

## **Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of November, (Fifth Week) 2022**

- 1. What are the reasons behind the overcrowding of prisons in India? State the measures that are required to handle the overcrowding.**
- 2. Discuss the factors supporting the growing cultivation of exotic and novel fruits and vegetables.**
- 3. Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) suffer from the conflicting nature of different roles. Elaborate.**
- 4. Inclusion is integral to rapid growth. Discuss.**
- 5. Malnutrition exacerbates the magnitude of the public health crises we face and is India's most serious challenge and concern. In this regard, highlight the significance of Food fortification for India.**
- 6. Accepting reforms mooted by previous panels will strengthen the Election Commission's independence. Elaborate.**
- 7. What are the implications of the Supreme Court's ruling on the EPFO pension scheme?**
- 8. Discuss the need for a comprehensive "maritime vision" and articulating it into a "National Strategy for Maritime Security".**

**Q.1) What are the reasons behind the overcrowding of prisons in India? State the measures that are required to handle the overcrowding.**

**Indian Express**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain the reasons behind the overcrowding of prisons in India. Also write some measures that are required to handle the overcrowding.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

According to the **National Crime Records Bureau's reports** the capacity of prisons has increased from some 3.32 lakh to 4.25 lakh in the last decade, which is a 27% increase while the number of prisoners has increased from 3.7 lakh to 5.54 lakh in the same period, by 48%. This imbalance has caused the occupancy rate to surge from 112% to 130% in the last decade.

**Reasons behind the overcrowding of prisons in India:**

- The main reason behind overcrowding is **undertrial prisoners** as they account for 77 percent of the total occupancy. According to the **Prison Statistics India 2021**, between 2016-2021, the number of convicts in jails has decreased by 9.5 per cent whereas the number of undertrial inmates has increased by 45.8 per cent.
- The pace of **creating new infrastructure** is sluggish. As the number of prisoners grows and no additional space for their accommodation is provided, overcrowding in prisons occurs.
- There is the **rise** in the number of people held under **preventive detention**.

**Measures:**

- **Fair social policies and crime prevention:** Taking action against poverty and social marginalization is key to preventing crime and violence and, in turn, reducing prison overcrowding.
- **Reviewing and re-categorizing offences:** It would give the courts the possibility of imposing non-custodial sanctions and measures or shorter prison terms for a larger number of offences. E.g. Imprisonment of children as a measure of last resort
- **Improving the efficiency of the criminal justice system:** Procedural laws may be simplified to allow courts to spend less time on processing minor cases and freeing up time to process serious and complicated cases. e.g. computer-based case tracking systems.
- **Alternatives to imprisonment:** Traditional alternatives, such as **finances, community service orders; Suspended sentences** (used in Germany).
- It may be better to focus on **creating new infrastructure** to accommodate the ever-rising number of prisoners.
- **Faster trials, liberal bail provisions**, amendments in Acts to make offences compoundable also can solve the problem.

The Dickensian idea of building more prisons is not a sustainable solution. The judiciary, lawmakers, and government must act quickly to address this crisis.

**Q.2) Discuss the factors supporting the growing cultivation of exotic and novel fruits and vegetables.**

**Business Standard**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some factors supporting the growing cultivation of exotic and novel fruits and vegetables.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

The growth of exotic food in India is being closely followed by the domestic production of exotic foods, which itself is **growing at 14-16 percent**. Among fruits, those that are imported in large quantities include Japan's Fuji apples and other varieties of green apples, red grapes, dates, berries, kiwi fruit, different types of mandarin oranges pomelo, and several other varieties of citrus fruits.

### **Factors supporting the growing cultivation of exotic and novel fruits and vegetables:**

- 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.
- **Increased awareness** among people to eat diversified food.
- Impact of the pandemic increased the **need for nutritious and immunity-boosting foods**.
- **Government promotion:** Under **Integrated Horticulture Development Mission**, the government promotes kiwi, avocado, passion fruit, blueberry, dragon fruit, etc.
- The **Indian Agricultural Research Institute** has been promoting the technology for growing non-native plants under controlled environmental conditions in poly-houses.
- A University in Himachal Pradesh has developed **high-yielding technology** suitable for growing products like avocado, kiwi, and hazelnut in northern hilly areas.

India's highly diverse agro-climatic conditions in different regions should be effectively utilised for cultivation of exotic and novel food items. Farmers need to include high-value exotic fruits and vegetables in their cropping patterns to get good returns.

### **Q.3) Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) suffer from the conflicting nature of different roles. Elaborate.**

#### **Business Standard**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain in detail why Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) suffer from the conflicting nature of different roles.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

**Stock exchanges, depositories and clearing houses** are all Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) and constitute a key part of the nation's vital economic infrastructure. Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) are unique institutions providing vital infrastructure of trading, settlement and record keeping. They are vested with regulatory responsibilities, while pursuing commercial interests like other profit-oriented entities

#### **Conflicting nature of different roles:**

- MIIs also perform a unique **dual role**. On the one hand, MIIs are **corporate entities** wherein attention to bottom line of their business is a natural outcome. On the other hand, as a first line regulator, MIIs carry **out the key regulatory and public utility functions**.
- Given their vital role in the capital market ecosystem, they cannot engage themselves exclusively in pursuit of profits which results in **dilution of their focus on the regulatory role**.
- At the same time, they have to be viable institutions generating sufficient surpluses to effectively discharge their role of public utility with an eye on robust investor protection. The business model of an MII is thus inherently conflicting.

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- **Misgovernance** is another challenge with MIIs.
- Every key management person's appointment decision of exchanges is **controlled by the regulator (government)**.
- Personnel at MIIs have begun to behave like civil servants. E.g. not taking decisions and pushing every small question up through the hierarchy and get multiple signatures. This has **hampered operational capability**.
- Exchanges and MIIs in India can no longer be described as autonomous organisations as they **lack in rapidly taking decisions**.

Well-functioning MIIs, constitute **"the nucleus of the capital allocation system"**, are indispensable for economic growth and have a net positive effect on society like any other infrastructure institution.

### Q.4) Inclusion is integral to rapid growth. Discuss.

#### Times of India

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain why Inclusion is integral to rapid growth.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Inclusive growth infers an **impartial allocation of resources with benefits incurred to every section of the society**. Rapid growth is necessary to reduce poverty but for this growth to be sustainable in the long run, it should be broad-based across sectors, and inclusive of the large part of the country's labour force.

#### **Why inclusion is integral to rapid growth?**

- It **lessens the fast growth rate of poverty** in a country and upsurges the participation of people into the development of the country.
- Inclusive growth is important for the **overall growth of a nation** and the government should focus on inclusion in its policies and programmes.
- Advancing inclusive growth is so important in India today. At the most basic level, economic growth results from **labour force growth and productivity growth** of workers.
- Broad-based and significant improvement in health outcomes.
- **Increased access to higher education** and improved standards of education, including skill development.
- **Better opportunities** for both wage employment and livelihood.
- Improvement in provision of **basic amenities** like water, electricity, roads, sanitation and housing.
- 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.
- There will be no inclusive growth unless it takes satisfactory care of women and children. India needs to democratize productivity through inclusive growth to finally reach its full economic potential. To achieve inclusive growth in India, there is a need to shift the workers from informal employment to formal employment.

### Q.5) Malnutrition exacerbates the magnitude of the public health crises we face and is India's most serious challenge and concern. In this regard, highlight the significance of Food fortification for India.

#### The Hindu

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain the significance of Food fortification for India.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

India ranks 101 out of 116 countries in the **Global Hunger Index 2021**, with a 15.3% undernourished population, the highest proportion of stunted children (30%), and wasted children (17.3%). Fortification is the **addition of key vitamins and minerals** such as iron, iodine, zinc, Vitamin A & D to staple foods such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content.

**Significance of Food fortification for India:**

- **Cost-effective:** Foods that are high in certain nutrients can be expensive. E.g. fish is a great source of omega-3 fatty acids but may cost too much to buy regularly. Eggs, milk, and other products can be fortified with omega-3 fatty acids. These products often cost less and still have similar nutritional value.
- **Prevents nutrition-related illness:** As in **National Family Health Survey-5 data**, every second Indian woman is anaemic, every third child is stunted and malnourished, and every fifth child is wasted. E.g. folic acid is added to many fortified products. During pregnancy it lowers the risk of birth defects.
- **No alteration of food characteristics:** It does not alter the characteristics of the food like the taste, aroma or the texture of the food.
- **Quick implementation:** It can be implemented quickly as well as show results in improvement of health in a relatively short period of time.
- **Wide reach:** Since the nutrients are added to widely consumed staple foods, fortification is an excellent way to improve the health of a large section of the population also for those who are **economically disadvantaged** do not have **access to safe and nutritious food**.
- It is a **socio-culturally acceptable** way to deliver nutrients to people as it does not require any change in eating habits or behaviour.

Food fortification, according to stalwarts of nutrition, is a cost-effective complementary strategy to address multiple micronutrient deficiencies. The intervention, carried out with precautions, is the key to the malnutrition issue which the nation continues to struggle with.

**Q.6) Accepting reforms mooted by previous panels will strengthen the Election Commission's independence. Elaborate.**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some issues with Election Commission's independence. Also write, some reforms mooted by previous panels to strengthen the Election Commission's independence:

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

**Article 324** envisaged that the Commission be led by a single CEC (Chief Election Commissioner). The President can appoint more Election Commissioners (ECs). But this is subject to any law made in that behalf by Parliament.

**Issues with Election Commission's independence:**

- **Appointments:** whether Election Commissioners should be selected by the executive or by a collegium.
- **Providing security:** Constitution did not afford the Election Commissioners the same constitutional protection (of removal by impeachment) as is accorded to the Chief Election Commissioner. They might feel they should remain within the ambit favoured by the government.
- **Financial autonomy:** At present, the budget of ECI is not charged on Consolidated Fund of India which tends to reduce its independence and autonomy.

**Suggested reforms to strengthen the Election Commission's independence:**

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- **Dinesh Goswami Committee, 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, and 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.
- **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution:** the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners should be appointed on the recommendation of a body comprising the Prime Minister, the Leaders of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
- **255th Report of the Law Commission:** chaired by Justice A.P. Shah, 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 Leader of the Opposition of the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India. It also suggested measures to safeguard Election Commissioners from arbitrary removal, in a manner similar to what is accorded to the Chief Election Commissioner.

Elections are the cornerstone of democracy, and the Election commissioners are crucial to that legitimacy. Therefore, to defend its functional independence, the guardian of elections itself urgently needs structural safeguards.

### Q.7) What are the implications of the Supreme Court's ruling on the EPFO pension scheme?

Indian Express , Indian Express 2

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain implications of the recent Supreme Court ruling on Provident Fund (PF) pensions.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

The **Employee Pension Scheme (EPS)**, which is administered by the **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**, aims to provide employees with pension after the age of 58. The Supreme Court directed that members of the scheme who did not exercise the option for higher pension as provided for in the scheme as it existed before the 2014 amendment, were entitled to exercise the option, jointly with their employers, even under the amended scheme.

#### **Implications:**

- The serving employees can **opt for higher pension now**, transferring the stipulated part of the employer's contribution to the pension fund.
- **More members and employers** now have four months to opt for a pension scheme linked to actual salaries. Only a negligible percentage of EPFO members – with salaries higher than the Rs 15,000 a month pensionable salary cap – had earlier opted for contributions based on their actual salaries.
- This would essentially imply **higher annuity after retirement**. Experts said that in times of higher inflation this would provide a **better social security cover** for workers after retirement.
- The existing members had to contribute the additional 1.16 per cent if they opted for pension linked to actual salaries. Otherwise, as per the Scheme, the government pays this 1.16 per cent of the pay of the members. So, the **EPFO will have to find ways to fund this additional contribution**.
- The government may have to **rework the contribution distribution** between provident fund and pension.



The pension scheme needs to be **reformulated in a way that it provides benefits to employees without putting an onerous burden on the employers**. The government contributes only 1.16% of employees' monthly salary.

**Q.8) Discuss the need for a comprehensive “maritime vision” and articulating it into a “National Strategy for Maritime Security”.**

### Indian Express

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain the need for a comprehensive “maritime vision” and articulating it into a “National Strategy for Maritime Security”.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

India comprises a significant size maritime sector with 12 Major and 200+ Non-Major Ports situated along its 7500 km long coastline and a vast network of navigable waterways. The country's maritime sector plays a crucial role in its overall trade and growth, with 95% of the country's trade volume and 65% of the trade value being undertaken through maritime transport.

### **Need for a comprehensive maritime vision:**

- **Develop best-in-class Port infra structure:** The 12 Major Indian Ports have witnessed just about -4 % CAGR growth in overall cargo traffic over last 5 years. Given the evolving global shipping market, India needs to upgrade its port infrastructure to increase its market share.
- **Cost Competitiveness:** The overall logistics cost in India is higher than best-in-class benchmarks, primarily as a result of larger hinterland distances and higher unit costs. To be globally competitive, the India Ports must drive mechanization and adoption of technology to improve productivity.
- **Enhance Logistics Efficiency:** With an aim to achieve ~5% share in world exports, India's exports need to grow aggressively in next 5 to 10 years and it is imperative for Indian Ports to strengthen maritime capabilities and improve ease of doing business.
- **Inland Waterways:** is imperative to increase share of the country's inland waterways as they are highly economical and an eco-friendly mode of transport.
- **Promote Ocean, Coastal and River Cruise Sector:** The Indian cruise industry is growing at over -3 5 % due to multiple government interventions in the last 3 years. Over the next decade, the Indian cruise market has the potential to increase by eight times driven by rising demand and disposable incomes.
- **The ship's major systems**, including gas-turbine engines, guns, missiles and radars, are **imported**.
- **Foreign origin of aviation-related facilities** such as workshops, aircraft lifts, arrestor-wires and landing-aids, vital for flying operations.
- The case for **IAC-2 remains in indeterminate state** even as China awaits the third ship in its carrier-building programme and envisions a carrier-led Indian Ocean task force.

In the half-century since the Bangladesh War, our navy has emerged as a compact but potent and professional force. The navy's role must be spelt out, and its force architecture defined as well as funded, accordingly.