’s annual per capita income at Rs 29,794 and that of Karnataka at Rs 1,55,869. This trend generally holds across states.

Read more: [Inclusive growth: Why is it indispensable for India?](#)

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Why India is an exception to the subnational economic convergence theory?

India's fiscal architecture and related institutions such as the finance commission are designed to mitigate the fallout of economic convergence. This is done by allocating the divisible pool of taxes in a manner that brings about a degree of equity between states.

But the combination of **economic and fertility divergences** makes India an exception to economic divergence. For example, India's national population will increase to 311 million between 2011 and 2036. Of this increase, only 9% will come from the five southern states. On the other hand, these southern states currently contribute 30% of national income with just 20% of the population.

Read more: [Circular Economy: Meaning, Benefits and Opportunities – Explained, pointwise](#)

How India can ensure a subnational economic convergence?

India's subnational economic divergence is a trend that deserves more study and policy attention. This is because an uneven economic structure usually has consequences that ripple out into other areas. So, India should focus on attaining economic convergence.

119. [Air To Everywhere – North's fewer farm fires were thanks to tech, incentives & some good politics. There's a wider green lesson](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Air To Everywhere – North's fewer farm fires were thanks to tech, incentives & some good politics. There's a wider green lesson**” published in **The Times of India** on **2nd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment.

Relevance: About measures to tackle farm fires.

News: This year winter witnessed a significant reduction in farm fires in both Punjab and Haryana. North India's citizens had slightly better winter air as well.

About the recent reduction in farm fires

Farm fires are down by 30% and 48% over last year in Punjab and Haryana respectively. This may be Punjab's lowest farm fire count since 2012. This reflects the concerted attempt by Punjab and Haryana officials to deter farmers from setting fields on fire.

This is done by

a) In-situ straw management: This is done through super-seeders, which plough the straw back into the soil. Super-seeder machines gained popularity over the previous generation happy-seeders is a promising development.

b) Ex-situ baling of the straw for sale to biogas plants, industries with captive power plants, and fodder suppliers were heavily promoted this year.

c) Other measures: Centre's Commission for Air Quality Management, in which the affected NCR states are stakeholders, has released ample funds.

The key then is to sustain these gains next year and the years after.

Read more: [Stubble burning: Addressing north India's burning issue sustainably](#)

What needs to be done to reduce farm fires further?

ICAR's **bio-decomposer** appeared to not find much favour, given the short window between kharif harvest and rabi sowing this year. This has to be promoted.

India should **focus on even bigger environmental challenges**. Such as weaning off coal, using a mix of technology, promoting government-backed incentives and funds to address environmental challenges.

Read here: [Centre to help set up paddy straw pellet units to arrest stubble burning](#)

120. [Maritime stocktaking](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Maritime stocktaking**” published in **The Indian Express** on **3rd December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Various security forces

Relevance– Issues related to Indian navy

News– The article explains the importance of the navy for the security of our country. It also explains the achievement in the maritime sector.

Why is a strong navy needed for our country?

Border impasse at LAC and **China expansionist activities** in South China sea necessitate a strong navy.

In the 1971 conflict with Pakistan, the Indian navy was actively involved. INS Vikrant mounted sustained attacks on East Pakistan airfield, ports and riverine traffic. Maritime dominance had expedited Pakistan’s surrender.

What are significant achievements of India’s maritime past?

The navy of 10th century South Indian emperor Rajendra Chola defeated the Sumatran empire to establish chola power.

The century **Maratha admiral Kanhoji Angre Konkan fleet** constantly harassed the British, Dutch and Portuguese.

Bombay Wadia master shipbuilders was a ship-building pioneer who constructed warships for Britishers.

What are naval assets added by our country in the recent past?

In the 1960s, Indian naval leadership started **indigenous warship production**.

Mazagon Docks delivered the **first license-built frigate, INS Nilgiri**, in 1972.

The commissioning of India largest indigenously designed aircraft carrier called INS Vikrant is a major achievement for our navy.

The Indian navy has launched over a hundred warships; ranging from patrol boats to destroyers and from hydrographic vessels to nuclear submarines.

Recent induction of US built **shipborne helicopters** and **maritime-reconnaissance aircraft** will boost Navy surveillance and anti-submarine capabilities.

What are the shortcomings in inducting the naval assets?

Many of INS Vikrant major systems like gas-turbine engines, guns, missiles and radars are imported. Another concern is foreign origin of aviation-related activities such as workshops and landing-aids.

The time interval between ordering, launch and commissioning of Vikrant was excessive by international standards.

What is the way forward to strengthen the navy? Given the political leadership’s global **aspirations**; navy has made significant contributions to make India a QUAD **member** or as a regional “**net security provider**”.

The navy role must be spelt out. Its force architecture should be defined as well as funded.

There is a need for a comprehensive “**maritime vision**” and articulate it in a “**National Strategy for Maritime Security**”.

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121. [Measuring food insecurity](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Measuring food insecurity**” published in **The Indian Express** on **3rd December 2022**.

Syllabus: GS3- Poverty and hunger

Relevance– Issues related to malnutrition

News-India ranked at 107th out of 121 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2022.

There are some question marks on data used by FAO to measure the hunger prevalence in India which is used in GHI score

What is food security?

It exists when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. It should meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

What are the arguments favouring the authenticity of data by FAO that is used to calculate GHI score?

India ranking results from the use of Indian government official statistics called **NFHS survey**. This data confirms that there persist high rates of **child mortality and chronic malnutrition** in India.

A falling **child mortality rate** is not a consolation for the fact that a larger proportion of children still suffers from chronic malnutrition.

The indicator used by FAO to measure food security was scrutinised and approved by countries through the **UN Statistical and UN Economic and Social Council**.

Prevalence of malnutrition is not simply based on survey data collected by FAO using the **Food Insecurity Experience Scale(FIES)**. It is computed using data on **national food balances and consumption** at household level. The most recent food consumption data available for India is from 2011. FAO does not have access to updated data, including the 75th round of the same survey on **consumer expenditures** conducted in 2017-18.

There is a lack of understanding regarding how **FAO FIES data** are processed to ensure valid, reliable measures of severity of food security across countries.

In 2013, FAO started the “**Voice of the Hungry**” project by engaging the global community because the international community did not have a way to identify and monitor food insecure households and individuals in a comparable manner across countries.

These efforts resulted in development of **statistical protocols** that ensure different translation and interpretations of FIES survey questions in 180 languages.

All the methodological details regarding the way FAO measures food security are public knowledge.

For the last four years, FAO has been actively collaborating with the **Ministry of Statistics** to include **FIES data** into official national data collection initiatives and to align with national SDG indicators.

122. [Why India needs timely and reliable data on crop production](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Why India needs timely and reliable data on crop production**” published in the **Indian Express** on **3rd November 2022**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Agriculture

Relevance: About the credibility of NSO estimates

News: According to the National Statistical Office’s (NSO) latest GDP estimates for July-September, manufacturing contracts 4.3% and agriculture growing 4.6% year-on-year.

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About the credibility of NSO estimates

The credibility of NSO estimates on Manufacture

The estimates of NSO is in stark contrast to the S&P Global's Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI). According to PMI, the manufacturing sector registered an expansion of 17 months in a row.

Reason for divergence: **a)** Most companies reported higher input costs in the recent quarter, this might be caused by the divergence between the NSO and PMI data, **b)** The PMI is based on a panel survey of just around 400 manufacturers. But the NSO's estimates are based on gross value added.

Read more: [Improving Agriculture Yield in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

The credibility of NSO estimates on Agriculture

The estimates of Agriculture are in stark contrast with the other reports. Such as,

-According to the Agriculture Ministry's first advance estimates, the production of kharif foodgrains and oilseeds (during July-September) was lower compared to last year.

-Most field reports suggested deficient precipitation in this monsoon, drought conditions in the Gangetic plain and excess rains in September-October would adversely impact the kharif crop.

-The high fodder and feed costs, and lumpy skin disease virus infecting cattle across many states have impacted non-crop segments such as livestock, forestry and fishing.

Overall, it's difficult to reconcile the NSO's agricultural growth estimate with the reported reality on the ground.

What should be done?

Timely and reliable information on crop production is a necessary public good — for policymakers as much as farmers and agri-businesses. Hence, India should,

Address the credibility of data: India is becoming a digital superpower. So, it should rely more on satellite imagery, remote-sensing vegetation indices and hand-held chlorophyll meters, instead of the traditional patwari-girdawari system for estimating crop area and yields.

Follow the approach of the US: The US Department of Agriculture releases monthly reports providing crop-wise output, domestic consumption, export and import forecasts and updates.

Read more: [India's Agriculture Exports: Status and Challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

Overall, India should understand the impacts of overestimation and underestimation of production.